

offer that no company on earth can match: the opportunity to make a difference; structured guidance and support throughout a career; responsibility at a level unmatched anywhere; a retirement plan that is guaranteed to be there at the end of a career; respect recognized throughout the world; the chance to grow and develop in an environment that is tolerant of mistakes; camaraderie that cannot be matched by any corporation; and an opportunity to experience all this in a global environment.

The person who needs to be able to transmit the knowledge of those perks to the sailor, and to make sure they are available, is that sailor's chief. Sailors are happiest when: they have a clearly defined mission; have ownership of their work environment; are held to fair, consistent and sensible standards; their families live in a clean, safe, and relatively comfortable location; and they receive recognition and pay that reflect the importance of what they do for their country. As the Navy leadership focuses on the first and the last, the responsibility of fighting for the rest lies squarely on the shoulders of the chief. The bottom line? Keep sailors happy and they will stick around."

And finally, Master Sergeant Michael M. Green, USAF writes, "Our military and political leadership express serious concern for the ever-growing retention and recruiting problems facing the enlisted force, and have initiated moderate pay improvements to help resolve these problems. Much more can and must be done, however, to address the real financial needs and expectations of our enlisted warriors. The chief shortfalls of the current pay structure are in basic pay, the basic allowance for subsistence (BAS) and education incentives." He concludes, "There are innumerable reasons why patriots choose and continue to serve in our nations military. There are significantly fewer reasons why they opt to leave. Financial compensation is the chief concern to both young recruits and old wardogs. Fashioning a more equitable pay and allowance structure will greatly entice tomorrow's warriors into service as well as to keep today's enlisted force serving proudly. . . . Our enlisted force is not composed of second-class citizens. It is a collection of the guardians of our nation and our national interests. It is time they are compensated that way."

These veterans have poignantly put forward their thoughts on a most difficult issue in an honest and sincere fashion. Mr. President, I thank you for the opportunity to share their views with you and the Nation they serve.●

IN HONOR OF JIMMY DON HUDSON

● Mr. BREAUX, Mr. President, on behalf of Senator LANDRIEU, I rise with great sorrow on the passing of Jimmy Don Hudson of Monroe, Louisiana. He was a friend to me, Senator LANDRIEU and all those who knew him.

It has been said that Jimmy Don had a gift that made everyone think they were his best friend. A dedicated husband and father, Jimmy Don worked hard every day for the people of Monroe and the state of Louisiana.

A tireless public servant, Jimmy Don served on numerous boards and commissions. He was president of the Tensas Basin Levee District. He also held leadership roles on, to name a few, the Monroe Chamber of Commerce, the Governor's Commission on Higher Education, the Monroe Downtown Economic Development District, the West Monroe Boys and Girls Club, the United Way of Northeast Louisiana and the Ouachita Council on Aging.

Jimmy Don also served his country in the Vietnam War. As a helicopter pilot, he logged more than 1,000 hours of flight time while making sure both wounded and able-bodied American soldiers were out of harm's way. After his tour of duty, Jimmy Don continued his military service in the Army National Guard until 1996, logging an additional 2,800 hours of seat time.

Mr. President, some say the best people die at an early age. This is certainly true in Jimmy Don's case. Although he only spent 52 years with us on this earth, his legacy will live forever. Senator LANDRIEU and I extend our condolences to his wife Pam, and sons Brandon and Gabe. Jimmy Don will be sorely missed.

I have attached an editorial written by Keith Prince of the Monroe (La.) News-Star that describes Jimmy Don well, and request it be included following my statement.

[From the Monroe (La.) News-Star]

(By Keith Prince)

HUDSON WAS ABLE TO MAKE EVERYONE FEEL LIKE HIS BEST FRIEND

It's never easy to say goodbye.

It is even more difficult when it is someone in the prime of life, at the very pinnacle of his professional and personal life.

Jimmy Don Hudson fits that description perfectly.

Why his heart failed last Saturday night while in Washington, D.C., attending Mardi Gras festivities is unknown. An avid pilot, Hudson had passed a flight physical exam just two weeks ago.

All we do know today is that countless friends feel a very real loss and have his wife, Pam, and sons, Brandon and Gabe, in their thoughts and prayers.

There's a lot of great qualities that we will all remember about Jimmy Don, but the list should start with the tremendous dedication he had for his family. He spent a lot of time with his sons and it shows, said longtime friend George Luffey.

The uniqueness of this man is his rare ability to easily handle the boundary of business associate-friend that some people never figure out.

Jimmy Don was capable of being both a very effective and successful ambassador for BellSouth and at the same time make everyone he knew feel special.

The comment Sunday by State Rep. Francis Thompson summed up Jimmy Don perfectly. He had that gift of making everyone think they were his best friend.

Personally, anytime we visited I walked away feeling better. He was always positive,

uplifting and you had no doubt he was interested in you and what you had going on.

Very unassuming, Hudson had moved steadily up the ranks in the corporate world of BellSouth, and I suspect that the company long ago recognized the same qualities that all the rest of us grew to appreciate in this man.

He began at what was then South Central Bell working summers in the coin department while a student at Northeast Louisiana State College.

Except for a highly decorated tour of duty with the Army during the Vietnam War, Hudson never left the telephone company and next month would have marked his 28th year there.

Linda Williams had worked with Jimmy Don in the public relations office at BellSouth since he moved into that department in 1985, and she doesn't remember a bad moment.

He was very kind-hearted and wonderful to work with. He was always trying to help others and never sought out any recognition for it. He loved life and I think he made a real difference in the lives of many in our community.

Hudson also made a major difference for many wounded American soldiers during the Vietnam War. After going through ROTC at the college and graduating in 1969, he entered the Army as a second lieutenant and later served as an aviation platoon leader and helicopter pilot in Vietnam. One of his assignments was to rescue U.S. soldiers downed in the field.

He wouldn't talk much about that, but I understand he had over 1,000 combat hours and was one of the best helicopter pilots over there, said Luffey.

Of course, it is impossible to characterize Jimmy Don Hudson without recalling his sense of humor. He was the master of comebacks, said Luffey. You might think you had him pinned down with a comment but he was always able to get in the last word.

One of Hudson's lifelong friendships began when, as a high school student, he worked for Jackie Neal, then the director of parks and recreation for the city of Monroe.

He did whatever we needed—mow grass, line off the fields, umpire a little. He was something else. I've always said Jimmy Don is the only person I ever fired twice in one day. First he and Petey Smith got two trucks stuck, and later I needed him and finally found him playing basketball at one of the recreation centers, Neal recalled.

Later Neal and Hudson officiated football games together for 10 years. We finally gave that up, and he began playing golf in his spare time. He's been like a little brother to me. We talked on the phone or saw each other often. Any time I've ever been sick, Jimmy Don would call every day.

I can't tell you how much I will miss him, added Neal.

And, so will everyone else lucky enough to have known Jimmy Don Hudson.●

AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

● Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today in honor and acknowledgment of African American History Month, a great tradition honoring and celebrating African Americans. This 74 year tradition, proposed by Dr. Carter G. Woodson, a son of former slaves, seeks to broaden our vision of the world, the legacy of African Americans in our nation's history, and their role in our nation's future.