

fury of BARBARA BOXER and the House women, and those hearings were convened. The Anita Hill hearings made an indelible mark on this country.

It really woke America up as to what was going on in the workplaces around the country for women and how little representation women really got in Congress. Watching that all-male Judiciary Committee tear into Professor Hill for daring to accuse her boss of sexual harassment, the women of America took action and elected BARBARA BOXER, DIANNE FEINSTEIN, Carol Mosely Braun, and PATTY MURRAY to the U.S. Senate.

I was thrilled when BARBARA came to me thinking about running for the Senate. I told her it was the perfect time: she can do more in the Senate and be heard in the Senate. I said would be worth the fight to get her here with me, even if just to have someone I could see eye-to-eye with on a daily basis.

BARBARA even started an exercise program in the House when we were there together. She showed up in colorful leotards, and Geraldine Ferraro came looking like a photo op for Vanity Fair, and Olympia Snowe wore this gorgeous outfit. I show up, chunky yet funky, and the instructor is yelling, "Go for the burn! Put your hands on your waist and bend, bend, bend!" And I turned to BARBARA and said, "If I had a waist, I wouldn't be here." Well, those exercise classes may not have lasted long for me, but her energy just couldn't be beat.

Her zip and zest is pure California sunshine, and Californians have more sunshine in their spirit because of her work. Her energy has brought light to California and light to the sometimes dreary Capitol hallways.

I am going to miss my good friend and irreplaceable political partner. Democrats have had a lot of tough fights over the last 25 years, and the two BARBARAS have always been there, side by side. We voted against the war in Iraq, both believing it was a mistake. We were in the minority, but both of us still believe it was one of the best votes we have ever taken as Senators. We stood up for what we believed in and what we thought was right—which is exactly what our constituents sent us here to do.

BARBARA BOXER has been there for our children, leading the way for after school programs and making sure they are kept safe. She has fought against wasteful spending in the Pentagon—the \$400 hammer and the \$7,000 coffee pot. She has defended women's right to choose and protected women against domestic violence. She has held the feet of polluters to the fire as the champion of clean air, clean water, and our natural resources. It is too hard to pinpoint just one thing the Senate will miss about her: her political prowess, her dedication and determination, her undying loyalty and friendship. All of those and more will be missed.

As we end this session of Congress and our careers in the Senate, I wish

BARBARA and her husband, Stewart, many happy days ahead as they start writing this new chapter in their lives. Even if we are on opposite sides of the country, I know I will always have a friend in California.

TRIBUTE TO MARK KIRK

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, on January 3, 2013, Senator MARK KIRK climbed the 45 steps to the U.S. Capitol, triumphantly returning to work after a year of intensive recovery from a stroke. To the cheers of colleagues and friends, he called it one of the greatest moments of his life.

It was a moment of courage and determination that defined a life dedicated to serving the people of Illinois and of our Nation. From his service in the Navy Reserve as an intelligence officer, to the World Bank, the State Department, the House International Relations Committee, and five terms representing the 10th Congressional District of Illinois, Senator KIRK brought to this chamber a wealth of experience, wisdom, and commitment.

I had the pleasure of working alongside Senator KIRK on the Appropriations, Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, and Aging Committees. His approach to legislating has been in the highest traditions of the Senate: Informed, passionate, and always civil. He looked at the issues before the Senate not through the lens of a political partisan, but rather through the lens of a pragmatic problem solver and consensus builder.

Senator KIRK has been a valued ally on many fronts. We introduced the REGROW Act to accelerate the development of new therapies for patients living with such diseases as Alzheimer's disease and diabetes and to achieve breakthroughs in stroke recovery. I was proud to be named with him to serve on the Women's and Family Global Health Task Force so that the United States will continue to be a leader in preventing maternal and childhood deaths from treatable causes. We joined together on vital legislation to keep firearms out of the hands of terrorists and in addressing our Nation's opioid addiction crisis. He has always had a deep commitment to good government and was a strong voice for accountability through independent, effective inspectors general.

As chairman and former ranking member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, Senator KIRK has worked tirelessly on behalf of the men and women who serve our country. Following in the tradition of Illinois Senator Everett Dirksen, who helped pass the Civil Rights Act a half-century ago, Senator KIRK has been a leader in ensuring the rights of America's LGBT community.

The past election brought disappointment, but it also revealed character. Senator KIRK ran a vigorous but honorable campaign and never compromised

his principles. When the decision went against him, he conceded graciously, reminding Americans that what unites us is far stronger than what divides us.

It has been an honor to serve with Senator KIRK in the U.S. Senate. It has been a joy to develop our friendship, one I will cherish always. I wish him all the best in the years to come, and I know that he will meet any challenges that lie ahead with the strength and fortitude he brought to those 45 steps of the U.S. Capitol.

TRIBUTE TO BARBARA MIKULSKI

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, today I wish to honor my friend, colleague, and mentor from Maryland, Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, who is retiring at the end of this year. BARBARA has an impressively long and distinguished career in public service, representing her home State of Maryland in Congress for nearly 40 years.

Since I came to the Senate in 2013, it has been a pleasure to serve alongside titans like Senator MIKULSKI. As a matter of fact, my first official Senate office was tucked in-between hers and then-Senator Rockefeller's on the fifth floor of Hart. As neighbors we formed a friendly bond, and I oftentimes would stop by to chat with her or sometimes just Mrs. O'Malley, who runs a tight ship. On occasion, Senator Rockefeller and I would overstay our welcome, and Mrs. O'Malley would kick us out and send us back to our offices. For those of you who don't know, Mrs. O'Malley has played a critical role in Senator MIKULSKI's office for nearly 30 years and has helped instill the values of hard work and dedication to a generation of Hill staffers.

As the longest serving woman in Congress, Senator MIKULSKI has inspired a generation of women to pursue careers in public service and run for higher office. As dean of the women Senators, BARBARA worked to mentor new women Senators on how to be effective legislators and build coalitions across party lines to advance landmark legislation. The bipartisan women's group has met regularly under her leadership, helping bridge partisan divides that so often plague this Chamber by getting Senators to know each other on a personal level over her homemade Maryland crabcakes.

One cannot mention Senator MIKULSKI without also mentioning her fierce advocacy and determination to make Maryland and our country a better place to live, work, and raise a family. One of the first bills I cosponsored when I came to the Senate was the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, VAWA, which BARBARA played a critical role in originally passing. Since its passage in 1994, VAWA has been effective in responding to domestic violence. Additionally, she has worked tirelessly in the fight to close the pay gap for women, who currently earn about three-quarters of what men