

small town in Helena, AR, on the Mississippi River. My upbringing gave me a deep and abiding love for the rural way of life. In rural America, you learn that in order to have good neighbors, you have to be a good neighbor. Importantly, you learn by the example set for members of the community.

Growing up, I lived within walking distance from both sets of my grandparents. I learned what it meant to be a caregiver. At the age of 14 I learned from my grandparents. I learned values, I learned stories of World War I and the experiences they had during the Depression and so many other things that I captured from a real perspective—not from a textbook.

My mother would prepare dinner for our family every night, but very often she and my aunt would go back and forth and prepare a little bit extra every other night. It was my duty and my cousin's duty to take that dinner up to my grandparents and spend time with them, valuable time, where we would make them feel better, to share part of our day and they could share a story with us. I didn't realize at that age what caregiving was all about. I do now.

Being a good neighbor is something that comes easily for rural Americans. It is taught early in life. I am proud to have had the opportunity to learn that lesson by example. I see it as a model that can be applied outside the family, outside the neighborhood and to so many relationships that we, as people of a global community, have around the world, when we listen to the comments of Senator BROWBACK and Senator BOXER talking about our neighbors across the globe and what that means to us, what our responsibility is as a global neighbor to those people in such need of protection, of sustenance of life, of education, and the ability to build for themselves a life of independence.

My love for the rural way of life I grew up in, the values it taught me, is what drives me to want to strengthen and support rural communities all over our country. With the passage of this resolution this week, the Senate has formally acknowledged the invaluable contribution that rural America makes to our country.

The experiences in my life have shown me firsthand that the more than 55 million people residing in rural America are the embodiment of the values that make our country great: community, service, hard work, family, responsibility.

Rural America provides significant contributions to our Nation, such as the safest, most abundant and affordable food supply in the world, as well as the renewable sources of energy with the potential to significantly reduce our country's dangerous dependency on foreign oil, not to mention what we could do for our environment.

Americans residing in rural areas have also made a considerable contribution to our country's freedom.

Rural Americans comprise a sizable percentage of our reserve, military force abroad and the highest concentration of military veterans live in rural communities.

Additionally, police officers, volunteer firefighters, EMTs or National Guardsmen, and members of our rural communities come together in times of national emergencies to keep our country safe. I am certainly reminded of the proud, strong, courageous firefighters, Guardsmen, ambulance drivers, and so many more that responded from Arkansas to New York during September 11 and to Louisiana during Katrina and the entire gulf coast.

I am proud of my heritage in rural America. I am pleased the Senate has acknowledged we owe rural America a considerable debt of gratitude. Rural America is critical to this Nation.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to address the challenges and the obstacles that rural America faces so all in rural America can enjoy every blessing and opportunity that our Nation has to offer.

I commend my colleagues for joining me in this special effort. I want to especially commend our leader, minority leader HARRY REID, who grew up in Searchlight, NV, who knows and understands the mentality, the values, and really has a tremendous passion for those people in rural America. I am proud to have joined he and Senator FRIST and others in bringing this resolution forward.

TRIBUTE TO ANN RICHARDS

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I also come to the floor today to pay tribute to one of the most important and unique individuals in the history of American politics, Governor Ann Richards.

As a female politician from the South, Ann Richards was a person who I considered to be a role model. She was a great American patriot who had overcome tremendous obstacles to become a valued public servant while blazing a trail for aspiring female politicians, with wit, style, and grace like no one else could produce.

I consider it my good fortune to have come to know her over the years as a friend. While I am deeply saddened by her passing, it is so difficult not to smile whenever I think of Ann. She was remarkably gifted at using her keen sense of humor to say exactly what was on her mind and to get her point across in an effective and quotable way, proving she was truly one of a kind.

Ann Richards became the first woman elected to statewide office in Texas in more than 50 years—winning a seat as treasurer in 1982. In 1990, she became the first female to be elected Governor of the State of Texas.

As Governor, she took pride in the fact that she appointed more women and minorities to State positions than any of her predecessors. During her tenure, the Texas economy enjoyed

growth, despite the trend of the slumping U.S. economy.

Additionally, her audits of the State bureaucracy saved Texans \$6 billion, and her reform of the State prison system resulted in fewer violent offenders being released.

Perhaps her most remarkable achievement was maintaining the respect and admiration of Texans in the midst of not being reelected to office. The poll numbers of her popularity remained above 60 percent at that time.

Ann has been noted as saying that she did not want her tombstone to read, "She kept a really clean house," but, instead, preferred to be remembered by it reading, "She opened government to everyone."

Ann Richards will certainly be remembered as doing much more than keeping a clean house. She opened a door for me as a female politician in the South, and I know I speak for so many when I say that she continues to have my respect and my admiration.

She will certainly be dearly missed by this Senator and so many, many more across this Nation.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I yield to my colleague from Connecticut.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, first of all, let me thank our colleague from Arkansas for her eloquent comments both about rural America as well as on our wonderful friend, Ann Richards. I want to add my voice of condolence to her family and friends, not only in Texas but across this great country of ours, because she had friends that reached all across this land of ours—in fact, beyond the shores of the United States in her work after she left public life, working in the private sector as a great representative of a number of interests, including some that were offshore.

She was a remarkable person, and Senator BLANCHE LINCOLN has captured her very, very well. There are so many things I remember about her. She was a strong-willed woman. She had definite and clear views, and she was not shy about expressing them to you. But she probably had one of the best senses of humor of anyone I ever met in American politics. She could make you laugh. She could take a situation and bring up an anecdote or a story to make her point that would bring the house down.

Regardless of your point of view, Ann Richards had a gift to communicate with the American public like few other people I have ever met in public life. And it was a gift because she did so many good things with her talents.

Both as the State Treasurer of Texas and as Governor of that State, I got to know her very well, when I was the general chairman of the Democratic National Committee. She was a tremendous source of help to me in those years of 1995 and 1996 when I was campaigning and supporting Democrats across the country.

But her politics transcended partisan politics. She was beloved and admired and cared for by people of all political stripes and colors in this country. She will be sorely missed. But as Senator LINCOLN said, the memories of her are going to linger on for an awful long time. Every time you mention her name, a smile comes to your face because she brought many smiles many times on the countless occasions I heard her address audiences across the country.

I thank Senator LINCOLN and others who have spoken about her. I do not have prepared remarks, but I just wanted to express my feelings about this wonderful person.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, today we mourn the loss of a great Texan and certainly a trailblazer in our State. Former Governor Ann Richards passed away last night after a long battle with cancer. Today, I want to pay tribute to her because she really made a mark on our State and our Nation.

Ann Richards was the second woman to hold office in Texas as Governor and the first to be elected in her own right. When she was Governor of Texas, I was State treasurer, and we certainly had a very strong and positive working relationship. She embodied the Texas spirit as well as anyone I have ever known, and her enthusiasm for life was evident in everything she did.

I didn't agree with her on issues—sometimes I did and sometimes I didn't—but you could always respect her because she spoke straight. She told you what she could do and she told you what she couldn't do. She gave some pretty good advice along the way.

She could have chosen another career—that of entertainer—and been quite successful. She was one of the best. But instead, she chose politics—and she chose to try to make a difference in government, in our State and Nation. She was successful at that as well.

Ann Richards was born on September 1, 1933 in Lakeview, TX, very near Waco. She did grow up in Waco.

She graduated from Baylor University in 1954. She attended on a debate scholarship.

She was the mother to four children and the grandmother to eight.

One of the things she will always be remembered for is how she tried to bring women into public office—and certainly to the table—to make sure that women were represented well.

I was so struck with her after she lost the Governor's race. She, of course, lost the Governor's race the second time she ran against Governor George Bush, who became President George Bush. But I think it was the way she handled the loss that showed the real spirit that she had. She just turned the page and kept right on going.

She had a career in New York and never gave up her home in Texas. But she took New York by storm too. She

was a commentator on television, always with the witty saying that people would remember.

I remember after she left the Governor's office, I was in Istanbul, Turkey. I walked into one of the markets there, and who did I see looking at rugs but Ann Richards. She was having the best time. Whatever she was doing at the time was her total absorption. She was finding out everything about those rugs.

I saw her sometimes up here in Washington when we would be working on something that would be for Texas where we would agree. She would take her side and I would take my side, working for the same cause but trying to make sure that we covered all of our respective bases.

I knew, of course, that she had cancer. I wrote her a note after the diagnosis became public.

She wrote me a note back. It was vintage Ann Richards. It was: This is just one thing you get through in life, and I'm going to get through it. She was very upbeat, very positive, just the way she would always be, tackling the task of the moment and doing it with gusto.

I did not know she was so near the end. I was sorry that it came so quickly. She will be someone whom no Texan who has ever known her or who has lived in Texas during her service will ever forget. I want to make sure the tributes to her are worthy of the contribution she made.

I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I join with my distinguished colleague from Texas in expressing condolences to the bereaved family, the State of Nevada, the Democrats in the Senate and America, for the loss of Ann Richards.

She was my friend. She came to Nevada whenever I asked her to. Why did I ask her to come? Because she was entertainment plus. She was always good for a stunning speech, a stirring speech.

For those who had the good fortune this morning to listen to Public Radio, what a wonderful piece they had on Ann Richards, the many funny things she did in Texas to change the ways of Texas. She modernized Texas.

We will all miss her. It is a loss for all Americans. We are comforted to know that Ann departed this world in high spirits and humor, just as she would expect us to continue our lives.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the life and legacy of a truly remarkable woman—Governor Ann Richards. She will long be remembered and loved for her tireless activism, her charisma and compassion, and her excellence in governance. I will also remember her as a friend and a trailblazer. Ann Richards showed women that anything and everything was possible.

Ann Richards was an original. Yet her life was the American dream. She was born in Lacy-Lakeview, TX, to her loving parents Robert Cecil Willis and

Mildred Iona Warren. As a young woman, she took an early interest in politics and participated in Girls State, a youth leadership and citizenship program for high school students. She later studied at Baylor University on a debate scholarship. After earning her teaching certificate at the University of Texas, she began her remarkable career of public service as a junior high school teacher.

Governor Richards became known as an effective advocate and an accomplished political leader. In 1976, Governor Richards successfully ran for commissioner of Travis County, the same year I won my seat in the House of Representatives. She held this post until 1982, when she was elected State Treasurer—the first woman elected to a statewide office in Texas in over 50 years. In 1991, when I was the only female Democratic Senator, Ann Richards became one of the few female Governors in the country. We showed that—together—women can make change.

As Governor of Texas, Ann Richards spearheaded an economic revitalization program that expanded Texas' economy during a nationwide recession, and also led an effort to expand State funding of public schools. In 1988, she charmed the Nation with her witty, passionate remarks as the keynote speaker at the Democratic National Convention.

People have called Ann quick-witted and feisty. Well, I happen to like feisty people. She stood up for what she believed in. She fought for what she felt was right. And she made a difference. She served her Nation and she served her State.

Governor Richards' death is a tragedy but her life was a triumph. I offer my heartfelt condolences to Governor Richards' children, who were at her bedside when she passed, to her friends, and to all those whose lives she touched. She and her family are in my thoughts and prayers at this very sad time.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I was saddened to learn that my friend Ann Richards passed away last night after a courageous battle with cancer. She was a wonderful person and an outstanding public servant, and she will be missed.

Ann brought delight, excitement, ability, and compassion to public life, and she was an American original. To her public service was a calling, and she dedicated herself wholeheartedly to the goal of building a better future for all Americans, regardless of income, race, or gender.

She was a trailblazer in many ways, and she was also one of the last great American characters in politics, someone who projected joy and optimism even in the face of adversity. None of us who were there will ever forget her brilliant keynote address to the Democratic National Convention in 1988. She was truly one of a kind.

As Governor of Texas, she fought hard for equal opportunity, appointing

more African Americans, Hispanics, and women to State office than the previous two Governors combined.

She used her skill and wit to help pass vital legislation in Congress too. I will never forget her hard work on the Civil Rights Act of 1991, the Family and Medical Leave Act, the Violence Against Women Act, and the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act.

There will never be another Ann Richards, and we will never forget her.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President yesterday, we lost a great political great woman with an incredibly energy who helped to change the attitude of Texas politics.

Ann Richards was born in Lakeview, TX, in 1933. She died yesterday, September 13, in Austin, TX, at the age of 73.

She battled cancer in the last months of her life, being diagnosed with esophageal cancer in March and undergoing chemotherapy treatments.

I would like to extend my deepest sympathy to her four children—Cecile, Daniel, Clark and Ellen—who were with her when she passed away.

Ann Richards was a homemaker and teacher before beginning her political career as a county commissioner in Travis county, TX, in 1976. Six years later, in 1982, she ran for State treasurer and won. She was reelected in 1986. Winning the office of Texas State treasurer made her the first woman elected statewide in nearly 50 years.

Like so many female politicians of our time, running for office in a male-dominated political environment took courage and determination. But Ann didn't take on these challenges only to prove that she was a worthy candidate. She wanted to show Texas, and the Nation, that all women could succeed in the same way that men had for many years. She blazed a trail for women, in politics and in life.

Two years later, in 1990, Ann Richards narrowly won the election to Governor, winning by a margin of 49 to 47 percent. Again, she fought a tough campaign battle against a male opponent. But with her fierce determination, she came out on top.

During her 4 years in the Governor's office, Ann Richards made a strong effect, championing what she referred to as the "New Texas."

As Governor, Ann Richards promoted women and minorities who historically were ignored in Texas politics; reformed the Texas prison system; backed proposals to reduce the sale of semiautomatic firearms and "cop-killer" bullets in the State; instituted the Texas State lottery to provide funding for education; revitalized the State's economy; and worked to protect the environment, particularly with a veto of legislation that would have allowed for the destruction of the Edwards Aquifer in south central Texas.

She was defeated in her 1994 reelection campaign by George W. Bush.

Near the end of her term as Governor, Ann Richards said: "I think I'd

like them to remember me by saying, 'She opened government to everyone.'"

She was a popular figure in Texas politics, known for her white head of hair and her great sense of humor.

And she was daring, on the political stage and off. At the age of 60, she learned to ride a motorcycle.

Ann Richards will be missed. For her charisma, for her integrity, and for her honesty.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I rise today with a heavy heart, to pay tribute to a remarkable woman and patriot, Ann Richards.

There are so many words that I could use to describe Ann. She was vibrant, fiery, quick-witted, fearless, but for me the word that I think captures her best is genuine.

With Ann, what you saw was what you got. She had an authenticity that is rare in life, and even rarer in politics.

Even with all of her charisma and charm bubbling over, Ann would be the first to tell you that her life was not perfect and that she had made many mistakes over the years. But it was her embrace of those imperfections, and the wisdom to see that she could learn from her mistakes, that made her such a successful leader. People could relate to her.

When she won the Governor's office in 1990, Ann decided she really wanted to shake things up in Texas. So she made it her mission to appoint more minorities to State boards and commissions than any Governor before her.

According to the Houston Chronicle, about 44 percent of her appointees were female; 20 percent Hispanic; and 14 percent Black. That is in comparison to her two predecessors, who had given more than 77 percent of their appointments to White men.

So not only did Ann blaze a trail by being the first woman elected Governor of Texas in her own right, but she opened the doors of the State house to those who otherwise would have been in the back of the line.

Why? Because she understood that you can't just talk the talk, you've got to walk the walk. She knew that change was a good thing, even if it made people squirm in their boots.

There are a lot of people talking today about what a tremendous loss this is for Texas. I heard our President, George W. Bush say that, "Ann loved Texas. And Texans loved her." But I have to take that one step further and say, Ann loved America, and Americans loved Ann. She barreled her way into our hearts, and for that we have been made all the richer.

I would like to offer my sincere condolences to Ann's children: Cecile, Daniel, Clark and Ellen, her eight grandchildren, and all those who knew and loved her. She will be sorely missed, but I am sure, always remembered.

DARFUR

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I want to spend a couple minutes talking about

Darfur as well. I know my colleague from Kansas addressed this issue. I know my colleague, Senator DURBIN, as well, has been working on this issue for a long time. Many of us have been watching this situation. Senator BARACK OBAMA, I know, cares about this issue. And many members of the Foreign Relations Committee have talked about it. We heard Senator BOXER, a moment ago, talk about her deep concern.

There is a tremendous amount of interest about what is happening and great concern. It is the moral responsibility of nations around the globe to help end the genocide in Darfur.

Even as we speak here this afternoon, in the closing days of this week's work, we are moving backwards in Sudan. Earlier this week, U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan sounded the warning that Darfur is about to enter a new phase of needless bloodshed and suffering on a catastrophic scale. I do not think we ought to let this happen. It is not just our responsibility but certainly the United States should and can take a leadership role here in marshaling the forces to stop the events as they unfold to these poor, poor people who are caught in this dreadful situation.

The blame lies squarely, of course, first and foremost, with the Sudanese Government's intransigence and murderous Darfur policy. Since February of 2003, when rebel groups attacked government outposts, the Sudanese Government has used the janjaweed militia to systematically decimate tribal groups of African descent in Darfur.

The warfare has exacted a tragic toll. Men, women, and children have been slaughtered in front of their families. Women and girls are regularly raped. Entire villages are routinely destroyed and property looted by marauding militias.

Estimates suggest that the conflict in Darfur has killed as many as 300,000 people and driven 2.5 million people out of their homes. The United States has rightly labeled the Sudanese Government's actions "genocide."

I remember, with great clarity, former Secretary of State Colin Powell appearing before a Senate committee on which I served calling the actions in Darfur genocide, loudly and clearly. And I commend him for it. He was one of the earliest voices to do so. We know what the word "genocide" means and its full ramifications.

Yet there was a glimmer of hope for the violence to end in May of this year with the conclusion of a peace agreement brokered in large part by the United States. The agreement called for a cessation of hostilities between the Sudanese Government and one of three major rebel groups in Darfur.

But it is time to face the facts in Darfur. The peace is over. In fact, it never really had a chance. Hostilities between the government and the other two rebel groups never ended and are