

true friendship with Senator Ted Kennedy from Massachusetts, as we all know who passed shortly before Senator BYRD, and for whom Senator BYRD had nothing but the utmost and kindest words of praise, and truly defined a friendship that perhaps has not been in American politics for some time.

□ 1630

This was a defining quality and a wellspring of immeasurable joy that irrigated ever greater horizons for Senator BYRD. His penchant for setting records and then breaking his own was the inevitable result, but ultimately, we are the ones who reaped the great benefit.

In his later years, when anyone questioned age as somehow detrimental to service, Senator BYRD reveled in ticking off the names and ages of the ancients in the Old Testament and their continued service to the Lord: Moses was 120, Senator BYRD would say; Noah lived to be 960; Methuselah at 969 years old; and he would call out, While I am but a spry 85.

At 92, with the longest record of service in Congress well established, Senator BYRD enjoyed public service so much that it is possible he also had the longest, happiest life on record. If only we could have captured the energies produced by his immense job satisfaction. If only we could package them and share them with others.

Senator BYRD was cautious about the use of superlatives. He felt they were tossed around too casually, and although I do not doubt that he is now grimacing a bit at me for saying this, the fact is it is just not possible to speak about Senator BYRD without using superlatives: longest serving, hardest working, most revered, best loved. And the list goes on and on. Yes, he was passionate about people. He was passionate about politics. He was caring. He was all concerned about the lives of all of us in West Virginia.

As we all know, we go through personal trials and tribulations in our family—the loss of a loved one, sibling problems, loss of a job. Senator BYRD, when he was physically able, would so surprisingly show up in West Virginia offering that comforting arm around the shoulder and always telling those afflicted with tragedy to keep the faith in God, to don't let them get you down, keep plugging along. Senator BYRD himself, who never had a bad word to say about anybody despite some of the words that were said about him, was forever the true gentleman.

Many in this body had their own personal remembrances of Senator BYRD. He touched so many of us, encouraged us, taught us, even argued with us. And I can recall the last time perhaps, except for the miners' memorial that he attended this past April in honor of our 29 fallen coal miners, the only time before that he was probably in his home area of Raleigh County, Beckley, West Virginia, was a dinner in which he was

a surprise guest that honored yours truly. And my wife, Melinda, and I fixed up our house, and my wife even set up the "big daddy suite" in our home in West Virginia. That big daddy suite is still there waiting, as it always was, for Senator BYRD to pay a surprise visit.

We are all better for the life of Senator ROBERT BYRD. We owe him generous helpings of gratitude and admiration, and we shall all miss him.

Again, to Senator BYRD's family, we offer our prayers, our never-ending thanks for the fact that they shared Senator BYRD's extraordinary life with a grateful State and a grateful Nation.

Now, our former senior Senator, our late senior Senator is indeed with his beloved wife, Erma, who was always a twinkle in his eye. For 69 years, they were married before her passing some 5 years ago. The Senator is with his beloved Erma, smiling down upon all of us.

We say thank you, Senator BYRD. Thank you for all you've given our great State. Thank you for all you have given our Nation, because we shall miss you.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### CONGRATULATING DR. JOSEPH GRUNENWALD UPON HIS RETIREMENT FROM CLARION UNIVERSITY

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in warm congratulations for Dr. Joseph Grunenwald upon his retirement from Clarion University in Clarion, Pennsylvania.

Dr. Grunenwald faithfully served Clarion for more than 30 years, earning him such honors as the title of president emeritus from the Pennsylvania State system of higher education. He's one of five in the organization's 27-year history to receive this honor, which is awarded to those who exhibit an exemplary record of service. Under his leadership, Clarion's enrollment reached record levels, and the university saw marked improvement in its academic, community, and business programs.

In addition, Dr. Grunenwald serves on the boards of numerous community organizations, attesting to his sincere dedication to the welfare and advancement of Clarion. He is a true example of community service and steadfast effort and deserves to be praised and honored. I am sure that Dr. Grunenwald

will continue to serve his community and foster positive progress.

Congratulations to Dr. Grunenwald. I wish you success and fulfillment in your years of retirement and look forward to working with Clarion University's 16th president, Dr. Karen Whitney.

#### PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE OF SENATOR BYRD

(Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I was detained when my colleagues were on the floor of the House paying tribute to Senator BYRD and did not want this time to go without acknowledging my deep sympathy to his family and to my good friend from West Virginia and to acknowledge how special this man was to the institution we call Congress and to the freedom that this Nation stands for.

I cannot account for my personal encounters with Senator BYRD, but I can tell you, as someone who respects and loves this institution, what a man who understood the Constitution and rules that were not for selfish reasons, to keep people from being in power, but really it was to empower people.

He had no qualms in standing up against Presidential authority that was wrong in the Iraq War. He had no qualms in fighting to ensure that resources came to his great State. He loved the institution. He was a holder of knowledge, and what we will lose with his passing is that special sensitivity to the rules and to the responsibility we have to not play politics with this institution. We are here to serve America, and Senator BYRD did serve America.

May God rest his soul and may he rest in peace. Senator BYRD, we will miss you.

□ 1640

#### SEAMAN WILLIAM ORTEGA

(Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Navy Seaman William Ortega. This fallen American hero gave his life on June 18 after a bomb exploded while he was in a patrol vehicle and while he was conducting combat operations against enemy forces in the Helmand Province in Afghanistan.

Seaman Ortega, 23 years old, was a hospital corpsman to the 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force at Camp Pendleton. His battalion is nicknamed the "Thundering Third."

His family stated that Seaman Ortega cherished becoming an American citizen. He enjoyed being named "student of the month" at school and winning first place at the local youth fair.