

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

A CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE OF THE HONORABLE ROBERT HENRY MICHEL, EIGHTEENTH DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS (1957–1995) MINORITY LEADER OF THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES (1981–1995)

HON. PAUL D. RYAN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 10, 2017

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, the Honorable Robert H. Michel, former Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, died on February 17, 2017. On that day, I issued the following statement:

“On November 29, 1994, an extraordinary thing happened on the House floor. Outgoing House Speaker Tom Foley, a Democrat from the Pacific Northwest, asked outgoing Minority Leader Bob Michel, a Republican from central Illinois, to take the gavel and preside over the House. More than a symbolic gesture, it was a fitting sendoff for a happy warrior revered for his decency and commitment to what’s right.

“A half-century earlier, as a combat infantryman, Bob Michel was in the Battle of the Bulge. He was at Normandy too. For his service in World War II, he received two Bronze Stars and the Purple Heart.

“I did not have the privilege to serve with Leader Michel. But I do have the honor of working every day in the office in the Capitol that bears his name. What a name and legacy it is. What a life well-lived by this great and gracious man. Today the members of the House—past and present—mourn with the family and friends of our former colleague and leader.”

The House took several steps to honor Mr. Michel. The flags of the U.S. Capitol were lowered to halfstaff in honor of his passing. A book of condolences was made available for the remembrances of friends and colleagues. On February 27, 2017, the House adopted House Resolution 151, honoring the life of former Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, Robert Henry “Bob” Michel. A memorial service was held in Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol on March 9, 2017. The following is a transcript of those proceedings:

MARCH 9, 2017

PRELUDE—(United States Army Brass Quintet)

PRESENTATION OF THE COLORS—(United States Armed Forces Color Guard)

NATIONAL ANTHEM—(United States Army Chorus)

(The Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, S.J., chaplain of the United States House of Representatives)

Reverend Conroy: God of Heaven and Earth, the work of Your hands is made known in Your bountiful creation and in the lives of those who faithfully live in Your grace.

Today we especially remember the life and work of Bob Michel, son of the very proud city of Peoria.

As the long-time minority leader, he was a modest man whose impact on the public weal

beyond his district far exceeded any projection of ego strength. A man of an age past, he was a better practitioner of governance than politics. It was this characteristic of his that ushered through a Democratic House much of President Ronald Reagan’s agenda, evidence of an extraordinary ability to legislate within our constitutional structures.

Be present with us this day, O God, as we mark his life and remember his legacy. Bless this gathering and comfort us as we comfort one another in remembering a great American and a genuinely good man.

Amen.

(The Honorable Paul D. Ryan, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives)

Speaker Ryan: Good afternoon, and welcome to the United States Capitol.

Today, we celebrate the life of the Honorable Robert H. Michel, the distinguished leader from the State of Illinois. On the day of his passing, it was my sad duty as Speaker to order the flags flown over the Capitol to be flown at halfstaff.

At this moment, I would like to ask the Capitol Police to present one of those flags from that day to the Michel family, if you will, please.

(Presentation made.)

Speaker Ryan: Bob Michel was a man of very simple rituals. He pressed his own shirts. He whistled while he worked—no, he really, actually did whistle while he worked. He had time for everyone. That is a skill I am really learning to appreciate, and that is difficult to develop in this job.

Actually, I would say this is the kind of inclusive program that the leader would enjoy: three Republicans, two Democrats, and Ray LaHood.

(Applause.)

Speaker Ryan: That is right. Because this is a celebration of a great life, this being a House event, we are going to hear some really great stories. I want to start the bidding with two.

One comes from Karen Haas, Karen, whom we all know very, very well right here in the House because she is the Clerk of the House. But Karen came to us as a long-time Bob Michel aide. Karen tells this story of a time she briefed the leader on a tax provision that Bill Archer was going on about. She went into all the great details. The reason she did that was so that they wouldn’t have to go over the whole thing all over again with Bill Archer on the floor.

So they get to the floor, and sure enough, Bill Archer comes up on the floor, comes up, starts going into the tax policy. The leader sits down, and he says: “Walk me through it from beginning to end. Tell me all about it.” Karen starts fidgeting in her chair. He just taps her lightly, and the leader basically is saying to her, without saying a word: “This is the job. A leader takes a moment; a leader listens.”

My predecessor, John Boehner, he tells a story of his very, very early days when he was a freshman Member. You ever hear of the Gang of Seven? Right. John Boehner was a part of the Gang of Seven. They were about to drop something really big on the House Bank. That’s what made the Gang of Seven famous.

So John Boehner, he is a freshman, goes to the leader and gives him a heads-up about what they are right about to do on the House

Bank, and he is thinking: “He is going to cut my legs off. This guy is never going to speak to me ever again.”

The leader just nods and he says: “Well, you do what you have to do. As leader, I will do what I have to do.” That was it—no breaking of arms, no retribution, just that.

You know, years later, when I was a rabble-rouser causing John Boehner very similar problems, he showed the same decency to me. Now I know whom I have to thank.

Bob Michel loved this place. Many of us got to know him after. We didn’t serve together, but we all got to know him so well after that service. He loved this place. He loved this institution. But he really loved his people. He did not just shape events; he shaped people’s lives, how they lived, and how they treated others. That’s what makes a giant a giant, it is the values that they instill in us, those moments that make you say: “Wow, I will never forget this.”

Bob Michel had a lot of those kinds of moments in his good and long life. You wouldn’t know it, given how humble and how genial he was. But today, I hope that he will permit us to speak out of order so that we can give this great patriot, this man of the House, the due he so richly deserves.

Thank you very much for being here today.

(Applause.)

(The Honorable Dick Durbin, United States Senator from Illinois)

Mr. Durbin: If Bob Michel were here looking out at this crowd, we might have heard some of his favorite profanities: Ye gads. Doggone. By gosh, by Jiminy! Son of a buck!

He would say: “Just look who’s here: my friends, my family, Republicans, Democrats, diehard Cub fans—and the rest of the world.”

We have beautiful baseball weather outside, a U.S. Army band and chorus inside, and we meet in the right room. If you can’t be on the floor of the House, this is a great room to honor Bob Michel. Imagine how many times he walked across this room back and forth to his office, to his beloved floor of the House of Representatives.

But best of all, we meet with the uncommonly decent spirit of Bob Michel among us again. The only thing Bob loved better than the people’s House, as he called it, was his family.

To Bob and Corinne’s children—Scott, Robin, Bruce, Laurie—grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, we hope in this time of loss, as you look around here at the support and friendship, that you can replace that loss with happy memories of a great fellow, one loved by all.

Bob’s devotion to public service began when he was 19 years old. He was an Army private, off to fight with courage in some of the most important battles in human history. It continued after he left Congress, with his extraordinary efforts to increase America’s investments in medical research.

But he left his greatest mark in public service right here in this building. In his nearly 50 years in the House of Representatives, he said that the times he was proudest of were the Ronald Reagan years, starting in 1981, his first year as a minority leader, when he was able to create coalitions to help big parts of President Reagan’s agenda pass.

I was elected 2 years later, in a tumultuous election in 1982. Bob, of course, was the Republican leader at that time, and we had adjoining congressional districts. Now, a lesser

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

man and a different leader might have written me off as just another freshman Democrat; but Bob Michel treated me as a colleague and as a friend, and I never forgot it.

I used to love the stories. We would meet just around the corner there once every month with an Illinois delegation for lunch. It was such a treat to hear the great stories from our delegation in those days, but especially the stories between Bob Michel and Dan Rostenkowski.

Are there two more different politicians alive in the State of Illinois than Bob Michel of Peoria and Dan Rostenkowski of the bare-knuckle wards of the city of Chicago? You would think it was just going to be a knock-down-drag-out every time they got in the same room, and you couldn't be further from the truth.

They became such close friends that—listen to this—they would actually get in a station wagon after the adjournment of the House and take turns driving back to Illinois. One would drive, the other would sleep on a mattress in the back of the station wagon. That was their regular return home and back and forth. They were that close.

Over the years, Corinne and LaVerne Rostenkowski and Bob and Dan were the closest of friends. I never shared a station wagon trip with Bob—thank goodness neither of us had to do that—but what we did share was a commitment to our state and a reverence for the House of Representatives and this great Nation.

We were both children of immigrants, and like many first-generation Americans, we shared an awe for this great Nation. That was the foundation of a friendship for the 12 years that we served together in the House of Representatives and all the years since.

The last time I saw Bob, I was telling the family, was at a Cubs-Nats game over at the stadium. And he was having the time of his life, as usual.

Bob Michel taught us the importance of listening and respecting other persons and the other person's views, even if you didn't agree with them. He never mistook politics for warfare because he had seen real war, like Bob Dole.

It is an honor that you are with us today, Senator Dole. Thank you for being here.

(Applause.)

Mr. Durbin: John Warner, thank you for being here, too.

And men like Danny Inouye, so many of the Greatest Generation. There was a quiet, battle tested bravery about them.

He showed us that consensus is not weakness, and principled, intelligent compromise is not capitulation. It is how a democracy works. He once said, and I quote: "Raising the level of your voice doesn't raise the level of discussion. . . . Peaks of uncommon progress can be reached by paths of common courtesy." One look at his historic legislative achievements and you know that that is true.

Bob Michel often said that the real heroes of World War II never came home. At the risk of correcting my old friend, I have to say this: Some of those heroes did come home. It was our honor to know and work with one of the finest.

In his great, beloved hometown of Peoria, one of the tributes after his passing read: "They certainly don't make 'em like Bob Michel anymore."

And I might add: We are all the lesser for it.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

(The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Democratic Leader of the United States House of Representatives)

Minority Leader Pelosi: Good afternoon, everyone. Senator Dole, Senator Warner,

thank you for honoring us with your presence.

Many honors are afforded members of Congress, but to be asked to speak at a memorial service for Leader Michel is an honor indeed. It is an honor to be here with speaker Ryan and senator Durbin, Vice President Cheney, Secretary Baker, Secretary LaHood, Secretary Jack Lew, Billy Pitts. I will talk about the two of them later.

Today we remember a beloved former colleague who embodied the highest ideals of our democracy: Leader Robert Henry Michel. In this hallowed Hall, gathered beneath the great statue of Clio, the muse of history, Clio and her clock remind us that our time is short and history is watching. She reminds us that we are part of history, that our words and our actions will face the judgment of history, that we are part of the long and honorable heritage of our democracy.

This distinguished gathering is a tribute to Leader Michel's leadership, service, and civility, embodying everything we hope our heritage would be.

Bob Michel was a patriot, a proud immigrant's son, a soldier, and a great American statesman—a patriot indeed.

In World War II, Bob served with heroism and honor, which earned him the first congressional Distinguished Service Award.

In the Congress, Leader Michel fought for the people of Peoria and his beloved Illinois. He brought the values of the heartland to Washington. And he personified the highest ideals of our Nation.

His valor and leadership were recognized with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, with the high honor of France's Knights of the Legion of Honor. We all benefited from his wisdom, his dignity, and his integrity.

Bob once said: "Understanding the other person's viewpoint is the beginning of political wisdom. It doesn't mean we will always agree. But it does mean that when we disagree, it's a disagreement based on fact."

What great guidance.

Leader Michel reminded all of us that we have a role to play in strengthening our democracy. Let us carry forward Bob's courage, his conviction, and his civility.

With his characteristic civility and grace, Bob Michel held the respect of colleagues on both sides of the aisle. I am sure that Steny Hoyer will attest that Democrats in the House who served with him and since then all respected and loved Bob Michel.

His relationship with Speaker O'Neill was legendary. Tip O'Neill served as Speaker, and he took the leader's office and yielded the speaker's office to Bob Michel. That office is now named for Bob Michel. And it brings a joy to all of us that it is, and it brings luster to that office that it bears his name.

They were really close friends, and they traveled a bit. And I am just telling you this one story about Jack Lew, who worked with Tip O'Neill, and Billy Pitts, who worked with Bob Michel. One time they were on a trip visiting Gorbachev in Russia, the Soviet Union at the time. And they were so close and interacted in such a nonpartisan, bipartisan way that, when Tip O'Neill's spokesperson was not available to lead the press event that they would both speak at, Billy Pitts stepped in for the Democrats.

Okay, Billy? Billy and Jack, please stand up, because they are probably the two closest people to Tip and Bob Michel.

(Applause.)

Minority Leader Pelosi: It wasn't that long ago when we all gathered in Statuary Hall for the service for Speaker Tom Foley. All of us remember the beautiful, beautiful presentation that Bob Michel made about Tom Foley and about bipartisanship and working together and respecting each other's views. In fact, Bob Michel was one of the last people

that Tom Foley saw before he left us. So, whatever the politics were, the personal respect always prevailed.

Leader Michel, may I say again, had a role to play in strengthening our democracy, but he also understood that we were engaged in a political disagreement from time to time. Leader Michel and Democrats might disagree on policy proposals, but we always agreed, because he led us that way, on the importance of public service. He believed in the truth and compromise and working out differences to meet the needs of the American people.

It was a joy to behold Leader Michel's devotion to his late wife, Corinne, and love for their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. I hope the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren who are here understand how much their grandfather is revered—is revered—and for a long time to come. Of all of his achievements as Republican leader of the House, Bob Michel was most proud of being a husband, father, and grandfather.

So, for many of us, it was such an honor to serve with him, to be his colleague in the Congress. It was a privilege to serve with him. It was an honor to call him colleague and a joy to call him friend. Many of us, maybe, presuming, but he made us feel that we were all his friends.

To Scott, Bruce, Laurie, and Robin, thank you for sharing your father with all of us over the years. May it be a source of comfort to you, to your whole family, the people of Illinois, and the people of America who loved him that so many join all of you in celebrating the life of this extraordinary American, mourn your loss, and are praying for your family at this sad time. Thank you again for sharing this great, patriotic American statesman, a person who taught us all so much about civility and about our country—a great patriot.

Thank you.

MUSICAL SELECTION—"Mansions of the Lord" performed by the United States Army chorus)

(The Honorable Dick Cheney, 46th vice President of the United States)

Vice President Cheney: Good afternoon. This is a sad occasion, obviously, for all of us, but it is also an opportunity to give thanks for the fact that we were able to share time with Bob. He was a major, major influence in my life.

When I arrived here after the 1978 election, Bob took me under his wing, taught me a lot about what he knew about the House. He did his darndest, with some success: got me elected to the leadership in my first term, made me a member of the Intelligence Committee—his committee assignments were very important—and eventually put me in charge of the Iran-Contra investigation. And I loved every one of those. I was never quite certain it was going to come out the way Bob thought it was going to come out, but his role as my mentor I will never forget.

My highest aspiration was to follow in Bob's footsteps and hopefully some day become the Speaker. Speaker Ryan and I have often reminisced over the fact that my desire was to become Speaker of the House and his was to become the Vice President. It didn't work out quite the way we planned.

But Bob was one of the finest men I have ever known. There cannot be many others who spent so much time here yet were held in such thoroughly high regard by everyone, from beginning to end. Our leader was never known to make a disagreement personal or let opposition give way to hostility, to show the signs of injured vanity. And forget holding a grudge; Bob wouldn't know how to acquire a grudge in the first place. He was a

straight-up guy through and through, as authentic and devoid of pretense as any man could be.

Like his counterpart, Senator Dole, Bob was a man of his generation who knew far bigger tests than a tough vote or a heated floor debate. I guess when you have landed at Normandy, led a platoon in combat, been wounded by machine gun fire in the Battle of the Bulge, you gain a perspective that doesn't come any other way. You know what a real fight looks like, what a real loss feels like, and the dramas and reversals of politics are all a little bit more manageable.

When we are young and we first start reading about politics, we picture a certain kind of individual to serve in Congress. Maybe, in time, reality teaches us a little differently. In this case, the man and the ideal were awfully close.

The gentleman from Illinois commanded respect well beyond anything required by title. He was a man of courage, rectitude, and personal kindness, a friend we looked up to and were lucky to have in our lives. We honor Bob for all that he gave to America, and we are grateful for all that he meant to us.

(Applause.)

(The Honorable Jim Baker, 61st United States Secretary of State)

Secretary Baker: Of course it is traditional to refer to Members of Congress as "The Honorable." In Bob Michel's case it was particularly appropriate when people called him The Honorable Bob Michel because it was a simple fact. He was a most honorable man.

The words "duty," "honor," and "country" were not catchphrases for Bob Michel; they described a prescription for almost everything he did. He was a masterful legislator, of course, and a leader of his party in the House who had enough accomplishments to fill the rotunda of this building where he worked for so very long.

But more importantly, he remained a generous and decent man whose ego was as humble as his Midwestern roots. After all, as Senator Durbin has said, how can you not like someone who cusses like a choir boy? While the Halls of Congress echoed with supercharged epithets deleted, Bob would simply smile and say, "geeze," or maybe if he was really steamed, "dagnabbit."

A conciliatory influence who knew how to work with Democrats, Bob was also tough and strong-willed, and he knew how to swing votes. Without his skill, we could never have helped President Reagan achieve his 1986 income tax reform, the only time our tax system has been completely overhauled successfully. With a deadline approaching, we gathered in our leader's office and began working the phones to seek support from wary Members. It took a lot of calls and it took a lot of horse trading—Bill Pitts remembers all that—but we got it done. It was classic Michel: fair, but very strong.

Rather than rely on bellicosity—a trait that, sadly, I am afraid to say is in vogue today—Bob's actions always spoke a lot louder than his words. In what now seems to be a long lost approach to governance, Bob preferred to reach across the aisle than battle across the aisle. He could, and he did, disagree agreeably.

So I can just imagine the scene when Bob arrived at the pearly gates not very long ago. He is greeted by St. Peter, who smiles, spreads his arms wide, and tells him: "It's good to see you up here, Bob, but dagnabbit, you really are missed back down there."

Thank you.

(Applause.)

(The Honorable Ray LaHood, 16th United States Secretary of Transportation)

Mr. LaHood: Thank you all for being here. We knew that this would be a standing-

room-only crowd. And I can't pass up the opportunity to recognize the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, John Roberts. When I called the Chief Justice and invited him, I told him what an honor it would be for the family.

When Bob left Congress, he went to work at Hogan Hartson, which is now Hogan Lovells, and he met one of the top partners there, John Roberts, and they became good friends. So, Mr. Chief Justice, I know it is an honor for the family to have you here, and I know Bob would be so humbled to have your presence here. So thank you for coming.

(Applause.)

Mr. LaHood: Bob Michel's life reflects the perfect definition of what Tom Brokaw called the Greatest Generation. Bob was raised by two loving parents with his two sisters in Peoria, Illinois. He learned his strong Midwestern values of faith in good, hard work and play by the rules in Peoria. He and Corinne raised an all-American family, obviously.

Bob served his country for 50 years: as a decorated war hero in World War II, as an American hero to his constituents from the 18th Congressional District, and as a teacher for those of us who had the greatest privilege of working for him. I consider myself, as well as many other people sprinkled throughout this wonderful Statuary Hall, a graduate of the Robert H. Michel School of Applied Political Arts and Sciences.

And if I could, just for a moment, ask all of you that were touched by having the privilege of serving as a Bob Michel staffer to stand up, just to say thank you to all of you for what you did for our leader. Please stand, all of you that were a part of it.

(Applause.)

Mr. LaHood: When you worked for Bob Michel, you were a part of his family. He cared as much about you as a staffer as he did any one of his children or grandchildren. Bob's classrooms were his office, the floor of the House, its committee rooms, and the farms and towns of the 18th District. Everywhere he went he taught his staff by his example what it means to be a great public servant.

President John Adams once said the Constitution is the project of good heads, prompted by good hearts. Bob taught us that both a good head and a good heart are necessary in order to be a good Congressman, but also to be a good staffer.

Bob taught us by example that the 18th Congressional District should offer a forum for reasoned debate among constituents equal in dignity. Bob taught us to respect every person, no matter their opinion or political persuasion. I heard him say on more than one occasion: "You learn much more from listening."

Bob worked every day, either in Washington or in the district, for the people, not to engage in ideological melodramas or political vendettas, and he expected and demanded all of his staff to do the same.

Bob knew warfare firsthand—not war in a Steven Spielberg movie or war fought on the pages of a book, but real war. I guess that is the reason that he never used macho phrases like "warfare" and "take no prisoners" when discussing politics with his staff. To Bob, the harsh personal rhetoric of ideological warfare had no place in his office, no place in the House, and no place in American politics. He knew that the rhetoric we use often shapes the political actions we take.

I never saw Bob get angry or use a swear word—lots of deviations of swear words, but never a swear word. Whenever there is a debate on the House floor or in the 18th District conducted by men and women with good heads and good hearts, treating each other with mutual respect, Bob Michel's

long, rich history of respect for others and uncommon decency to all will endure. He was a great Congressman, a great leader, and a great teacher.

Three final thoughts:

Many of you that knew Bob knew that he was the best gardener in the world. If you drive by his townhouse on A street today, what you will see are barrels in front of his house with tulips coming up, planted by him—the best tulips, the best flower beds. And he taught all of us about flowers and how to plant them and when to plant them, when to pull the tulip bulbs up. He was a great gardener. We learned a lot from him. He spent more time in his garden than on any piece of legislation that he ever wrote.

Bob Michel loved Bradley University. We had a wonderful memorial service at Bradley a week ago to honor Bob. On that university, there are a couple of buildings that are named in his honor. That is where he met the love of his life, Corinne, and that is where he really developed his love for music. Bob was an extraordinary singer. He loved to sing. I traveled with him all over the district on many occasions, and he was either whistling or singing. And he loved singing. He would have loved what you all presented today; and thank you for doing that, and thank you for being here.

(Applause.)

Mr. LaHood: And finally, Bob Michel the Cub fan. Many of us in this room received Christmas cards from Bob year in and year out, great family pictures going way, way back to 1956 and 1957, when he was first elected. The best Christmas card picture was this year, which is on the back cover of the program. Bob stayed up until 2 o'clock in the morning when the Chicago Cubs won the World Series. And I called him the next day and I said: "Did you watch the game?" He said: "I stayed up until 2 o'clock." And he wasn't feeling that well.

There is nobody that was a more long-suffering Cub fan than Bob Michel—nobody. And he loved it when the Cubs won the World Series, and he never dreamed that he would live long enough for that to happen. So we are grateful to the Ricketts family and all of the people that put together that great organization that helped a great Cub fan watch them win the World Series.

I am going to finish with a quote from the Journal Star. We were told we were only going to get 300 words, but when I saw the Speaker go over and all these other speakers, I figured I am going to, too. I want to read from an editorial tribute that was in the Peoria Journal Star. And it's a quote from Bob. Michel was "always proud to say he was from Peoria."

This is a quote from me when I was asked about this, and the reporter asked me if Bob was going to be buried in Peoria. I recall my asking him: "Bob, do you want to be buried at Arlington Cemetery?" which, by all rights, he would be able to do. And he said: "No." He said: "Everett Dirksen was a big man." And Everett Dirksen was Bob Michel's mentor. He was the Congressman before Bob was elected, and he was the Senator while Bob was serving. And he said: "If Everett Dirksen was not too big to be buried in Peoria, then I'm not too big to be buried in Peoria."

And the final quote in this editorial is from Bob. And it begins: "You never know for sure how you are going to be perceived in history. But you want to be a credit to your kids and to the people that are closest around you, that they will maybe take a leaf from your book if it's desirable, and will fill the shoes that get emptied when you pass on."

So, lastly, we remember a Bob Michel who did that, who made Congress better by being

here, and who brought honor to his hometown of Peoria.

Let me introduce, finally, Scott Michel. When the Michel family gave me the privilege of helping them organize the memorial service in Peoria and here, all of us, except for Scott, thought that a family member should say something. We persuaded Scott to be the spokesman for the family. You all know Bob loved every one of his children and his grandchildren. So Scott really stepped up and decided that he would be the one to represent the family. So please welcome Scott Michel.

(Applause.)

(Mr. Scott Michel, son of the Honorable Robert H. Michel)

Mr. Michel: Thank you, Ray.

First, let me thank all of you, on behalf of the entire Michel family, for joining us here this afternoon to celebrate the life of my dad, Bob Michel.

Since his passing last month in Arlington, Virginia, I have read glowing tributes, news articles, and obituaries capturing the highlights of his illustrious career and extolling the virtues of his character. What I want to tell you today is that the qualities that propelled him to such lofty heights were made a part of him by his father and mother, Charles and Anna Michel, back in Peoria, Illinois. His parents instilled in him values and character that developed, matured, and later were passed on to his sons and daughter, just as his parents had done for him.

As I got older and had a son of my own, I looked back and tried to replicate what I saw and learned when I was growing up. What did I see and learn? First, I saw a larger than life figure with a booming voice, a vivid presence, and the bearing of a leader. He was in charge. And even though his work in Washington meant we saw him only twice a month on weekends, he called us almost every day to check on our academic progress, our athletic pursuits, our musical instrument accomplishments, and our chores around the house. We all saw that he was in our midst even while being away, and we saw his involvement, commitment, and influence, which was constant and reassuring.

Second, when he was at home, we saw up close what he was made of, and that made a lasting impression on all of us. Learning his life lessons was simple: just watch and listen. His lessons weren't taught so much by conversation as by simple observation. We could see how he interacted with my mother: how he treated her, how he respected her, how they spoke with each other. It was with love, sensitivity, and without harsh or bitter words. We could see how he treated each of us, too. He was fair, evenhanded, strict when needed, held us accountable for our actions, and expected no less than our best at whatever we were doing, whatever tasks we were given, or whatever our school studies demanded. All of this reinforced his desire for us to be responsible.

He also showed us how to be humble by practicing humility. Bragging was called out. So was self-centeredness and arrogance. He showed us that working hard and doing a good job was its own reward. He showed us how to be honest by demanding the truth from us and expecting no less when dealing with others. He showed us how to be generous and compassionate by his countless efforts to help assist, console, and empathize with those less fortunate or those who had fallen on difficult times. And he showed us how to respect others by treating them the way he would want to be treated. That sounds like the Golden Rule.

As I look back at the values and character that witnessed growing up with my father—his humility, his honesty, his work ethic, his generosity, his respect for others, and his

abiding faith in God and our country—I feel so fortunate and blessed to have had him as my father. He loved us and his family in every way and with all his heart. He was a one-of-a-kind role model.

While his accomplishments in public life make us all so very proud, it is his values and character that he instilled in each of us that means the most to us. That will be his lasting legacy.

Godspeed, Dad. I love you. I miss you. I know you are in God's hands now.

Before we close, I would like to ask that you all join the U.S. Army chorus in singing "God Bless America," which was one of my dad's favorite songs, especially when he could lead the singing, as he did on numerous occasions.

MUSICAL SELECTION—"God Bless America," performed by the United States Army Chorus)

Reverend Conroy: Dear Lord, as we close our time together, send Your spirit of peace and consolation upon us who mourn the loss of the Honorable, former minority leader of the House, Bob Michel.

He was a glowing example, an icon of what it means to be a man for others. His decades of service to his home State of Illinois and to our great Nation will be long appreciated by those whose lives are forever blessed by his life's work and dedication.

His belief in the durability and transcendence of Congress as an institution, the first branch of government, is a challenge in this day of severe partisan divide and a persistent and seeming inability to consider compromise in order to reach consensus. May some from both sides of the aisle be inspired to emulate such a great statesman.

May Your angels, O God, come to greet our beloved Bob Michel, and may those who mourn him here be consoled with the knowledge that, for those whom love You, everything is turned to good.

Amen.

POSTLUDE—(United States Army Brass Quintet)

### HONORING JOE MCEARCHERN FOR HIS CAREER IN PUBLIC SERVICE

#### HON. BRADLEY BYRNE

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 10, 2017

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Joe Deal McEarchern, Jr. for his over forty years of service as Chief Clerk of the Mobile County Probate Court.

Born in 1949, Joe has been a lifelong resident of Mobile County, Alabama. After Joe's father passed away when he was young, he worked in various shoe stores in the Mobile area to help finance his college education. He attended public schools in Prichard, Alabama and graduated from C.F. Vigor High School in 1968. During his time at Vigor, Joe was President of the National Honor Society, sports editor for the yearbook, and named "Student of the Year" by the Civitan Club.

Joe went on to attend the University of South Alabama, where he graduated in 1972 with a bachelor's degree in political science. While in college, he married Wendy Stinson, who also graduated from South.

In July of 1972, Joe was hired by Mobile County Judge of Probate John L. Moore to serve as chief clerk of the Recording Division. He later served as administrative assistant of the Court before being appointed chief clerk of

the Court in March 1981. He has served in that position ever since under Judges John L. Moore III, Lionel W. Noonan, and Don Davis.

Early in his career, Joe oversaw and implemented changes to the Probate Court's pre-computerized indexing system for judicial and land records. His work focused on making these systems more efficient and easier to use. As technology advanced, Joe oversaw and implemented changes to the Court's operations to utilize computer technology in all aspects of the Court's operations, including the recording of documents, word processing, websites, judicial case management, and accounting.

Joe is currently the dean of the chief clerks of probate courts in the State of Alabama. He is a founding member and past president of the Alabama Probate Court Chief Clerks Association. He served as a member of the Alabama Law Institute's Probate Code Revision Committee and assisted the Alabama Law Institute on numerous projects involving Alabama probate courts, probate law, and probate procedure. He has been asked to speak and present on these topics countless times throughout his career.

When he was not working, Joe has pursued a number of hobbies including photography, astronomy, birding, ham radio, and flying. He is also a long time member of the First Baptist Church of Mobile.

Joe has always been a good friend of the lawyers in our community, including a friend of mine. So, on behalf of Alabama's First Congressional District, I want to wish Joe and Wendy all the best upon his retirement. His dedicated service to Mobile County has not and will not go unnoticed.

### IN RECOGNITION OF ORELAND BOY SCOUT TROOP 1

#### HON. PATRICK MEEHAN

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 10, 2017

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Oreland Boy Scout Troop 1 of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania as it celebrates its 100th Anniversary. The Boy Scouts of America chartered the troop in 1917, and its members have been active and dedicated contributors to their communities in the century since. Today, Troop 1 hosts scouts from Oreland, Flourtown, Erdenheim, Fort Washington, Maple Glen and other neighboring communities.

The Boy Scouts are one of the largest youth development organizations in the country, and I am pleased to have so many active troops in Pennsylvania's 7th District. Oreland Boy Scout Troop 1 is one such troop, among the oldest in Pennsylvania, and it has trained so many of our area's youth to be young men of character, service, and commitment to community and country.

Mr. Speaker, Oreland Boy Scout Troop 1 performs an invaluable service to the scouts involved and the communities it serves. I thank the Troop's scouts and leaders over the last century for their service and leadership.