

men and women who serve the country in uniform. It was because of Democrats leading, with Senators WEBB, LAUTENBERG, and others to move that GI bill. Even though the President said: No way, too expensive, and it is a fraction of the cost of 1 month in Iraq, he said he was going to veto it. We said: No way, we are going to honor the men and women who honor the uniform and take care of them when they come back. That is how a grateful nation honors those who serve. Because of our persistence and communicating with the American people, today he signed into law the greatest GI bill investment since the first one—a major accomplishment.

Tomorrow we will pass this housing bill over the objections of the President, who said, "I am not going to sign it"—a major commitment to our economy, to restoring the American dream in terms of home ownership, and making sure we move in a different direction. It is time to say yes to the American people, and stop filibustering. It is time to stop using the powers of the minority in an abusive way. I respect the powers of the minority, but not to be used in an abusive way that undermines the fundamental principle of majority rule.

The people of the United States elected a new majority a year and a half ago to move the country in a different direction. The fact that the minority wants to simply show that, in fact, the Congress cannot move in that direction as a tool of political expediency and a tool of political success is totally inappropriate and, most important, damaging to the Nation's interest. I hope that starting tomorrow, when we consider the critical issues on housing and LIHEAP, to keep people in their homes, and to warm those homes, we can move forward in a way that speaks to the true values of our Nation and the integrity of this institution.

With that, I yield the floor.

REMEMBERING JOHN Y. SIMON

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, in 1887, 2 years after the death of Ulysses S. Grant, William Tecumseh Sherman wrote in a letter to his old Army Chief of Staff, "Grant's whole character was a mystery, even to himself."

Today, more than 120 years later, the world has a far better understanding of Ulysses Grant than did General Sherman, or maybe even General Grant himself. And for that, we are indebted to one man more than any other.

John Y. Simon, a leading Civil War scholar and the preeminent authority on Ulysses Grant, died on July 8 in Carbondale, IL. Mr. Simon, an award-winning historian, spent more than four decades at Southern Illinois University, where he taught courses on the Civil War, Reconstruction and the history of Illinois. He also served as executive director of the Ulysses S. Grant Association, based at SIU, since 1962.

But his passion and his true vocation was the Ulysses Grant papers project.

Mr. Simon collected, edited, and organized hundreds of thousands of documents connected with America's 18th President—then assembled them to form a vast and astounding collection, which he called the "Papers of Ulysses S. Grant."

He began the Grant papers project in 1962 and was close to completing it when he died. The 31st and final volume of the collection is in its final stages. The entire collection is published by Southern Illinois University Press.

Harriet Simon, Mr. Simon's wife of 51 years, told the New York Times that working on the Grant papers consumed her husband.

"It was daily," she said. "It was weekends and it was most holidays. Some holidays, not all day."

John Younker Simon was born in Highland Park, IL, in 1933. He graduated from Swarthmore College and received an M.A. and a Ph.D., both in history, from Harvard, where he met his future wife. He taught at Ohio State before finding his place at S.I.U. in 1964.

Just as President Grant's own autobiography raised the standard for Presidential memoirs, Mr. Simon's work raised the standard for Presidential papers collections.

Harold Holzer is senior vice president of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. He is also a renowned Lincoln scholar and a cochairman, along with Representative RAY LAHOOD and me, of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Committee. As he told the New York Times, Mr. Simon approached his work on the Grant papers as a biographer rather than simply a cataloger.

Mr. Holzer said:

He changed the whole ethos of presidential papers. He matched incoming correspondence with outgoing, so researchers would have a complete episode. He included editorial commentary that was more substantial than footnotes. He wrote introductions to each volume. . . . He is the father of this whole discipline.

In 2004, Mr. Simon received a Lincoln Prize for outstanding achievement for the Grant papers. The awards jury wrote "It is inconceivable that any historian would write on the Civil War without having these volumes at hand."

In 2005, John Simon was honored with a lifetime achievement award from the Lincoln Forum. Frank J. Williams, chairman of the Lincoln Forum and president of the Ulysses S. Grant Association, praised him as "a brilliant scholar, a dazzling writer and an original, irreplaceable personality [who] has enriched the world of Civil War studies and enriched the lives of those who know him."

Upon receiving the Lincoln Prize, Mr. Simon said of his life's work:

I have enjoyed it. It has been an opportunity for me to spend time with a spectacular figure in American history. Grant was a complex character—an unmilitary soldier, an unpolitical president and an unliterary author.

And Ulysses Grant was often misunderstood.

Alexander Stephens, the Vice President of the Confederacy, met General Grant toward the end of the Civil War. Years later, he wrote of their meeting:

We all form our preconceived ideas of men of whom we have heard a great deal . . . but I was never so completely surprised in all my life as when I met him and found him a different person, so entirely different from my idea of him. . . . He is one of the most remarkable men I have ever met.

He was an unlikely war hero. At the start of the Civil War, Grant was several years out of the Army and utterly broke. At one point, he had been reduced to selling firewood on the street in St. Louis.

But the cause of preserving the Union gave Grant a new purpose. He reentered the military in 1861, and rose quickly through the ranks, thanks to his fearlessness and brilliance as a military commander.

In 1864, he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General of the Armed Forces, a position only ever held by George Washington, and given overall command of all Union Forces.

The following year, he accepted the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia from General Robert E. Lee at Appomattox Courthouse. His generous terms of surrender and his magnanimity stunned Lee and his men and helped a bloodied nation begin to heal.

As President during the Reconstruction era, Grant's policies moved America further toward reconciliation.

Near the end of his life, broke again after being swindled in a business venture and in constant pain from throat cancer, Grant agreed to write his memoirs to earn money for his family. He wrote feverishly, racing against death, and died 5 days after putting down his pen.

His friend, Mark Twain, called "The Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant" "a great, unique and unapproachable literary masterpiece." It is widely regarded as the finest U.S. Presidential memoir ever written.

Understanding the real Grant and helping others to understand this pivotal figure in our history was John Simon's life's work, and he did it with uncommon distinction.

In addition to the Grant papers, he wrote and edited a number of other books dealing with Grant, Lincoln and the Civil War and produced hundreds of journal articles. Along with the Lincoln Prize and the Lincoln Forum award, he received an Award of Merit from the Illinois State Historical Society and many other honors.

After the Union victory at Vicksburg, President Lincoln wrote to General Grant:

My Dear General: I write this now as a grateful acknowledgement for the almost inestimable service you have done the country.

By spending his entire career to give us a clearer picture of "The Hero of Appomattox," John Y. Simon also performed a great service for our country.

He brought honor to my State and a deeper understanding to us all. I offer my sincere condolences to his wife Harriet, his daughter Ellen, his grandchildren, friends and colleagues, and the many students he inspired.

REMEMBERING SENATOR JESSE HELMS

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise to speak today about former Senator Jesse Helms, who passed away on July 4, 2008, at the age of 86. I knew Senator Helms well, and I am sure I am joined by many of my colleagues in saying that he will be missed.

Senator Helms was born in Monroe, NC, in 1921. His first full-time job was as a sportswriter for the Raleigh Times. After serving as a recruiter for the U.S. Navy during World War II, Senator Helms became the city news editor for the Times before moving on to do journalistic work in both radio and television. In 1960, he began working at the Capitol Broadcasting Company in Raleigh as the executive vice president, vice chairman of the board, and assistant CEO. He became famous in his home State for his daily CBC editorials, which featured his now-famous southern anecdotes occasionally laced with his sometimes provocative political views.

Prior to coming to the Senate, Senator Helms' only political experience consisted of two terms on the Raleigh City Council. However, in 1972, Senator Helms became the first Republican Senator elected from North Carolina in the 20th century, replacing the retiring Senator B. Everett Jordan.

During his three-decade tenure in the Senate, Jesse became known as one of the Chamber's staunchest conservatives. His refusal to compromise on his beliefs was the source of both his greatest strength as a legislator and, as I am sure some would argue, his greatest weakness. Indeed, I don't think there are any of us who served alongside Senator Helms who did not, at one time or another, find themselves in a disagreement with him.

However, while I didn't always agree with Jesse, I do have a number of fond personal memories of him.

For example, when I first came to the Senate in 1977, Senator Helms was nearing the end of his first term. About 3 months into that first session, still becoming acclimated to life in the Senate, I took a few moments to write down some of my early impressions of my fellow Senators. About Jesse, I wrote that he was "one of the dearest people in the Senate," and that he had always treated me with kindness and respect. I also noticed that, despite having a reputation for being an unmovable conservative, he had a knowledge of parliamentary procedure and tactics that was virtually unmatched.

A couple years later, I witnessed this knowledge first-hand when Senator Helms and I found ourselves on the

same side of the debate over what was being called a "labor reform" bill. Sadly, as I was working with a number of my colleagues to sustain a filibuster against this unabashedly radically liberal pro-union legislation, our friend Senator James Allen passed away. While we were all saddened by the loss of our dear friend, at the back of our minds we were worried that, without Senator Allen's mastery of Senate procedure, our efforts might fail. However, Senator Helms stepped up and provided much needed insight, helping us to block this harmful legislation. At one point during this debate, while many of us were worried about the strength of the filibuster, Senator Helms assured us, saying that we would keep the necessary Senators on the floor "if they have to wear their pajamas and bedroom slippers."

I believe we were all surprised during the latter part of Senator Helms' tenure when he coauthored the landmark 2002 legislation authorizing funds that were, at that time, unparalleled for international AIDS relief. Many of his colleagues, including myself, had sparred with Jesse over providing support for AIDS relief and research. But, in those last few months of his Senate career, I believe he showed the world that, while he wasn't always the most agreeable of politicians, he was a compassionate man who was committed to doing what he thought was right.

Mr. President, I want to extend my deepest sympathies to the Helms family. As I said, Jesse and I did not always agree on the issues before the Senate, but I can say, without reservation, that he was a dedicated public servant and dear friend to those of us who knew him well.

TRIBUTE TO GEN ALEXANDER "SANDY" PATCH AND THE 65TH ANNIVERSARY OF OPERATION DRAGOON

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I say to Mayor Bruno, residents of Ramatuelle, France, and especially to all the French and American veterans gathered for this important event, I am honored to lend my voice from afar to the chorus of those who celebrate the past, present, and future of the extraordinary bond between our two great nations.

At watershed moments in history, France and America have always looked across the sea to each other in friendship and fidelity.

When the British colonies reached their moment of truth, our Founding Fathers stood shoulder to shoulder with Marquis de Lafayette, Comte de Rochambeau, and countless other Frenchmen who never made it home. Many French were, as we would later say, "present at the creation" of the United States. And our great experiment, in turn, helped inspire the French to not just dream of, but actually take to the streets and demand, "liberty, equality, and brotherhood"

for all of their own people and all of mankind.

So when our military leaders came together to liberate France from Nazi Germany, we weren't inventing a new story from whole cloth. We were reaffirming a centuries-old friendship, giving new life to the timeless ideals we share and the recurrent sense on both sides of the ocean that the fates of our nations are forever linked.

GEN Jean de Lattre de Tassigny, commander of the French forces in Operation Dragoon, used to tell a powerful story about a meeting with his American counterpart, GEN Alexander "Sandy" Patch. Unlike Sandy Patch, General de Lattre lived long enough after the war to reflect on his experiences.

When Patch granted him the support he needed to take the fight to the Nazis, de Lattre wrote that, "I suddenly saw the clear, grave eyes of the American commander soften. With hesitation that was full of shyness, he brought out his pocket-book and from it he took a flower with two stems, which was beginning to fade. 'Look,' he said, breaking it into two and handing me one of the stems, 'a young girl gave me it on the slopes of Vesuvius on the day before we embarked. She said it would bring me luck. Let us each keep half and it will take our two armies side by side on the road to victory.'" As the French General said, it was "a touching wish which was answered by heaven."

General Patch's gift was the personal gesture of a man who was both great and gracious. It is also a fitting metaphor for the friendship of our two countries. Each helped freedom to flower in the other, and we are bound together by the enduring fact that we each carry a part of the same idea forward with us.

GEN "Sandy" Patch—hero at Guadalcanal, liberator of southern France, whose troops would later cross the Rhine as victors—was a great American and a great admirer of the French people. Hailing from a small mining town in the western United States near the Mexican border, Patch described General de Lattre in a letter to his wife as "a typical, intelligent, broadly educated, volatile and attractive Frenchman." But when the French emerged from their homes in the liberated town of Saint Raphael and began to sing their national anthem, which had been forbidden just days before, General Patch listened to "La Marseillaise" with tears streaming down his face.

Although Patch was famously pugnacious as a young man, he grew into a man of remarkable personal discipline who remained unafraid of battle but who, as his biographer wrote, "had a remarkable and brooding concern about the human cost" of war.

He was a man who shunned the spotlight. It is said that when General Patch saw himself hailed on the cover of Time magazine as "Patch de Provence," he never even read the article.