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TRIBUTES TO HON. DON NICKLES

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Don Nickles

U.S. SENATOR FROM OKLAHOMA

TRIBUTES

IN THE CONGRESS OF
THE UNITED STATES



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Don Nickles

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Tributes
Delivered in Congress

Don Nickles
United States Senator
1981-2005



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*Compiled under the direction
of the
Joint Committee on Printing
Trent Lott, Chairman*

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Biography

Retired Oklahoma Senator DON NICKLES was one of the few Members of the U.S. Senate with a background in small business.

He worked his way through Oklahoma State University by starting a janitorial service. Following graduation, he went to work for Nickles Machine Corporation in Ponca City, OK, where he later became vice president and general manager.

His career in public service began with his election in 1978 to the Oklahoma State Senate where he served 2 years. In 1980—at age 31—NICKLES was elected to the U.S. Senate. And in 1998 he became the first Oklahoma Republican ever elected to a fourth term in the U.S. Senate. NICKLES was selected by his colleagues to join the Senate Republican leadership in 1988 as chairman of the Republican Senatorial Committee. He was next elected to the first of three terms as Chairman of the Republican Policy Committee.

In 1996, 1998, and again in 2000, he was selected unanimously to be assistant Republican leader. It is the highest leadership position ever held by an Oklahoma Senator. NICKLES was the first Oklahoman to chair the powerful Budget Committee where he served from 2003 to 2004.

NICKLES also served on the Senate Finance Committee, Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and Rules and Administration Committee.

Throughout his Senate career, NICKLES worked toward a more responsible and less intrusive Federal Government. He was the principle sponsor of the 2003 economic growth package which cut the tax on dividends, reduced the capital gains rate, raised the child tax credit to \$1,000 per child and reduced the marriage penalty. He led efforts to reform the Internal Revenue Service; helped enact the Nation's first balanced budget in three decades; and passed laws to make Members of Congress accountable to the same laws as everyone else.

NICKLES and his wife Linda were born and raised in Ponca City. They have four children.

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Farewell

Friday, November 19, 2004

Mr. NICKLES. My wife and I, our families, were taking our Christmas photo a few days ago and I was surprised to realize that our two oldest children were actually older than we were when we came to the Senate. They are in their thirties and I think I was 32 when I was sworn in, just turned 32, and now we have a couple of children who are that age or more. It tells me we have been here a little while. I am actually very surprised that I am concluding 24 years in the Senate.

I have absolutely loved working in the Senate. The Senate is a great institution. It is one of the true pillars of democracy in the world, one which people look to with great respect and admiration. I have always been proud to be called a Senator and I have always been proud to represent my State and my country. To me, it represents a shining city on a hill, and a true beacon of democracy for the free world which has stood for more than 200 years.

My first time to visit the Senate and sit in the gallery was in 1974 and I was coming to Congress as a businessman to give my impressions on a bill that was pending before Congress. The bill was called ERISA, Employment Retirement Income Security Act. I ran a small business in Ponca City, OK, and I thought the better title for the bill was "Every Ridiculous Idea Since Adam."

But that was in 1974. I happened to be here, it was a coincidence at the time, and Senator McConnell will appreciate this, being a political historian, it was a time when an election was contested and it happened to be the Senate election of Oklahoma. Henry Bellmon was reelected by a very close margin over Congressman Edmondson. As all of our colleagues know, the Senate is the final arbiter in contested elections and it was being contested on the floor of the Senate the time I was here.

Senator Domenici remembers that. It was a very contested, spirited debate.

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I was quite taken by the debate. I sat in the gallery for hours. I remember Senator Allen, a Democrat. The Democrats controlled the Senate at that time. Henry Bellmon was a Republican. He won by a very narrow margin—I can't remember what it was, a couple thousand votes. There were disputes on election-counting machines. That sounds kind of familiar. It was a great debate. I remember Senator Allen spoke on Senator Bellmon's behalf, and then they had the rollcall vote and enough Democrats voted with Senator Bellmon, and that was the end of it.

I happened to ride back on the plane that day, and guess what. I was riding with Senator Bellmon and Congressman Edmondson. They were friends and they were shaking hands. I was impressed. And I was impressed with this body. I was impressed with the Senate. I was impressed with the Senators. I was impressed with the conduct of the debate. I was impressed with the fact that almost all Senators were here during the debate.

It was such a special occasion. I was so pleased because Henry Bellmon was reelected and affirmed by the Senate because I also considered him a mentor and a leader in Oklahoma. He was the first Republican Senator elected in our State in a long time and now he was reelected. Senator Domenici served with him on the Budget Committee. He was the ranking Republican on the Budget Committee, on the formation of the Budget Committee in 1974. I served with Ed Muskie and he did a wonderful job in that capacity.

That was my first personal impression of the Senate. My impression of the Senate was very good then and it has been very good ever since. I have absolutely had the greatest respect for this institution and for this body. This body is composed of great Members.

I remember the time coming into the Senate when I was elected. It was 1980. That was a big election year. We have had a few big election years in my time, but I'm not sure we have ever had one quite as big, as dramatic a change as we did in 1980. There were 18 new Senators elected in 1980, and 16 of the 18 were Republicans. The majority leader became Howard Baker from Tennessee. He was nice enough to be my mentor, and I thought the world of him then as I still do today. He is a wonderful Ambassador to Japan, and he and Nancy Kassebaum were wonderful Senators. It was a great time to serve in the Senate.

I remember the highlight of my Senate career was on Ronald Reagan's inaugural day on January 20, 1981. It was a

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beautiful day, and I remember the hostages in Iran were released that very day. They were held hostage for 444 days. They were liberated on that inaugural day. I will never forget what a euphoric feeling it was for not just those of us who were elected to the Senate and taking control—the Republicans were taking control of the Senate for the first time in decades. I think none of those Republicans had ever been in the majority, and I don't believe any of those Democrats had ever been in the minority.

That was a big change. It was kind of a fun change from my vantage point. There were so many new people. I was one of 18 new Senators, and it was a great time. That is a big turnover any time in this institution. To think that the hostages were released and Ronald Reagan was elected—it was a big exciting time, and a lot was accomplished.

I was coming to Congress as a businessman from Ponca City, OK, with an agenda. Part of the agenda was not to be here forever. Frankly, I told people I was running because I thought our country had declined far too much militarily, economically, and morally, and I wanted to do something about it.

I came here to cut taxes and to cut regulations, particularly in the energy industry, and to see if we couldn't make positive changes for the country. Economic issues aside, I wanted to defeat the Communists. This was of particular concern to me, as I thought our country had declined way too much militarily.

We did a lot of those things. We accomplished a lot in the eighties under Ronald Reagan's leadership. I am absolutely amazed when I look back at when Ronald Reagan was elected, and when I was elected. The maximum tax rate was 70 percent, and 8 years later it was 28 percent. I am still amazed at that. What an unbelievable accomplishment. I remember how it was accomplished. It took a lot of strong leadership and work by Howard Baker and Bob Dole. It took working with other people. I remember Bill Bradley working on some of these tax bills. That was a big change.

I came from a business background and, oh, yes, if you made some money, you could be taxed all the way to 70 percent on the individual side, and 80 percent on the corporate side. You were working more for the government than you were yourself. To me, that represented a real loss of personal and economic freedom. I wanted to restore economic freedom for all Americans and be part of that change.

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My father, unfortunately, died in 1961. We had a small family-held business. The government contested, basically, my mother and our family for 7 years over the value of Nickles Machine Corporation. They wanted a big chunk of that business. I always resented that. I thought government was supposed to protect private property; not confiscate it.

On the 1981 tax bill, I remember talking to Secretary Don Regan when I said: We really should eliminate the estate tax on surviving spouses—and we made sure that was included in the 1981 tax bill. I am probably as proud of that as any other thing. I had a little something to do with a very profamily, very probusiness, very progrowth-oriented bill becoming law. That success told me that we could accomplish great things here.

Of the 18 Senators who were elected with me in 1980, there are only 3 left. Chris Dodd is still here, Chuck Grassley is now chairman of the Finance Committee, and Arlen Specter will be chairman of the Judiciary Committee. Only 3 of the 18 are left.

I respect them greatly, and I compliment them for their many years of service.

Over the years, I've had many great mentors. I mentioned Bob Dole and Howard Baker. I'll mention one other one with fond affection. That would be Senator Jesse Helms. I remember one time when we were engaged in a filibuster, and I encouraged the Senate not to have many filibusters, but that is the first one I can remember. I believe it was 1982 or 1983. This was a little filibuster on the Nickles gasoline tax. Some of us believed that the States should do it rather than the Federal Government. Three of us were opposed to that: Senator Helms, Senator East, and myself. That was when the filibuster was a real filibuster. We spent the night on cots outside the Senate Chamber.

I remember laying awake at night somewhat nervous. The heart was still beating, and I remember some grumbling amongst some of our colleagues who weren't very happy about the fact that we were here in late December arguing over a Nickles gasoline tax. I remember that this wasn't quite worth falling on the sword over.

I communicated that to my friends and colleagues, Senator Helms and Senator East. I eventually convinced Senator Helms, and it took a little longer to convince Senator East, and we dropped the filibuster.

What I wanted to say about Senator Helms is I remember that we had a lot of discussions during these times. We were

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actually in session two or three nights around the clock. He told me something I will never forget, which I will pass along to our colleagues.

He said: “DON, when I am flying over North Carolina and I look around and see all those lights, I am amazed at how many people live in that State and how many people there are, particularly in rural areas. And I wonder if those people think they have anybody in DC who really cares about them, and probably most of them don’t think anybody cares about them.” He was just as genuine as he could possibly be.

“When I am on a plane at night looking out at the lights and see how big our cities, towns, and rural areas are, I think about that. Do the people in those areas really think somebody is fighting for them, working for them?” Jesse Helms is one of those individuals. He is very special. He had a reputation of being kind of tough and mean, but personally he is probably one of the nicest Senators with whom I have had the pleasure of working. He knew everybody who worked the elevators. He was nice to the staff. He was a gentleman’s gentleman. I understand his health is not real good right now, so my thoughts are with him, and I wish him all the best at this time. He was a great Senator. He knew the rules of the Senate, and he would fight for what he believed in, and he would fight with tenacity. He also was a Senator’s Senator, and I am fortunate to say I have had the pleasure of serving with many colleagues who fall into that category.

I came here with a real interest in trying to change things in the energy field. I served on the Energy Committee, but I wanted to make some changes. I ran and maybe was elected in large part because of some of the things that Congress was passing in 1978 and 1979 and 1980 with which I just totally disagreed. One of those was the windfall profits tax. I campaigned vigorously against it. I wanted to repeal it. I was disappointed that I couldn’t get it repealed in 1981, or in 1982. I introduced legislation every single year. We finally got it repealed in 1986.

As I told somebody last night, it was \$77 billion too late. But eventually it was repealed.

We did some other things that I think were very positive—undoing some of the things that were passed in the last couple of years of the Carter administration.

We deregulated natural gas. I did that working with Wendell Ford and Bennett Johnston on the energy bill. That was very positive, significant legislation that one of my prede-

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cessors, Bob Kerr, had worked on 20 years before. We got that done.

We repealed the fuel use tax. We eliminated the Synfuels Corporation. The Synfuels Corporation was run by an Oklahoman who ran against me, Ed Nobel. He ran against me in 1980. Ronald Reagan appointed him chairman of the Synfuels Corporation. I campaigned to eliminate it, which we eventually did.

I have had a lot of fun in this capacity. In the mid-eighties, I was appointed to the Appropriations Committee. I have great, fond memories of that. The Democrat leader, Harry Reid, was my colleague on two or three committees. I think we both were either chairman or ranking, and we switched back and forth a couple of times on the District of Columbia Appropriations Committee, our penance, and the Interior Subcommittee, which either Senator Reid or Senator Byrd was chairman and/or ranking members. We worked together on those committees for years.

We did a lot of good things together, such as reforming the frank so you couldn't mail out thousands and thousands of pieces of mail, particularly prior to election time.

Harry Reid is my friend and his word is as good as gold. He will be a good leader for the Democrats, and he will be a good Senator for Senator Frist and Senator McConnell to work with to get things accomplished. So I am excited about his elevation.

I was selected by our colleagues to be campaign chairman back in 1989 and 1990, one of the tougher jobs. I compliment George Allen for the fine job he did this year. I compliment Bill Frist for the fine job he did in that position, and Mitch McConnell when he had that position. It is probably one of the toughest elected positions we have in leadership, but one which I thoroughly enjoyed. The reason I enjoyed it is you work hard, and you get to know your colleagues. We get so busy around this place we often don't get to know our colleagues. If you are campaigning with somebody, if you are spending the night, as I did at Gordon Smith's home in Oregon, or campaigning in Maine with Senator Snowe or Senator Collins, or if you are campaigning in Minnesota, or when you campaign with people and you are traveling with them for a day or two, or in Montana on a bus tour with Conrad Burns and his wife Phyllis, you get to know them.

I have gotten to know our colleagues well. I think I have been in almost everybody's State, at least on our side of the aisle, campaigning. I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know my

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colleagues. The Senate is composed of a great group of individuals, Democrats and Republicans, and we need to get to know each other better. I think if we get to know each other better, our body works better and we will do better.

After that, I was fortunate enough to be elected policy chairman. I had that position for 6 years, and it was another job I absolutely loved. I succeeded Bill Armstrong, and I was fortunate to keep some of his staff, some of the best staff on the Hill, I might add. They stayed with me, and I appreciate that. Eric Ueland and Doug Badger would fit in that category, and they were outstanding.

Bill Armstrong is another one of my mentors. I met with Bill Armstrong and a couple of other Senators in a prayer group once a week for 12 years. He is probably the most articulate Senator I have had the pleasure of serving with, an outstanding leader. I wish he would have continued his service. He decided to return to the private sector, and since I am doing that, I respect that greatly. But I have always looked up to him because he was a man of conviction, and he got things done.

Let me add that Jon Kyl, who is now the policy chairman, and there could not be a better policy chairman, is doing a fantastic job, a very important job. I compliment him for his leadership.

After that position—and I thank my colleagues for giving me that responsibility—I served 6 years as assistant majority leader, and I guess at some point maybe assistant minority leader. It was a great honor and a pleasure to work with Trent Lott, which I enjoyed greatly. Trent did a fantastic job as our Republican leader, and I'd like to take this opportunity to commend him on his outstanding service. Mitch McConnell has my old post now, and he is doing a super job. Again, it is a position where you get to know your colleagues really well. You not only learn how to count votes, but you find out what makes people tick and where they are coming from, what they are trying to accomplish, and what they are trying to do. And Mitch McConnell is doing a fantastic job in that capacity.

During my tenure in the Senate, we have had the pleasure of passing a lot of legislation. I am fortunate to have so many colleagues who have helped me do some things that I think have become good laws.

The Republicans took control of the Senate in the 1994 elections, and in 1995 I think the first bill we passed was the Congressional Accountability Act that Senator Grassley and

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a lot of Democrats and Republicans passed. We worked hard on that. I am glad to see that happened.

We passed the Congressional Review Act. Senator Reid was my principal Democrat sponsor on that legislation, where we could review expensive and expansive Federal regulations. We actually used that to repeal the ergonomics rule which the Clinton administration tried to pass in the last couple of days of their term. Although he supported the regulation, Senator Reid, to his credit, defended the Congressional Review Act which is still the law of the land. We used that to repeal what I felt was a very intrusive, expensive, and unwarranted regulation. Again, that is another case where Senator Reid stated—he did not agree with repealing the regulation, but he defended the law we repealed it with, and some people were trying to undermine that.

Senator Lieberman and I passed the Defense of Marriage Act, an act that became a little more noteworthy in the last year or two. I thank Senator Lieberman for his help and leadership on that issue. Bill Clinton signed that bill. I am not sure he wanted to, but he did sign it in the wee hours of 1996. That act is still the law of the land. It basically says States do not have to recognize other States' legalization of same sex marriage. Some States have legalized gay marriage, which is their prerogative, but due to our bill other States do not have to recognize that. Some people presume that it will be declared unconstitutional. I hope it is not. I would be disappointed if the Supreme Court did overrule that. That bill passed with 80-some-odd votes in the Senate and still is the law of the land.

We passed the International Religious Freedom Act. Again, I say “we.” Senator Lieberman joined me in passing that bill. We passed that in 1998, and it is now the law of the land. It is very important that we note countries that are very repressive and oppressive in stifling religious freedom. Unfortunately, we have seen such oppression in many countries around the world. That kind of bigotry is the genesis of a lot of the hatred and violence and the wars we are fighting today.

We have ensured, with the passage of this act, that the State Department will be much more proactive in not only identifying cases of religious intolerance and persecution, but will take proactive steps to change such behavior as a matter of U.S. policy.

Senator Landrieu and I passed, in 2000, the Child Citizenship Act, which basically grants citizenship to foreign-born

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children who are adopted. I think 150,000 children became citizens in 1 day as a result of that act, and I am greatly pleased to have been a part of that success.

I have had the pleasure for the last couple of years of being chairman of the Budget Committee. I look back at some of our accomplishments, and I have to think maybe those were some of the best in my career as a Senator.

The budget we passed in 2003 was a real challenge. We probably spent more days, more hours, and had more votes on the 2003 Budget Act than any other Budget Act in history. I think we had 80-some-odd votes. It took more than a week. It took about a week and a half, almost 2 weeks, on the floor.

I compliment Senator Zell Miller for his assistance in that. We passed that budget with the Vice President breaking the tie. That was not easily done. We defeated numerous amendments, and were successful in passing a budget that allowed us to have the opportunity to have an economic growth package. President Bush was nice enough to ask me to introduce the package and to try to carry it, and we did. Again, Zell Miller was the principal co-sponsor with me of the bill, the growth package. We introduced that package in January 2003. We passed it in June 2003.

When we first took up that legislation, the Dow Jones was at about 7,700. Today, the Dow Jones is over 10,500. We wanted to pass that package so we could stimulate the economy because it was, at that time, pretty anemic. Government receipts were still down. We wanted to get something to grow the economy. We passed that package, and not only did the stock market go up, receipts are up, and we have created a couple million jobs since then.

We accelerated the tax cuts that were slowly being phased in from the 2001 tax bill. So now we have a maximum rate of 35 percent. Although some people say that is too much of a giveaway, it is the same rate the corporations pay, and I do not think individuals or self-employed people should pay a higher rate than Exxon or General Motors. So we passed that.

We also passed a 15-percent tax on capital gains and a 15-percent tax on corporate distributions, dividends, which I firmly believe has greatly helped not just the market but the economy. So I am proud of that.

I am proud of Zell Miller because he had the courage to be a co-sponsor, to stand up and fight for those things and make them become law. It also made a \$1,000 tax credit per

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child become law. It also eliminated or greatly reduced the marriage penalty on married couples. If they have taxable income of \$58,000, that is \$900 of tax relief. Those are positive things. It would not have happened without Zell Miller.

Zell Miller only served 4 years in the Senate. He replaced a very dear friend of all of ours, Paul Coverdell. I mourned Paul Coverdell's loss, and I stated at the time he cannot be replaced; and he certainly cannot be replaced. But Zell Miller has been one outstanding addition to this body. He is a great patriot, not a great Democrat or a great Republican, he is a great patriot, and he stands for what he believes in, and he helped us enact these measures which are vitally important.

I also read in the *Washington Post* today that somebody said, well, the Budget Act is not working, and so on, and there is no discipline in Congress. Frankly, they don't know what they are talking about. I hate to tell them that.

They also said we did not pass a budget this year. Well, they don't quite know what they are talking about there either. In the last 2 years, thanks to the collective will of this body, we have made 82 budget points of order—in the last 2 years—78 of which were sustained. I voted to waive a couple of them. We defeated \$1.7 trillion of additional spending over a 10-year period on those 78 budget points of order.

The Budget Act did work. We passed a budget through the Senate earlier this year that had domestic discretionary spending at \$821.9 billion.

I am confident that when the leader brings up an omnibus bill this year, it is going to meet that goal of \$821.9 billion. That is several billion dollars less than a lot of people wanted.

I thank my colleague, Senator Stevens. I have wrestled with him every day on appropriations bills. But Senator Stevens helped us pass the 821.9 cap on the DOD appropriations bill. I could not get the budget resolution to pass. We passed it through the Senate and through the House. I could not get the conference report adopted. That was one of my disappointments.

One of our accomplishments, as most people didn't know, was we did put in the spending cap on the DOD appropriations bill and we are enforcing that cap and we are abiding by that cap today. So I wanted people to know that. I also thank people such as Thad Cochran and Senator Specter, because they enforced the cap as chairmen of their respective Appropriations subcommittees, probably more than anyone. I didn't have to make the points of order; they did it. It

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worked. We have non-discretionary and non-homeland security growing at less than 1 percent this year, compared to a 14-percent growth a few years ago in President Clinton's last years. Yes, we are spending a lot of money in defense and homeland security, no doubt about it.

Are the deficits too high? You bet. Are they coming down? You bet. The deficit this year was finalized at 400-something, over \$100 billion less than the administration projected 9 months ago; and that is because revenues are up and the economy is growing. The changes we passed in 2001 are working significantly.

I project, and CBO projects, they will continue to climb by another \$100 billion in the next year or so. Is the war expensive? Yes. Is it worth it? You bet. Is the war on terrorism worth it? Yes.

Earlier this year—I would say this was a real highlight—I went to Iraq and Afghanistan with Senators Sessions and Lieberman. I have done a lot of things, and I have been to a lot of places around the world, but I cannot tell you how proud I was to be in Iraq, basically when there was a transition of power, when Mr. Allawi assumed control of Iraq.

We met with the Defense Minister and he said: Yes, we want to protect our country. When we met with our military leadership and theirs, we were in the process of training 210,000 Iraqis, and we had a chance to meet with Iraqis there that are hungry for freedom and thankful for our support and eager to assume and take control.

They are talking about elections in January, and I am hopeful and prayerful that those will be successful. I believe they will be. Senator Sessions and I also went to Afghanistan and met with now-President Karzai. It was around July 4. They were scheduled to have elections in October. They did that and he was elected overwhelmingly.

The success we have had in Afghanistan has been absolutely phenomenal. I remember well the debates here, with many people saying: You are going to be involved in a quagmire; you will never be able to have democracy. You cannot get in there. The Soviets were there 10 years and lost tens of thousands of troops. You are going to do the same thing.

Frankly, our military was successful, working with the Afghan Northern Alliance and other Afghan people who wanted freedom in Afghanistan. We basically helped them take control of that country with a few hundred troops on the ground and our Air Force. We have liberated Afghanistan. They have had elections and they have proved they can have

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a democracy. They will have parliamentary elections early next year.

So the success we have had and have seen in Afghanistan is restoring freedom to millions of people there. I believe we are in the process of restoring freedom and liberating the Iraqi people for the long run so the Iraqis can control their own destiny. If you look at those things, we have had an outburst, an outgrowth of freedom.

Abraham Lincoln said in the Gettysburg Address: "This Nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom."

This country is largely responsible for not only this country having a new birth of freedom, but frankly countries throughout the world, in our own hemisphere and in the former Soviet bloc, and now even in places as remote as Afghanistan and Iraq. To have been able to play a small part in that over these last 24 years has been a real pleasure.

I thank my constituents, the people of Oklahoma, for giving me the opportunity and the privilege to serve them for the last 24 years. I thank my family, and especially my wife for her tolerance in allowing me to do this for the last 24 years. I thank my colleagues who I have had the pleasure of serving with and working with and the pleasure of knowing. Frankly, my best friends are my colleagues. I have spent a long time here and I have absolutely loved this work. I love the Senate.

I think the Senate is in very good hands. My replacement is Dr. Tom Coburn. I am honored that an active physician would leave his career and serve in the Senate. We have not seen it often. We saw it with Dr. Bill Frist, and I am so grateful that he set aside his career as a talented physician to serve in the Senate. I am delighted he is the majority leader. He has done a fantastic job. I am delighted Dr. Coburn has left his profession to serve in the Senate. What a great addition to the Senate. I have had the pleasure of working with Jim Inhofe, and I see Jim and Tom Coburn doing an outstanding job in representing our State.

I look at the leadership in the Senate today with Bill Frist, Mitch McConnell, John Kyl, and the rest of the team on this side, and with Harry Reid and others on the Democrat side, and I see good things ahead for the Senate, positive things.

I have been so fortunate also to have what I have often said are the best staff on the Hill. I have truly been blessed. I have many staff members who have been with me for a long time.

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Looking to my left is Bret Bernhardt, my chief of staff, who has worked with me for over 20 years. Hazen Marshall came in as an intern many, many years ago, and he is now chief of staff on the Budget Committee. Nobody knows the budget or taxes any better than Hazen Marshall. Both of these men are true professionals.

I have so many people to thank. I cannot go down the whole list. I will recognize some who have been with me for over 20 years. In my Oklahoma City office, there is Joey Bradford, who worked for me going back to Nickles Machine Corporation in 1978–1979. She is still with me. She will be the last person to turn out the lights. She is a wonderful person. Jo Stansberry goes way back. She was my secretary when I was a State senator in 1978, bless her heart. She is the sweetest person you will ever know. She is still with me today. Also, in my Oklahoma City office, Judy Albro and Maurie Cole have been with me almost the entire time. Sharon Keasler has been running my Tulsa office for over 20 years.

In my DC office, Zev Teichman and Cynthia Singleton have been with me the entire time.

They are wonderful people and true public servants, all of whom could have done much better financially on the private side, but they have stayed with us on the public side, as well as many others.

I look at our staff and we have most of the staff still with us. I am grateful for that. They are all anxious about new careers, and they have been generous with their time and very loyal in their support, not just to me but to the people of Oklahoma and to this institution called the Senate. The Senate is a very special place.

I also would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge two or three other people who have had a profound and positive impact on my life. One is Doug Coe. Some of our colleagues know him very well. Doug Coe was a friend, brother, and mentor whom I respect and love greatly. He is also a golfer, and that is my favorite vice, I guess. Most golfers play for a little money. Doug would say, "I will play you for a Bible verse." We would do it and, of course, I would lose—predestined from on high. I will never forget when Doug said here is a verse for you to memorize. It was, I think, John 13:34: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another." He made me learn that. I learned it in, I think, about 1981 or something. He has been a very positive guiding light. I have

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tried to keep that commandment in my heart when I am on this floor and conducting my business, and it is good advice. I wanted to thank him.

Also, I will mention a couple of other people. One is Dick Halverson, the first Senate Chaplain with whom I had the pleasure working. He was maybe one of the most Christlike persons I have ever known. Lloyd Ogilvie, who succeeded him, was a great mentor. He led many of us in our Bible studies for years. He is a wonderful, wonderful brother and friend. And now Barry Black. Barry Black, when he was giving the prayer today, said we may seek to accomplish causes beyond our lifetime. And he is so right. That is what the Senate is about. It is about causes. It is about things that can have consequences, that can have real meaning beyond our lifetime eternally.

So I thank God for the opportunity and the privilege and the pleasure to serve in this great body.

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TRIBUTES
TO
DON NICKLES

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Proceedings in the Senate

MONDAY, *October 11, 2004*

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, the motto of the great State of Oklahoma is “Labor Conquers All.”

How perfect this is for the senior Senator from Oklahoma, Senator DON NICKLES, who has accomplished so much, and gone so far because of his willingness to work.

As a young man, after the death of his father, DON NICKLES worked his way through college as a janitor making minimum wage. After graduation, he returned to his hometown of Ponca City to help run the family business, the Nickles Machine Corporation, of which he became vice president, and then general manager.

In 1978, he was elected to the Oklahoma State Senate.

Two years later, in 1980, he was elected to the U.S. Senate as part of the “Reagan revolution.” When he took office in 1981, he was just 31 years of age, the youngest Senator in the 97th Congress. Seventeen years later, in 1998, he became the only Oklahoma Republican ever elected to a fourth term in the U.S. Senate.

During his 24 years in the Senate, for better and for worse, Senator NICKLES has remained consistently true to his basic conservative principles. *Congress Daily* has justly referred to him as, “the keeper of the conservative flame.”

Being true to his conservative principles has sometimes led him into taking some lonely stands. And his unflinching commitment to his conservative principles has led him to take positions that have angered constituents of his own State. His principles have even led him into positions on issues that have annoyed me. In addition to his views on tax cuts, I could mention his efforts to block the Patients’ Bill of Rights, his efforts to defeat increases in the minimum wage, and his effort to scuttle a Democratic initiative to help unemployed workers to be able to afford medical insurance coverage. Still, I have always admired and respected him for the firmness of his convictions and his beliefs, and his willingness to stay with them despite the consequences.

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Even with the firmness of his convictions, he has never allowed himself to be trapped or bound by dogmatic partisan stands. Time and again I have watched and admired his willingness to reach across the aisle and work with Democratic Senators in bipartisan efforts to extend unemployment benefits, to win passage of a regulatory reform bill, and to secure passage of other measures that, otherwise, may well have gone down in defeat.

During his 24 years in this Chamber, Senator NICKLES has served on the Senate Finance Committee, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Labor and Human Resources Committee, Small Business, and Joint Committee on Taxation.

For 14 of his 24 years in the Senate, he has served in Republican Senate leadership, first as chairman of the Senate Republican Senatorial Committee, and then as chairman of the Republican Policy Committee, which he transformed from a lunch club into a “conservative think tank.” In 1996 and again in 1998, he was elected assistant Republican leader, Republican whip.

In January 2003, Senator NICKLES left the Senate Republican leadership to become chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, and this is where I really came to know and appreciate what an outstanding legislator he is.

As I attended Budget Committee hearings and markups held by Chairman NICKLES, I came to realize his appreciation for the Senate as an institution, and his determination to make this institution work. I saw, first-hand, his efforts to accommodate differences and to restore bipartisanship to the Senate Budget Committee. While he staunchly advocated his beliefs, Budget Chairman NICKLES emphasized politeness, courtesy, cordiality, and amiability. These qualities endeared him to Democratic and Republican members of the Budget Committee.

It was here in the work of the Budget Committee that I really saw his personal side. I remember Senator NICKLES’s first Budget Committee markup as chairman. Senator NICKLES arrived at the markup and announced that his daughter had given birth to his first grandchild, Nicholas Fenton Rossiter. I had seen many times the look of pride on a new grandfather’s face, and it inspired me to recite a poem for his grandson. “Dear Nicholas, first, in thy grandfather’s arms, a newborn child, thou didst weep, while those around thee smiled, so live, that in thy lasting sleep, thou mayst smile while those around thee weep.”

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But at the same announcement of the birth of his grandson, I could not help myself in reminding Budget Chairman NICKLES that, given his support for a budget that embraces record deficits, his sweet grandchild was born owing \$24,000 on the national debt.

Although I failed to disabuse him of his egregious interpretation of the budget reconciliation process, Senator NICKLES, I am convinced, has come to understand the importance of debate in the Senate. Earlier this year, he devoted many hours to studying the budget rules for ways to eliminate the so-called “vote-a-ramas” that usually accompany the Senate’s budget debates. To his great credit, Senator NICKLES demonstrated that rule changes are not necessary. Together with Senator Conrad, he orchestrated this year’s budget debate in a manner that allowed adequate time for all Senators to offer and debate their amendments. For the first time in many years, there was no “vote-a-rama,” thanks to Senator NICKLES.

It has been reported in the media that Senator NICKLES was discouraged and disappointed that, in his final year as chairman of the Budget Committee, the Senate was not able to reach a consensus with the House of Representatives on a budget resolution. I hope Senator NICKLES realizes that the model of civility he created as chairman of the Budget Committee will be remembered and emulated, and that this accomplishment will survive in the annals of the Senate longer than any budget document.

While I must admit that I will not miss some of the values that he so eloquently advocated, and for which he so effectively fought, I do regret any time the Senate loses a good person, and Senator NICKLES is a very good person. During his 24 years, this outstanding Senator, through his hard work, his friendliness and his dedication and determination, has helped make the Senate a better place, and for that, I am grateful and thankful. Time and again he has demonstrated that “labor” certainly does “conquer all.”

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I wish him and his wife, Linda, happiness, health, and prosperity as they enter the next phase in their lives.

TUESDAY, *November 16, 2004*

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to and acknowledge how much I will miss Senator DON NICKLES in the U.S. Senate.

Since joining the Senate in 1980, Senator NICKLES has been a forceful advocate for smaller and smarter government, while at the same time tenaciously fighting for the interests of the people of Oklahoma. In a body filled largely with lawyers and career politicians, Senator NICKLES brought a small businessman's perspective to the legislative table. Throughout his career he spoke from personal experience about the need to relieve unnecessary burdens on our Nation's small businesses.

Personally, I have come to know Senator NICKLES well from our joint service on the Budget and Finance Committees. Although we were often on the opposite sides of policy debates, he was always a straight shooter, a gentleman, and a pleasure to work with. In areas where we disagreed, he was a formidable and articulate advocate for his position. In areas where we agreed, he was a powerful and determined ally. I am proud to say that, despite this era of too much partisan division, I consider Senator NICKLES a good friend. His ability to maintain a civil and respectful tone and demeanor in even the toughest policy disputes has exemplified the finest traditions of the Senate.

In his role as Budget Chairman, I am particularly grateful for the graciousness and respect with which he treated me and my staff. His efforts to strengthen the Budget Committee and the budget process will be an important part of his legacy in this body.

I have been honored to serve with Senator DON NICKLES. I join my colleagues in wishing the Senator and his family all the best in the future and in paying tribute to his tre-

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mendous contributions to the Senate and our Nation. We will miss him.

THURSDAY, *November 18, 2004*

Mr. BURNS. * * * DON NICKLES will leave this Senate in this year, having arrived in 1980 with President Ronald Reagan. The real voice of conservatism, a fiscal conservative, who stood in this Senate and fought wasteful spending and did it with grace, did it with knowledge, a leader among all.

There again, he being 8 years ahead of me, he was a mentor and someone I could look to, study and learn from. * * *

As to all of these men, I want to say you do form relationships here, and there is a certain bond that attracts us all, as we learn that even though you may be on the same side of the aisle or the opposite side of the aisle, one could always agree or disagree without being disagreeable. That is what makes the Senate a special place.

We will miss all of these men, but I am looking forward to those who take their place as, there again, new relationships will be developed, a new bond dealing with the old challenges of a free society, with those who love the Constitution and love this country who were prepared to die for it and would if asked to do so today. No one doubts the depth of their patriotism nor their service to their country. We welcome them as we say goodbye to old friends, old relationships that will never be forgotten.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I am so pleased that I have a chance to say a few good words about my colleague, DON NICKLES. It is hard to talk about DON NICKLES. I remember him when he was in the State senate. I believe DON NICKLES at that time was the president of the College Republicans in Oklahoma. I remember going to Ponca City and giving a speech at his invitation. Afterward, he showed just an incredible interest in politics. This was back in the seventies. He ran for State senate. I believe it was in 1978. And he won.

Midway through that term, in 1980, a seat opened and he decided he was going to run for the U.S. Senate. Everybody laughed. Who is this kid, anyway? He was about 30 years old. He still looks like he is about 35 years old. At that time he looked like he was about 18 years old.

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He ran and defeated some of the real heavyweights in the State. Then he came and served in the Senate.

I understand that in those early years they wouldn't let him ride the Members' elevators because they didn't believe he was a Member. They thought he was a page.

Nonetheless, DON NICKLES started proving himself. I watched him mature in this job. As the years went by, every time a 6-year period ended, he would talk about dropping out. But we talked him into running.

Finally, he decided he needed to do something else with his life and do what is in the best interests of his family.

But he grew with the ability to offer expertise that I haven't seen in the Senate since I have been here, and I have been here for 10 years. I have watched DON NICKLES as he matured, as he gained knowledge in areas and expertise in not just one isolated area but in all areas. When he stands up to talk, everybody is quiet. They want to listen to him because they know he knows what he is talking about.

I can recall when Elizabeth Dole was first elected. We were making a tribute to DON NICKLES about 3 months after she was here. She said: I have watched him talk about the budget. I have watched him talk about how you finance government. I have watched him go through all these very difficult things, and I have been here 3 months and I have to confess I don't even know what he is talking about. I said: Elizabeth, don't feel bad. I have been here 10 years and I still don't know what he is talking about.

DON NICKLES developed that level of expertise that other people do not. It is because he studies. He works.

He is going to be sorely missed by a lot of people around here because of what he had to offer and because of the contributions he has made.

I am 15 years older than DON NICKLES. I have been his junior Senator. I guess it is now time I become senior Senator.

I will miss his expertise, his charm, his humor, and most of all I will miss him because he is my brother. I will miss him dearly. DON, it is going to be goodbye to you but hang around. We look forward to working with you and accepting your advice because I know it will be there when we need it.

Mr. SHELBY. One of my colleagues we all care about and work with is DON NICKLES of Oklahoma. He came here as a very young man in 1980. He has been here 24 years. He was the whip, assistant majority leader. He was right here

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on this floor. He spent many days, many hours trying to herd us together as one of our leaders. He is now at the moment the chairman of the Budget Committee, and that is a feat in itself. He is a senior member of the Finance Committee.

We wish you had stayed around, but you chose to leave the Senate on your own volition. DON, we will see you, we will miss you, and I commend you for your service to the Nation and to your great State of Oklahoma.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, Senators follow many different paths on their way to this Chamber. Some come from the professions, others from a life in public service.

Few have lived the American dream the way DON NICKLES has.

At age 20, DON NICKLES was paying his way at Oklahoma State University, living in a trailer home, working as a janitor, and raising his growing family.

A few years later, he returned to his hometown. There he pulled his family business from the verge of bankruptcy. Pretty soon his neighbors elected him to the Oklahoma Senate.

Then, in 1980, at the age of 31, when few expected it, he became a U.S. Senator.

DON did not let his early success go to his head. He worked hard to keep our country a place where men and women can dream big and live those dreams.

In the Senate he has been a friend to taxpayers, an opponent of overbearing regulation, a voice for traditional values, and an ardent advocate for Oklahoma.

DON NICKLES has worked to keep America a land of opportunity—a place where everyone has a valued place and nobody lacks the opportunities to succeed.

Through all of his hard work, through all of his toil, he has always put family first. He and Linda have been married for 36 years. And they have raised four wonderful children.

In DON's favorite Bible chapter, Galatians 5, the Apostle Paul lists a godly man's attributes. A godly man, says Paul, works hard and lives a life of "love, joy, peace ... kindness, goodness, faithfulness."

I could not think of a better description of DON NICKLES. He has had an amazing career—and I take comfort in that he is just hitting his stride.

We all wish DON and his family the best in what will certainly be a bright future.

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Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise tonight to make a quick comment about a dear friend. The greatest thing about serving in the House of Representatives and the Senate is meeting the colleagues we have the opportunity to serve with on both sides of the aisle. As a Member of the House of Representatives, I had the opportunity to get to know a number of the Members of the Senate, one of whom is retiring at the end of this session.

DON NICKLES was elected to the Senate when he was too young to serve in the Senate. He actually had a few months after his election before he was old enough, but he was old enough before he was sworn in. That was back in 1980. He has now served with great distinction in this body for 24 years. He leaves with a record that not many Senators are able to claim after serving in this Senate for whatever period of time they may be here.

DON NICKLES has been a leader in the Republican Party, but most significantly he has been a leader in the Senate. He is a man who has provided strong leadership on any number of issues, whether they are fiscal issues as chairman of the Budget Committee and a long-time member of the Budget Committee, which is where I first got to know him in our conferences between the House and the Senate, or whether it is on energy or social issues, DON NICKLES possesses all the assets that America holds dear.

He is a strong family man. He is a hard-working individual. He is a man of faith. He is a man who when he looks you in the eye and tells you something, you can go to the bank with it.

I am going to miss DON NICKLES. I will miss his quick wit. I am going to miss his being able to stand up in the Senate and quickly take on anybody on either side of the aisle with respect to whatever the issue may be or whatever the rule may be that applies to the issue that comes up.

I marveled at his ability to, off the top of his head, take on folks on the other side of the aisle relative to a particular issue and to point out issue by issue and point by point what must be done. That is a unique capability and something that must be studied and learned.

My predecessor, one of the folks who held my seat many years before I got here, was the master of that. That is Richard Russell. DON NICKLES knows the rules just as well as Richard Russell did.

I will miss DON in a number of respects off of this Senate floor. He is a close personal friend. He and his wife Linda

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are dear friends of Julianne and me. I will have to find somebody else to get money off of on the golf course because I have known DON so long now that I have come to spend the money before I play golf.

He is a terrific guy both in the Senate as well as outside the Senate. He is a man of great integrity. He is the kind of Senator who every citizen of Oklahoma should and has been proud of for his 24 years of service to the Senate.

I went back to his hometown a couple of months ago, his hometown of Ponca City, OK, a very small town in America. DON was a football hero. As in my home State of Georgia and my hometown, football is huge in Ponca City. They still remember DON as a high school fullback and linebacker.

His old coach was there that night to talk about DON and some of the things he did during his high school career. It is those foundations that people all across America build upon to come to the Senate.

The things that were said about DON back then could still be said about him today; that is, what a dedicated person he was, what a hard-working person he was, and what a student of the game he was, just like he has been a student of the Senate.

No one there was surprised at what a great job DON had done as a Member of the Senate and what a success he was, what a success he will be once he leaves. DON had the right kind of foundation and the right kind of instincts and the right kind of family stability, support, and love to make sure he did the right kind of job in the Senate, and he will continue to be successful when he leaves here.

To DON and to Linda, we say thanks for the service to our country. My children and my grandchildren are going to benefit from the service of the Senate of DON NICKLES. That is something for which I will forever be grateful.

Just as important, I have been a better Senator than I would have been otherwise because of DON NICKLES. In future years, because of what I have learned from DON NICKLES, I will be a much better Senator.

DON, we appreciate your service to our country. Thank you. God bless you and Linda.

FRIDAY, *November 19, 2004*

Mr. FEINGOLD. * * * I look forward to hearing the remarks of my colleague, the Senator from Oklahoma, whom

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I have enjoyed serving with very much, especially on the Budget Committee * * *.

Again, I commend the Senator on his wonderful service to this body.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, on leader time, I want to make a few comments in tribute, not in response, to the great man we just heard on the floor of this institution [Mr. NICKLES]. Over the last several days, all of us have taken that opportunity for three of our colleagues on this side of the aisle and others on the other side of the aisle, to reflect on the past and how people have affected us directly.

All of us have prepared remarks, and we have taken the opportunity to read them into the *Record* or enter them into the *Record*. What we just heard does reflect in many ways why so many of us have such strong feelings about DON NICKLES and his family—Linda and their children.

For me, it boils down to two general areas. One is the tremendous respect he has and continues to have and will always have for this institution. He literally reveres this institution. We heard it in his words today, the way he closed referring back to Chaplain Barry Black's opening this morning where causes beyond our lifetime is the essence of this institution, and he has captured that in his 24 years in the Senate—respect for the institution, for its traditions, for its values, for its rules, for its precedents, all of which he has manifested.

The second general area when I think of DON is his wise counseling that he has been able to reflect in different ways to each and every one of us. For me, it is the National Republican Senatorial Committee. When I was first thinking about running, I went directly to DON NICKLES because in the early nineties he developed a model that was revolutionary at that time. The model really did go to what happens at the grassroots, and it applied both in terms of politics and fundraising. That model is one that has come full cycle.

One thing he did not mention directly but touched me in a very special way is what he did 2 weeks ago, and that is run, whether it is marathons or short races or out for a daily jog—I call it a jog; he actually runs. But for about a year, at least once a week, sometimes several times a week, we ran together with a few Senators—I think there were more than 2—a few Senators, but more than that, about 8, 9, 10, it got up to about 14 other people who every morning at 6 o'clock would take off and go initially for 30 minutes, an

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hour, an hour and a half, 2 hours, 3 hours, and DON kept going. But those are my memories.

What is interesting is that, of the people running with us, there were some new people. Then there were also people who had done this for years and years, and those rich relationships were played out on the floor of the Senate or with his golf, which everybody knows about, or the running, which is touching me.

A few weeks ago, he ran in the New York City marathon. He ran it by himself. He probably ran it in 3 hours. I would go much longer than that. I was back here, but I was really with him, thinking of him when he was going to be taking off and at each of those miles, as you run through those boroughs. I was really with him because it brought back memories of us spending time together.

That was for, again, a cause that goes beyond our lifetime because our running and the group that he put together was for an effort that Linda, his wife, I think introduced him to, the Lombardi Cancer Center. Again, it shows how everything comes together, in ways beyond going out to have a good run and working for this greater cause.

He mentioned getting to know each other. In terms of counseling to me, directly or indirectly, you cannot go anywhere in this town without DON NICKLES being recognized, without him having touched or having a relationship in some special way over the last 24 years, and counseling in terms of the prayer breakfast. DON NICKLES was there every single week, and the Bible studies again touch me directly in that those few moments every week we have the opportunity to come together and share.

He mentioned the positive and guiding light of Doug Coe in the same way he has touched us in those prayer breakfast meetings.

He mentioned the budget, again the wise counsel that he set in place that we will be using over the next several years as we look at tax relief, but also the impact it has had on the jobs and growth in this country.

I have to mention his overall optimism because there is nobody more optimistic in the Senate, even in very tough times, trying times. There were times dealing with the budget over the last 4 years that were tough, difficult, hard, challenging, especially in 2003. Even through all that, he was optimistic, upbeat, reaching out. He always knew there was some way to get the best out of people working together.

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I will close by mentioning—and we had this conversation 2 nights ago—his overall commitment to family. Everything comes back to Linda and their four children—Don Nickles, Jr., Jenny Rossiter, Kim Nickles, and Robyn Nickles. Everything he does comes back through that unit, to Linda who has—he used the word “tolerance,” and it does take a lot of tolerance to put up with DON NICKLES, I am sure. Linda was there, I should also add, with support through every one of his endeavors.

It has been a real privilege for Karyn and me to get to know them and their entire family.

He used a Bible verse, his favorite Bible chapter, Galatians 5. The Apostle Paul lists a godly man’s attributes. A godly man works hard, says Paul, lives a life of—the words that are key—love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, and faithfulness. As we look at that string of words, those nouns, I cannot think of a better description of DON NICKLES.

So, DON, we will miss you. I say that recognizing all our relationships will continue to grow. We will clearly miss you on the floor of the Senate.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, most Americans probably do not know the Senate is a continuous body. From the day the Founding Fathers established this marvelous institution up until today, it has never had a termination point. It goes on and on. Senator Byrd can tell us exactly how many Members of the Senate there have been. The last figure I heard was something over 1,500.

Candidly, a significant number of those probably did not make much difference. They filled the seats. They made sure the continuous body continued. But very few left any footprints on the sands of time. We have honored a handful out here off the Senate floor, people such as Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, John C. Calhoun, and just a couple of others.

I have been here now a couple of decades, a little bit less than my friend from Oklahoma. I can say without fear of contradiction, from the moment I got here until today, the Senator from Oklahoma has been a leader in this body. He has been involved in virtually every issue of consequence in the 20 years I have been here in some kind of leadership capacity or providing his inspiration or, as the majority leader indicated, his enthusiasm for getting a solution to the problems confronting America at that particular moment.

So I say to my friend from Oklahoma, he has left footprints in this body.

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He is one of the great Senators in the history of our country. We will always remember his service, and we wish him Godspeed in the coming years and look forward to seeing him again in his new capacity whatever it may be.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I have not been coming to the floor for a lot of speeches about our fellow Senators, nor have I given very many as they are departing. I do intend to do that in the next few months for all of them, but I would not dare let this *Record* go today without my having an opportunity to share some remarks with the Senate about the Senator from Oklahoma.

There is nobody here who has served on as many committees together as Senator NICKLES and Senator Domenici. We have been thrilled to work on the Energy Committee. He has told us the facts about energy. He has told us the impact that was made by that committee, and nobody can doubt that to have the Senator from Oklahoma come to that committee, having lived with the ridiculousness of the rules on natural gas, having him there was a great stimulus to change, once and for all—we did a little bit and we opened the floodgates—to give the country a great supply of energy called natural gas.

More important than that, he is one who takes an opportunity to come forth with an idea, with a cause, and set it forth when people do not even think it has a chance. All of a sudden it gathers some more momentum, and then it is a big issue, and nobody believes it but pretty soon it passes and becomes law. There are so many that we cannot talk about them. The Senator has talked about some of them.

When you came here, your senior Senator was kind of the opposite of you. He was a great hulk of a man. He was older than you by far. If he ever bragged, it was about being a marine lieutenant tank commander. He used to look at me and tell me: Well, I do not know. This NICKLES is just too young. I am not sure he can do this job.

Well, I am sure he told you some of those things when you were running or preparing to run, but your youth had nothing to do with your success. You were going to get it done because you have a great capacity to lead and to work with people. It has been my privilege to have you as my teammate.

There is one thing for sure, this place does not succeed without people who have talent. We can all look that over and say it is not so, but it is so. You are a very talented man, but talent is not enough. You have to be loyal.

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Senator NICKLES is the second most senior serving Senator on the Budget Committee, 20 years. I am the one who was goofy enough to serve more, but he was there during most of my time. Many times, Senator DON NICKLES did not get exactly what he wanted, but when it came to the time of getting something for this Senate that would permit us to follow that Budget Act, you never worried about DON NICKLES. He may have pushed and shoved and maybe held out to the end, but when the time came that you said, We have to do this, DON, he understood. That is because of what he just said here today. He really loves this place. He learned how to love it. He did not love it when he came here. He might have told his colleagues that he started liking it, but he did not love it the first few years like he does now.

I had the privilege once of nominating him for a leadership job. He will not ever forget that introduction because he was thinking I was not going to be speaking on behalf of him, but I surely was. I said something like, DON NICKLES came here and he was just too young. Then I proceeded to say, however, I have never seen a Senator mature as much and as fast as he has in terms of acquiring the skills and the capacity and understanding to be a Senator, after which time I suggested that he should win that particular job he was seeking. He did, obviously. I did not have anything to do with it, but nonetheless that is sort of the way I saw him for the first 8, 10, or 12 years.

Senator, you never stopped. You never stopped growing, and I think to grow in this place, besides the qualities I have just described, you have to end up understanding what the Senate is.

I have heard you many times in the last part of your career talk about what a great place this is, and I really believe you understand it. I think you understand that it is not just some legislative body. You have many times cast your vote, done your work, chastised and begged, cajoled people to do things because you would tell them sometimes when it was urgent that this is the Senate and we cannot be all on our own. We have to be a part of this place, and sometimes you have to do things to make it work.

I commend you for all of that and the policies and philosophies that you brought here. We did not agree on some of them. We have not agreed on everything, but I say the Senate was better off for every single day that you were here, and it will not be quite as good until somebody comes along and fills your seat. As our distinguished whip said, it is a

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continuing place, and we will go on. But I honestly think there will be sort of a place here for you, and we will remember how you used to do things, and, yes, Senator, you will know how you grew in terms of working with the other side. I mean, all of a sudden you would have something and we would wonder what is going on, and you would announce your co-sponsor and we would say, well, he started with something that was not going to work, but he has been working at it and it is going to work. I commend you for that. That is the end product of real growth and a real ability to get done what you thought was good.

So I will miss you and your wonderful family and your wife. You have been through some tough problems with the family just like many of us. You have come through it strong and robust, and your children are beautiful and successful.

As far as the prayer breakfast is concerned, you have stated this morning in beautiful terms, just as a matter of fact, with Doug Coe and other names, but I can remember talking to you many times about that, how it made you mature also in terms of your faith, in terms of how we prayed and how we did other things. For that relationship, I thank you. It has little to do with the Senate, but if it were not for the Senate, we would not have had that experience together.

So this is a good day because we get to say something about a great Senator, but on the other hand not so good a day because we say goodbye. He is young enough to honestly spend another 24 years here. I am 72 and I have been here 33 years, so I clearly could have left a while ago. Then I would be out there doing whatever you are going to be doing; I am sure you will have a lot more leisure time. You can hit the ball. Me, maybe I could play with my 11 grandchildren now, and growing.

Thank you, DON. It has been great to be your friend.

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, I rise after listening to the words of our distinguished whip, who has been here more than a couple of decades, and the distinguished Senator from New Mexico, who has been here more than three decades. I have only been in the Senate a couple of years, but I do want to let the distinguished Senator from Oklahoma know and say very publicly what an impact he has had on me and what deep respect I have for him.

When he came here, he talked about having respect for the Senate, and I certainly understand that. It is somewhat overwhelming to me. As he kind of recapped the 24 years, talking about the love that he has for this institution, I want

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to let him know what that means to somebody like me who comes here certainly with that respect—that love is something that grows. Love is something that is in the heart.

As I reflect upon a colleague who has been here, who has had some tough things he has had to do, I say to my friend—truly my friend from Oklahoma, the chairman of the Budget Committee—he is in an institution, surrounded by folks who like to say yes, who like to spend money. We like to take care of those around us who have needs. That is a good thing. But we also have to have a fundamental understanding. As in any family, you have to know what you earn and you have to know what you can spend. You have to have some discipline and you have to have some values and you have to do the right thing. It is hard, because naturally we want to say yes to those who come and say, We need help.

Because of the integrity of the Senator from Oklahoma, because of and help us understand what it meant to hold the line, to do the right thing, in the end, to build a stronger America.

His philosophical foundation, framework, “restoring economic freedom for America,” is something he said he started thinking about early, and that he always believed in it when he got here. Certainly in each and every thing I have seen him do here, it has been part of his core value, restoring economic freedom for America, so in fact we produce hope and opportunity and greater times for moms and dads. He has done it.

I cannot say I always thought it was the right thing to do. I can’t say that every time we voted the same way. But I do want to let the Senator from Oklahoma know how important his words and his values and his integrity were, what they meant to me.

I have been going to the prayer breakfasts since I came to the Senate. I have listened to some of his helpful suggestions for strengthening faith. They have made a difference. They have made an impact.

You are going to be gone, physically gone, and the Senate will be different. But I have no doubt, and I feel part of that, that your faith and your love and your strength and what you have been about has had a profound impact on so many of us here. It has had a profound impact on me. Although you will not be here, know that as I go about making the decisions I make, I have no doubt I will reflect upon your words, reflect upon what you might think is the right thing to do, and then make the decisions I have to make.

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You may be gone. You may move from this body. You are still a relatively young man with a great family, a magnificent wife. You are a person who can look back on all you have accomplished and still have the opportunity to accomplish so much more. But I do want to thank the Senator from Oklahoma for his service. I thank him for the opportunity he has given me to serve with him. I thank him for the impact he has had on my life, hopefully making me a better Senator, a better humble servant, a person better able to contribute with a deeper appreciation of how important faith is to the service we give. I want him to know what he is about certainly will live with me in the time I have to stay. I simply want to say for all of that: Thank you and God bless you.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, DON NICKLES has been truly one of our great Senators for almost a quarter of a century. I join with the remarks of others who came before me, and particularly Mitch McConnell's belief that DON NICKLES is one of the best of all times in this body.

He rode into Washington at the age of 30, determined to fight for a heartland vision of America with all his strength and energy. As he leaves here, still a young man, limping a little bit from that New York marathon he just ran a few days ago, every one of us can say he was true to those ideals and extraordinarily effective in advocating them. This Senate and this Nation is losing a tremendous champion. We are losing one of our most valuable Members.

DON was a small businessman who had seen personally the oppression of mindless regulation and taxes and rules that make creating a business and creating jobs difficult and frustrating. He knows taxes stifle growth and human creativity and taxes mean a transfer of power and wealth from the people who have earned it by the fruit of their labor, sending it to Washington for governmental politicians to dispense.

He knows government spends too much and is too wasteful. And he knows as a true man of faith that ultimately it is the families, the hearts, and the faith of America in which our strength resides.

Those values he holds and he holds them very strongly. For those values he has worked ably and courageously to his last day in the Senate. As his service here comes to an end, he can know that in each of these areas where he has committed himself, to a remarkable degree our country has made real progress. We have. He can and should take great

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pride in knowing he was a key player in effecting the historic transformation of this country from an era of big government to an era in which even President Clinton would say: Big government is over.

The battle hasn't totally ended. The roaches will come back. No doubt we will have to continue to spray. But tremendous progress has been made. DON's critical role in this historic reversal of the liberal big government vision as the answer to all our problems can be seen, in part, by examining the key positions he has held. He chaired the Budget Committee, the Republican Policy Committee, the National Republican Senatorial Committee, the Republican Platform Committee for the Republican National Convention, and he held a critical position of assistant Republican leader, the second person in charge here in the Senate.

During his career he has been involved in many key battles. One of the most crucial was the lead he took in opposing the Clinton administration one-size-fits-all health care plan in 1993. He offered a countervision of consumer choice and for Americans he won that battle by blocking what I think to be ill-advised legislation. I know he took great pride when Congress passed the Medicare prescription drug bill last year that included his vision for medical savings accounts and for more competition in the health care industry. I didn't agree with everything in that bill, but the good parts he and I battled for are going to be important for years to come in health care in America.

Two years later, in 1995, he secured passage of the Congressional Accountability Act, which made Congress abide by the same health and safety standards that employers around America did. That was an important psychological victory for those who suffered under government regulation, that those of us who write the regulations have to abide by them, too. In 1995 he authored the bill for families to receive \$500 per child tax credit. Now it is \$1,000 per child tax credit. When I campaigned in 1996, it was one of the primary emphases of my campaign. I strongly believed, and believe to this day, that nothing has been done to strengthen families more than allowing the working families trying to raise children today to have an extra \$1,000 in their pockets to take care of their children and their families. DON NICKLES was the one who drove that home.

In 1998 the International Religious Freedom Act that he referred to in his remarks became law. He has been a champion of religious freedom and rights. He worked to establish

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this commission to develop appropriate responses to violations of religious liberty worldwide. Since the bill's passage, the commission has issued four annual reports on religious freedom and persecution around the world. This act will become more and more important as the years go by, as we are now seeing a rise in religious intolerance and persecution around the world. Now we have an authoritative source so the world can know how serious this problem is, and that knowledge can help us lead to positive change.

The next year, the Senate passed the Patients' Bill of Rights legislation.

Throughout 1998, Senator NICKLES chaired a task force of Republican Senators, on which I served, working to better understand and respond to the concerns about managed health plans. His group wrote and introduced the Patients' Bill of Rights-Plus, a responsible alternative to the plan that would have dramatically increased health care costs. It was a terrific battle. DON called us together daily to prepare on how to carry out the debate. The opposition said a massive intervention into the American private insurance market by the Federal Government was necessary, and anybody who dared oppose this huge Federal mandate would just be run over by them. But DON proposed legislation that targeted the real abuses, with minimum cost increases and limited Federal regulation.

His bill would have, in fact, impacted the cost of premiums only a fraction of what was proposed by the opposition.

It may now seem a small matter. At the time of that debate it was a central issue before the Congress for months, and pressure from the liberal news media to pass an expansive bill was great. There could be no doubt that his personal leadership on behalf of individual citizens and small businesses was a key factor in the successful effort to avoid a fundamental takeover of private insurance in America.

In 2003 he became chairman of the Budget Committee, and I had the honor of serving as a member. During his chairmanship he made great strides to protect the fiscal sanity of our country. He led the Budget Committee during the time of war when our homeland was attacked and when we had a serious economic slowdown. He faced a surging national debt, and it was a time of heated partisanship in an evenly divided Senate. I was doubtful that anything could be accomplished because of the partisan atmosphere, and I told DON of my doubts.

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I said: I am not sure we can produce a budget. He understood the difficulty he was facing but was convinced that a responsible budget was essential for America. He set to work with his usual skill and determination and commitment to principle and courtesy. He knew his budget depended on many. There was, indeed, much political posturing on all sides as all maneuvered to promote their interests. But DON never wavered. He was confident, funny, gracious, and determined.

The result was a very responsible 2004 budget with good spending limitations and caps. Wisely, he managed to make sure there would be a cap for fiscal year 2005, which we are in now, in case the budget would have failed this year. Without doubt, this was a good plan. It was critical that the Senate at that time pass a budget in a time of national insecurity and great deficits. It impacted positively, I believe, the economic situation of our country.

We didn't produce a fiscal year 2005 budget, although DON gave it his all. I have never seen him work so hard. He tried everything that could be done to achieve a budget for this year. That effort failed, but his fiscal year 2004 cap still made sure that we could maintain spending control.

I could say more, but I will just close with the remarks that were shared by Phil Gramm as I talked about DON one time. I said something good about him. And Phil Gramm, an astute observer and great Senator, shook his head and said: I am always amazed that this machine shop operator from Oklahoma is so consistently right on every issue that comes up.

I agree. He has been consistently right for every year he has been here. He has been the leader in the values that the American people share. He has played a critical role in the development of a new vision for government in America. He has produced regulations; he reduced taxes; he has empowered people around the globe. It has been an honor and a pleasure for me to call him a friend and serve with him. I admire him greatly.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, I came here primarily to listen this afternoon and show my respect for the Senator from Oklahoma.

My remarks will be very brief.

I want to begin with a story that I told the Senator from Oklahoma before. My mentor in politics is the former majority leader of this body, Howard Baker. I got involved in politics because of him in the sixties, when we were building a

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two-party system in Tennessee. I remember the campaign of 1980. Senator Baker was the Republican leader. He changed the name on the door from “Minority Leader” to “Republican Leader” because he didn’t want the Republican Party thinking of itself as a permanent minority. Many people thought he was just whistling “Dixie,” so to speak.

At that time, there were 37, 38, or 39 Republican Members, and no one saw much prospect of getting much further ahead of that.

Then came a tidal wave in 1980 with the election of President Reagan and 13 or 14 new Republican Senators. It went from fewer than 40 to more than 50. Senator Baker had predicted that. I had learned to pay attention to him.

I saw him after the election. I said: Well, you were right about that. You were about the only person who was. He said: I will tell you one thing.

I said: What is that?

He said: Pay attention to NICKLES.

I said: Who is NICKLES?

He said: He is this young, 32- or 33-year-old new Senator from Oklahoma, and he is going to be a real force to deal with.

I have paid attention to Senator NICKLES ever since then. I have served in the Senate with the Senator from Oklahoma, and during that time I have seen him a lot. We have known each other. I think Senator Baker was correct. A lot of people have paid attention to DON NICKLES ever since 1980. I am delighted to have had the privilege of serving 2 years with him in the Senate.

In my experience, I have found him highly intelligent. He has been a big help with the complex issues that we have here. He is principled. That is important. And he has been easy to work with from the point of view of a colleague.

I heard his remarks to the new Senators that he was meeting with; he and the Senator from Louisiana spoke to them as they were stepping down. He was suggesting that even though he is known as a principled, effective, and conservative Senator, he reminded them that in order to get things done in the Senate there has to be a consensus. And that usually means finding ways of dealing across the aisle with colleagues we respect.

I am simply here today to show respect, not to make a speech.

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I am glad to have that opportunity and finally to say something that may be a little different from what some of your other colleagues have said.

I admire your decision, and from my perspective I think it is the right one. Life is big. It is more than politics. It is more than government.

This is a big wonderful world in which we live. We live in a magnificent country. There is a lot to savor.

For example, when I have been in and out of public life at different times and leaving the governorship, going into the private sector was liberating. I found that my focus had been narrow and that there were a great many things about my personal life, about my family's life, about my country's life, and about the private sector that I could get involved in and found very interesting. Over time I found I could come back to the public sector with a new energy, a broader experience and a different perspective.

I don't know what the future may hold for you.

I think it is wise to make such an enormous contribution here, and at the peak of that, to step out and take that to other places. For one, I hope the future will include, in some way, a contribution in the public arena. But you certainly deserve a chance to explore the private arena.

It has been my privilege to know you and to serve with you, and to know, once again, that Howard Baker was right in 1981 when he said, "Pay attention to NICKLES."

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, obviously, in the brief time here I am not going to be able to say everything that comes to mind about the Senators who are retiring but to summarize a little bit of the information for the benefit of those who might be watching.

When you have long, distinguished careers of Senators and they decide not to run for reelection but leave the body, there is a lot that comes to mind about their service. I think it is good to remind ourselves of just a few of these things because of the service they have provided, both to the people of their own States and to the United States.

Starting, for example, with our colleague from Oklahoma, DON NICKLES, he served both in the leadership of the Senate Republican Conference as well as chairman of the Budget Committee. The last 2 years of his time, during his chairmanship of that committee, he was deeply involved on behalf of taxpayers in saving literally hundreds of billions of dollars in taxpayer money that might otherwise have been spent but

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for his hard work in ensuring that we had the procedural mechanisms in place to object to excess spending.

Second, ensuring that taxpayers could keep more of their money. Helping to get passed significant tax reform, especially during the first term of President Bush, the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts in particular, coupled with the tax cuts of this past year, has meant substantial savings for all American taxpayers.

The marginal rate reductions accelerated in 2003, and the reduction in capital gains and dividend tax rates, have been a substantial reason that the economy has moved forward as quickly as it has.

Senator DON NICKLES was significantly involved in every one of those, and his leadership in tax policy is going to be sorely missed when he leaves the Senate.

He got his start in Nickles Machinery back in Ponca City, OK, and he understood early on the lessons of how government involvement in business could make it much more difficult to not only grow a business but to employ people and to contribute to the economy. It is one of the reasons, when his father passed away, that he began to understand how the estate tax can act in a pernicious way on American families when his business had to actually sell off part of its equity in order to pay the estate tax, to make it more difficult for them to stay in business, to employ the people they did, and do the work they did. He understood, therefore, from practical experience why we needed to reform the Tax Code, and he was instrumental in the reformation of the estate tax as well with the spouses' deduction, which was largely his work.

There is so much more one could say about the efforts of Senator DON NICKLES. He is a great friend of all of us. In addition to being very focused on getting the work done, he always managed to do so with a smile on his face and a slap on the back in a way that made it hard for people to disagree with him even when they didn't particularly follow his legislative agenda.

DON NICKLES will be very much missed in the Senate. He leaves, even after 24 years, at such a young age that he will be in Washington and around this country in a way to continue to have interaction with us. We all cherish that because of our friendship with DON NICKLES.

It is bittersweet that DON will be leaving the Senate, but we know after his significant contributions to this country he certainly deserves an opportunity to move on. * * *

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These are only four of the colleagues who are going to be leaving us at the end of this session. These are Senators whom I became particularly close to. I wanted to say a word about each one of them, to wish them all the very best, bid them farewell, also to know they have too many friends around here to ignore. And we are going to be staying in touch with every one of them.

We thank them for their service to the people of their States, to the Senate, and to the people of the United States of America.

Mr. FITZGERALD. Our whips on the Republican side, DON NICKLES and Mitch McConnell—DON NICKLES has done such a good job for the taxpayers of this country. It has been an absolute pleasure to watch him fighting excessive spending and confiscatory taxation. I have been pleased to join him over and over again to hold the line on spending and to vote against tax increases and for tax relief, something that I view as very important.

I am retiring at the same time as Senator NICKLES. I will miss him greatly as part of this body, but I hope to see him often in life outside of the Senate.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, * * * I am going to yield the floor, but I do want to talk about our other colleagues who are retiring in a few minutes. There are a lot of good people here on both sides of the aisle.

We are going to miss all of our friends over here, but I am going to miss DON NICKLES. I have had a lot of fights with him, but I know he always knew where he wanted to go. I respected that.

Peter Fitzgerald, newer among us, but a gentleman to be noted, and Ben Nighthorse Campbell comes from a State I love. I have two grandchildren there. He is a decent fellow. We are going to miss all of them. I will talk about them later.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, while the Senate is holding in abeyance for the final omnibus appropriations bill that the House is getting ready to file sometime tonight, I want to take the opportunity to pay tribute to our retiring Senators: Tom Daschle, Fritz Hollings, DON NICKLES, John Breaux, Ben Nighthorse Campbell, John Edwards, Peter Fitzgerald, Zell Miller, and Bob Graham.

I wish to make a speech about each one of these Senators who has become a dear friend, in some cases, over the years, such as Fritz and Peatsy Hollings, who took special interest

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in me as I came to the Senate and made sure I got on his Commerce Committee, which has been just an extraordinary experience with him as chairman, as well as with the present chairman, John McCain.

DON NICKLES, whom I have known over the 24 years he has been in the Senate, for I was in the House at the time, has been a regular in our Wednesday morning Senate prayer breakfast. He is a good friend. * * *

So for all of these names I have mentioned, in the great poem "Ulysses," he says, "I am a part of all that I have met," and I am a part of all these great Senators. I am much richer for it and for having been their friend.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I talked before about Tom Daschle. I also will discuss the rest of our colleagues who are leaving the Senate.

When the 109th Congress convenes in January, nine of our current colleagues will not be here. I take a few moments to pay tribute to them. Collectively, our colleagues have served in the Senate for 144 years. We will miss them. * * *

Mr. President, I will talk about a couple of my friends on the Republican side.

I have had my differences with DON NICKLES. We both have served on the Budget Committee, and it is hard to believe that he, at his tender age, has been here for 24 years. He is still so youthful looking. As a matter of fact, the two Senators from Oklahoma at one point in time did not equal the age of one of the Senators from South Carolina. They are both very young. But he was so young when he came here in 1981. He was barely 32.

On the subject of age, if I might digress, after 30 years of business I never dreamed I was going to be here 24 years, Lord willing. And for my friends on the Republican side, don't count me out at the end of 24 years.

I worked with DON NICKLES for many years on the Budget Committee. He has been a passionate, articulate spokesman for conservative causes, but he has always been a good opponent, a gracious opponent. The Senate is going to miss his energy and his knowledge. * * *

I close my remarks by noting that these men have made remarkable contributions to our society, and all Americans should be grateful. I would tell those who are retiring, I retired 4 years ago, and I did not like it. So here I am. Perhaps there is hope for any of them who want to rejoin. If you want to come back, I am here to tell you it can be done. Just make sure that you get to keep your seniority.

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Mr. President, I yield the floor and thank my colleagues for their indulgence while I made my remarks.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, let me say—this is probably the first and only time I have ever said this—I have been listening carefully to my friend from New Jersey, and I agree with everything he said.

I have had a chance to talk a little bit about some of these people who are retiring, and at some length about Senator NICKLES, and I certainly appreciate the Senator's remarks about him.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I know the hour is getting late and others want to be heard, but I briefly want to express some thoughts about our colleagues who are leaving this wonderful body. Today we have heard some very compelling speeches, particularly the one given by my good friend, Tom Daschle of South Dakota, our Democratic leader.

I was pleased to see so many of our colleagues remain on the floor to listen to the departing Democratic leader. The words he expressed about his State, his staff, his colleagues, his feelings about the country, and the future, are instructive. I know it can sound repetitive when people hear us talk about our colleagues this way, but I think it is important for the public to note that while they might hear only about the bickering, the part that you do not often see is the deep respect, affection, and caring that goes on among the Members of this body. This affection comes despite the differences that exist in red States and blue States, or being strongly conservative or strongly liberal.

There is this weaving of a common denominator through each and every one of us, particularly after years of common service in this remarkable institution we call the Senate. There is a deep and abiding respect for those who have come here, those who have served here, those who have tried to make a difference for our country.

It may seem like it is inside discussion, but I hope the public understands how deeply felt these comments are about colleagues who will no longer have the pleasure of spending each and every day in this Chamber, but whose friendship and collegiality will continue in the years ahead as we encounter each other in different walks of life. * * *

Mr. President, DON NICKLES and I arrived here on the same day in January 1981. There were 16 Republicans and 2 Democrats. If you think we had a sweep one way or the other a week or two ago, in 1981 there was truly a sweep.

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There were 16 Republicans and 2 Democrats. The other Democrat was Alan Dixon of Illinois, my good friend. Of the 16 Republicans who were elected, there will now only be 2 left in the 109th Congress. Today there are 3 of the 16 Republicans elected in 1980. DON NICKLES is the third, and he is leaving. I always say 50 percent of the Democrats are still here after 24 years.

It was an interesting class. DON NICKLES certainly was a remarkable public servant. Here he is after 24 years. I think DON is barely over 50. He was one of the youngest people ever elected to the Senate. He looks even younger. I think he ran the marathon just a few weeks ago, and is certainly in great health. He is truly a remarkable person.

We have disagreed on issues and have different points of view on many questions facing our country. But there has been no tougher, tenacious fighter for policies which he holds so dear, particularly in budgetary matters.

He has been a staunch supporter of lower taxes on business, of free markets, of limited government regulation. He is as tough a competitor as you are ever going to find.

I will tell you that when the battle is over—again, this is my advice to the new Members coming in, if you want a real role model to look to on how to serve—you could have one of the most fierce debates in your life out here on the floor with DON, but the minute that debate was over, you wouldn't have a better friend when you walked off the floor. He knew how to separate differences on public policy and not have it contaminate personal relationships.

Again, the new Members arriving here, as you get involved in debates, if you have disagreements with your colleagues on matters, don't let it become personal. That very colleague you are having the fight of your life with today, tomorrow may be your most significant ally on another issue. DON NICKLES is a wonderful example of that kind of stewardship in the Senate.

So to DON, Linda, and their family and children, we wish them the very best in the coming years. I am confident one way or the other that DON NICKLES is going to be directly and deeply involved in the public debate and discourse in our country in the coming years. * * *

I apologize for taking this extra time. It is important that the public hear Members talk about each other, even those who disagreed on matters, that they understand why this institution works more than 230 years after the Founders created it.

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I, as a Senator from Connecticut, take unique pride in the Senate because it was Roger Sherman and Oliver Ellsworth, both of Connecticut, who offered at the Constitutional Convention the idea of the Senate representing small and large States. Arguing over a unicameral system, Sherman and Ellsworth said, how about having a second body with equal representation, regardless of the size or the population of the State. As a result, this institution was created. It has been a great place that has served our Nation for so long and I am confident it will in the future.

We have been blessed by the participation of those who are leaving. All of us wish each and every one of them the very best in the years to come.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the year was 1980. Inflation was 13 percent, mortgage rates were hitting 15 percent, unemployment was 7.1 percent, and the economy was suffering its 4th year of recession in 10 years.

The Soviet Union was on the march in Afghanistan, its puppets were leading insurgents in Central America and South Africa, and U.S. Embassy officials were being held as hostages in Iran.

“Stagflation” and “malaise” were the new words of the American lexicon.

Then the Reagan revolution swept across this Nation and into this town. And while Ronald Reagan was the leader, he was not alone. Across this broad Nation, ordinary people came to this city with similar vision and they helped President Reagan accomplish extraordinary things.

One of these ordinary people was a young businessman from Ponca City, OK. At the tender age of 31, DON NICKLES was the youngest Republican ever elected to the U.S. Senate.

But while he might have been young, it didn’t take long for the Senate to discover that this young man—a former janitor who worked his way through college—was wise beyond his years and as solid as the Rock of Gibraltar.

Freedom has had no greater defender than DON NICKLES. He has been a strong proponent of the free enterprise system. On budget, tax, debt matters—in fact on almost every conceivable question of fiscal policy, DON NICKLES was dead on target.

He was absolutely committed to the bedrock Republican principles of cutting taxes, reducing the size of the government, and slaying the budget deficit leviathan.

And to these seemingly insurmountable goals, he brought a relentless yet cheerful determination.

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He has served this Nation and the people of Oklahoma so very well, with distinction and unwavering courage.

Too often, public servants come to Washington to drain the swamp until they see it as a hot tub. Not DON NICKLES. He changed Washington rather than letting Washington change him.

When he came to the Senate, he wanted to rein in government so people could keep their hard-earned dollars, and when he leaves now, his belief is the same today as it was when he placed his hand on the Bible.

That is the way it was then and now, and every day of his almost quarter of a century of Senate service. And he still looks like he is 31.

Back then, he fought to eliminate the inheritance tax on spouses and now he works to eliminate the inheritance tax altogether.

Back then he fought natural gas price controls which contributed to our energy crisis and now he fights price controls on prescription drugs.

Back then he fought the windfall profits tax and now he fights to ease the tax on profits and wages of businesses and families alike.

Mr. President, there isn't a Member of this body who doesn't respect DON NICKLES as a man of strong conviction, character, and deep faith.

I think there is good reason why he is seen that way. When the Founding Fathers designed the Senate to be one of the central pillars of American democracy, I think DON NICKLES is exactly the sort of citizen legislator they envisioned.

He has been a strong but happy warrior, and used the rules of this body to bring honor to the Senate and good service to our country. He loves the Senate and it showed every time he spoke. And we grew to love him in that process.

Through it all, he has never forgotten where he came from, or the people who put him here 24 years ago, or those who supported him, especially his wonderful wife Linda and his four children.

He will be remembered as the "keeper of the conservative flame," and like Ronald Reagan, should enjoy the legacy of freedom and economic prosperity he has created for all Americans in the years to come.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, the decision of the distinguished Senator from Oklahoma, Mr. NICKLES, to retire from the Senate will deprive this body of one of our most trusted

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and insightful leaders. I will miss very much the pleasure of serving with such an honest, forthright, and diligent colleague.

He brought to the Senate the valuable experience of running a family business which was translated through the use of his legislative skills into public policies that strengthened our economy by improving our tax and labor relations laws.

As chairman of the Budget Committee he was successful in his efforts to curb unnecessary spending. He was fair-minded in his dealings with Senators on both sides of the aisle.

He was a true friend to me in the Senate and a great help as a coach on the golf course. I wish him and his wife, Linda, much happiness and success in the years ahead.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I am reminded of the words of Will Rogers, that great Oklahoman whose statue is a few steps removed from the old Senate Chamber, who once said, "The income tax system is the only thing that has made a liar out of more of the American people than golf has."

Coincidentally, the tax system and golf are passions of another great Oklahoman whom I am proud to honor at the end of this Congress—our friend and colleague DON NICKLES.

DON has accomplished a great deal during his 24 years in the Senate. Chief among them is the fact that he somehow has managed to look almost exactly like he did when he first entered the Senate at the ripe old age of 32 in 1981.

But the accomplishment of DON that I admire the most is the remarkable record of success he has achieved in putting more money in the pockets of America's families by reducing their taxes and by restoring some fairness to the system.

To paraphrase Will Rogers, DON never met a tax he liked. And from reducing and then repealing the death tax to equalizing the tax system for the self-employed to being the guiding force behind the child tax credit, lowering the capital gains tax, and reducing tax rates for all Americans, no Senator has done more in the past 20 years to earn the enduring respect of our hard-working taxpayers than DON NICKLES.

DON will be greatly missed as a legislator, but he will also be greatly missed as a friend. I have long believed that you can learn a lot about someone by playing golf with them, and I've been privileged during my 8 years in the Senate to play a little bit of golf with DON.

And it should come as no surprise that his actions on the golf course are very much like his actions in the Senate.

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He is good, very good, at both.

And yes, there are times on the golf course like here in the Senate where he can be found on the right, the far right, but for the most part he plays it straight down the middle.

It is on the golf course where DON and I became more than colleagues, we became friends. And I know I am not alone in saying that I will miss DON's friendship, and the friendship of his wife Linda, on a day-to-day basis. When tragedy befell my family last year, DON was at my house within the hour. DON and Linda have been incredibly kind and supportive to Sharon and me.

DON, as a taxpayer I thank you for your service, as a golfer I thank you for more good memories than I can count, and as a friend, I thank you for being there when I needed you most.

I know your contributions to your State and your country are far from complete, and all your colleagues join with me in wishing you and Linda Godspeed as you begin this new chapter in your life.

SATURDAY, *November 20, 2004*

Mr. ALLARD. Madam President, I take a moment to talk about four colleagues whom I have had an opportunity to serve with in the Senate. * * *

Madam President, I also want to take a moment to talk about another colleague, DON NICKLES, who has had a long and distinguished career as we move into the waning days of the 108th Congress.

He brought to this Congress a perspective from the private sector. I am a small businessman. I grew up in the private sector. In my view, too few of us have had to meet the challenges and meet a payroll. I think it affects how you view rules and regulations and taxes.

Senator NICKLES from Oklahoma became a strong advocate of small business issues and worked hard to hold down the tax burden and regulatory burden.

I had an opportunity to serve with him when he was chairman of the Budget Committee, and I very much appreciated his leadership on that committee.

I also appreciated the opportunity to be able to work with him in holding down and actually eliminating the death tax which has such devastating effects on small business.

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During his many years here in the Congress, he has been an individual who maintained integrity in the process.

I view these four individuals as four individuals who have distinguished themselves in my mind and whom I have appreciated having the opportunity to serve with in the Senate and whom I hold in great esteem. I wish them the very best as they pursue life's journey, having served in a distinguished way in the Senate. I wish them the very best and Godspeed.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Madam President, I rise to say goodbye to several of my colleagues, dear friends with whom I have had the pleasure to work in the Senate.

I start with Senator DON NICKLES. We say goodbye to DON NICKLES of Oklahoma who leaves after spending 24 years in the Senate, but not spending much else. As chairman of the Budget Committee, his philosophy of smaller government and fiscal prudence often reminded this Chamber of our duty to be good stewards of the taxpayer dollars. DON did not back down but always held his ground, demonstrating his perseverance and conviction.

He was first chosen by his colleagues for a leadership position in 1988 as the chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee. He was next elected to the first of three terms as chairman of the Republican Policy Committee, and in 1996, 1998, and 2000, he was elected unanimously to be assistant Republican leader.

He was the principal sponsor of the 2003 economic growth package which cut the tax on dividends, reduced the capital gains rate, raised the child tax credit to \$1,000 per child, and reduced the marriage penalty. My friend also led efforts to reform the Internal Revenue Service. He helped enact the Nation's first balanced budget in three decades and passed laws to make Members of Congress accountable to the same laws as everyone else.

On a personal note, he worked with me on the marriage penalty. I could not have passed my bill to reduce the marriage penalty on married couples in our country without DON NICKLES's strong backing and leadership.

I will never forget the first time I met DON. It was at the Republican National Convention in Dallas, TX. DON was a young man and he had just been elected to the Senate, and everyone was referring to him as Senator. I assumed, because he was so young, that he must be a State senator. As I left, I said to him, you must have a long and great career ahead of you. I am sure you will run for higher office some

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day, thinking he was a State senator. But, in fact, he was a U.S. Senator already and was the youngest Member at the time.

He is the gold standard for principled conservatives who stand tall for their beliefs and work hard for their constituents.

As a Texan I may say there are times I am not fond of certain Oklahoma college football teams. I have always been proud of Oklahoma's DON NICKLES and honored to call him a neighbor. * * *

Madam President, I will miss all of my colleagues. As we take the opportunity to go forward in a new Congress, we will make new friends, but we will never forget the old ones.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. President, I want to share my views, as did Senator Hutchison and others, about our colleagues who are leaving for new adventures in life.

I wish all the best to Senator Hollings. We will miss his booming voice. We will miss Senator Edwards, Senator Graham of Florida, and Senator Daschle. We will also miss John Breau, a man we know will enjoy life with his good common sense and sense of humor. He is a good friend.

I want to speak about four others, though. * * *

DON NICKLES—Gosh, what a smart, principled leader. He will be missed. He is a taxpayer's hero. Last night, my wife and I enjoyed the Allen Jackson concert in DC. And that makes me think of country music. DON NICKLES is one of the reasons God made Oklahoma. We will miss DON NICKLES.

Mr. REID. DON NICKLES and I have done some things together in the Senate that I will always remember. There are laws on the statute books of this country. One of the things we did, and people said we could not do, resulted because we were concerned about regulations and how burdensome and overbearing they can become. So we introduced legislation that basically said if the administration promulgates a regulation that we do not think helps the country, then we can overturn that regulation. That is the law.

We have overturned regulations that have been burdensome to this country. I have not always liked the result of the legislation that has been overturned, but it is my law along with Senator NICKLES's. He is a great legislator.

We worked together on the Appropriations Subcommittee on Legislative Branch. We really did some things that have changed what goes on. We have changed things a great deal,

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such as how Members of the House and Senate do their franking. We changed that.

Senator NICKLES and I were the first to talk about how bad the East Front of the Capitol looked, and we did a number of things. We got the automobiles removed from the East Front of the Capitol. This was what first got me interested in doing something about having a visitor center on the East Front of the Capitol, which is now in the process of being completed.

I have so much respect for Senator NICKLES. He and I have a different political philosophy, no question about that, but I think the work we have done together sets an example of how Democrats and Republicans of totally different political philosophy can work together for the betterment of this country.

DON NICKLES is a good man. He is a young man. He has a great future in the private sector. I personally will miss him a lot. I care a great deal about DON NICKLES and wish him the very best.

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to departing Senators for their service and devotion to the U.S. Senate. They are not only my colleagues but my friends.

The reality of elections for the Senate is that every 2 years we experience change—current Members depart and new Members are welcomed. At every transition I am reminded by the reality that life is more than just politics. I am certain the departing Senators are experiencing a tremendous feeling of sorrow, yet anticipation of things to come, as they leave their friends, colleagues, and this great nurturing institution.

Though we may fight hard during campaigns, we return to the Senate after the election to realize that we are not just losing Senators—we are losing friends. There is a bond—a collegiality and friendship in the Senate that crosses party lines. We face long hard battles on the campaign trail and sometimes things can get ugly. But after all is said and done, after election day, we must all come back to Washington and work together to do what is best for our country.

I will certainly miss my colleagues with whom I have worked for several years. I have had the honor to serve on the Finance Committee with four of my distinguished retiring colleagues, including Senator John Breaux and Senator DON NICKLES. Both of these men were instrumental in leading the fight to reform Medicare.

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Senator DON NICKLES has been a valuable comrade in protecting intellectual property rights of pharmaceutical companies and reforming health care, specifically working hard to pass the Patients' Bill of Rights. He also sponsored commendable legislation to create the Office of International Religious Freedom at the Department of State, which I co-sponsored. Senator NICKLES as whip and chairman of the Budget Committee has done more to advocate fiscal conservatism than any other Senator during my tenure. He has true expertise in these issues, and I thank him for his guidance and leadership.

More important, Senator NICKLES befriended me when I first came to the Senate and encouraged me to get involved in the National Prayer Breakfast and the Senate bible study. If it were not for his friendship, my time in the Senate would have been drastically different.

Our departing Senators have been lights of inspiration and men who went above the call of duty to serve our country in their congressional capacities. They each have their own unique political perspective that has served the Senate well. Although my philosophies may differ from some Senators, we do not disagree on the greatness of America. We can all agree that we live in the greatest nation in the world, and we all believe that without democracy, life, liberty, and justice cannot flourish.

My departing colleagues are great men and great Americans. They have contributed immensely to our country—making their States and our country significantly better than when they first stepped foot on the Senate floor.

We are all going to miss their presence and wisdom here in the Senate. Their departures will surely leave a hole in expertise and leadership that will be hard to fill. I wish them health and happiness in their future endeavors—wherever the road may take them. May God continue to bless them and their families.

Come January, as we face another transition, I welcome in the new Members and look forward to forging new relationships as we continue to work toward making Americans safer, healthier, and more financially secure.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to express my sincere gratitude for having had the opportunity to serve with Senator DON NICKLES, and to wish him the very best as he retires from the Senate.

A lot of descriptive words come to my mind when I think of DON NICKLES. Among the most prominent are courageous,

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knowledgeable, and engaging. All three of these, as well as many other of DON NICKLES's qualities, will be sorely missed in the U.S. Senate.

I can think of no other Member of the Senate who has been a more rock solid beacon for conservatism than DON NICKLES. His is the kind of courage that leads him to speak up alone against the whole world, if necessary, for what he believes. No matter what the issue or whether it is brought up on the floor of the Senate, in one of his committees, or in some other forum, DON NICKLES is willing to speak up in his earnest yet friendly manner to ask questions, raise concerns, and stand up for conservative principles. Senator NICKLES has been one of the most articulate Senators I have seen in my 28 years of service in the Senate. His voice, in defense for what he and many of us believe to be right, will be noticeably absent in the months and years to come.

Senator NICKLES is also one of the most knowledgeable Members of this body. I have long been impressed with his grasp of minute details of economic, tax, and budget issues. His major committee assignments, Budget, Finance, and Energy, all cover complex issues that can take a huge amount of effort to master. Yet DON clearly does his homework and seems totally at ease in discussing details of the budget or a comprehensive tax bill. As chairman of the Budget Committee, Senator NICKLES has served with distinction. With all the challenges facing the budget in the recent past, DON has presided over that committee in particularly trying times. Yet he has exhibited patience and perseverance in the midst of a number of very difficult problems. Every citizen of this country owes him a debt of gratitude for his service on our behalf.

DON NICKLES is also one of the most engaging individuals I have had the privilege of knowing. His quick smile and friendliness to not only other Senators, but also to Senate staff and to everyone he meets marks him as a genuinely fine individual. I know DON has a deep faith in God and strives to do his best to live according to his convictions.

As Senator NICKLES moves on toward the next stage in his impressive career, I wish him the very best and hope that we have the opportunity to see him regularly and to have the benefit of his wisdom and knowledge for many years to come.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, DON NICKLES first came to the Senate in 1980 as a young man of 31 with a vision. He now leaves us, 24 years later, with a record we all can envy and a reputation we all should emulate. There are a lot of

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words that can be used to describe this man. Perhaps these five describe him best: "As good as his word."

In his eloquent eulogy to Ronald Reagan this summer, DON said that those who came to Washington after the watershed election of 1980, "considered ourselves part of the soldiers in the field trying to get an agenda done to expand freedom."

There is no more noble an agenda than the expansion of freedom, and he has been a devoted soldier to that cause. He has been a strong advocate for our Armed Forces, dedicated to the defense of our Nation and to the expansion of liberty around the world.

He has been equally devoted to the freedom that comes from responsible, less intrusive and more accountable government. He is a champion of effective economic-growth policies, and of tax reform that encourages investment and helps build strong families and communities. DON NICKLES has always been on the side of the American people. His tenure as chairman of the Budget Committee will long be held up as a model of effective leadership, a cooperative spirit wedded to rock-solid principles.

DON comes from a small State and from a background in small business. That we have not always agreed on every issue is insignificant. What does matter is the values we share and the friendship that is the result.

DON is much more than just an especially effective legislator and a very good friend. When Oklahoma City was struck by a heinous act of terrorism in 1995, he was there for the people of his State, offering comfort and support. The rebuilding, both material and spiritual, would not have been so quickly and thoroughly accomplished without the strength of DON NICKLES.

He came here as a young man and, despite the passage of 24 years, leaves as a young man. And, I might add, as a pretty fast man. In the New York Marathon last weekend, Oklahoma's senior Senator finished in the top half of a field of more than 36,000 runners. If there was a caucus for Senators able to run more than 26 miles in less than 4½ hours, I believe it would be the smallest in the history of the republic.

Thank you, Senator DON NICKLES, for your service to this institution and to this country. Whatever path the future sets before you, I know you will be at the front of the pack.

Mrs. DOLE. Mr. President, it is an honor to pay tribute to a good friend and colleague who has had such a stellar and

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effective career in the U.S. Senate. I am so proud to have worked alongside a man of such character and knowledge, and I am certain that I speak for all my colleagues when I say his leadership in Congress will be sorely missed.

DON NICKLES's career is the classic American success story. After working his way through Oklahoma State University by starting a janitorial service, he was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1980 at the age of 31. While serving in Congress, his peers have consistently shown their confidence in his abilities, electing him to several leadership posts including senatorial committee chair, chairman of the Republican Policy Committee, assistant majority leader and Budget Committee chairman.

The day after DON announced he would not seek a fifth U.S. Senate term, the Oklahoma City *Daily Oklahoman* stated that his retirement "will leave Oklahoma without its most powerful Washington advocate." How true that is. Over his two-decades-long career, the good that DON has done for his constituency is immeasurable.

As a Senator, DON has amassed a tremendous record as an advocate for taxpayers. When our economy was in need of recovery because of a recession compounded by the events of September 11, DON was a leader in pushing the economic growth and tax relief package through Congress. Thanks to his efforts, today our economy is on the upswing with jobs being added, homes being built and small businesses expanding. DON gets great credit for his role in making that happen.

I will always remember DON coming down to eastern North Carolina to campaign with me at a tobacco warehouse. Asked to speak on stage in favor of the tobacco quota buyout, which of course he did not support, he graciously spoke about how hard I would work to get this done for the State. DON demonstrated his character that day, as he did on so many other days during his many outstanding years as a servant of the public.

DON has always used the power of his office for good. I admire the way that he has stood for what he believes, no matter the challenge. He has brilliantly served the people of Oklahoma and all Americans with courage and conviction, a stellar example for those who follow in his footsteps. May God bless Senator DON NICKLES and his family for many years to come.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleagues today in paying tribute to a man whom, in the President's

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words, “has left his mark on virtually every major issue” during his service in this body, the senior Senator from Oklahoma, the Budget Committee chairman, our colleague DON NICKLES.

For more than two decades, Senator NICKLES has served the people of Oklahoma and America with strength of conviction, wisdom, and hard work, every day. I have had the good fortune of serving with the Senator from Oklahoma for a decade, particularly closely on the Budget and Finance Committees, and for 6 years as his counsel while he was majority whip. I have gotten to know well Senator NICKLES’s passion and insight, his firm understanding of policy matched with ability to plainly articulate it, and his generous sense of humor and warm personality that have made him a colleague no one will soon forget.

Oklahoma sent DON NICKLES to the Senate in the year of the Reagan revolution—1980. In many ways—and I know the Senator has said so himself—his start in public service was molded and defined by President Reagan’s inspiring vision and love of freedom. Our new 69-year-old President projected a contagious, even youthful optimism. So did the new Senator from Oklahoma, but in DON NICKLES’s case, it was the optimism of youth. At 31, he was the youngest Republican elected to this Chamber in American history.

Senator NICKLES’s contributions shepherding the Reagan agenda through Congress were immediate and his rise was meteoric. After 6 years he had served as NRSC chairman and was at the helm of the Republican Policy Council.

I must say that as chair of the Small Business Committee, I think it is an invaluable asset to the Senate to have a colleague such as Senator NICKLES who has been there on the front lines of job creation as an entrepreneur—starting his own janitorial service to work his way through Oklahoma State. Before Senator NICKLES came to Washington, he was a small businessman from Ponca City, OK. He was already allergic to needless redtape and gridlock. So when Senator NICKLES sees a problem, he sets out to solve it—guided by his deeply held principles and informed by a firm grasp of the legislative process.

Like the leader he counts as his mentor, President Reagan, the Senator from Oklahoma brings to public life his firmly rooted beliefs, a can-do Heartland optimism, and that rare ability to disagree without being disagreeable. Senator NICKLES is a colleague I will miss, and I wish him, his wife Linda,

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and his family much happiness in the new endeavors that lie ahead.

I am pleased to join my colleagues in thanking and honoring Senator NICKLES for over two decades of distinguished service to the country he loves and the State he has made proud.

Mr. DASCHLE. Today, I would like to say a few words about eight Senators with whom I have served these last historic 6 years, all of whom will be leaving when this Congress ends.

Senator NICKLES, Senator Campbell, Senator Fitzgerald, and Senator Miller, it has been a privilege to work with each of you. You have each sacrificed much to serve our Nation and I am sure you will continue to serve America well in the years to come. * * *

I have to be honest, Mr. President, it was not my wish to depart with these fine Senators. But it has been my honor and a joy to serve with them, and one that I will remember all the days of my life.

Mr. McCONNELL. We cannot conclude the 108th Congress without a sense of sadness. There are many—in fact there are too many—great Senators who are leaving this institution. I have already had an opportunity to express my goodbyes to Senator NICKLES, Senator Campbell, and Senator Fitzgerald.

I also wish a happy and healthy future to our colleagues across the aisle, Senator Daschle, Senator Breaux, Senator Hollings, Senator Bob Graham, Senator John Edwards, and Senator Zell Miller. Each of these men has made a lasting contribution to this marvelous institution.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I have served here long enough now that I have witnessed a lot of the comings and goings of many fine public servants whom I have known on the floor of the Senate.

Today, I would like to comment about those who are leaving us. * * *

Mr. President, another Senator who is leaving us is Senator DON NICKLES. Senator NICKLES is a man I first met when I was traveling through Oklahoma with my friend, Senator Bellmon, who served here as a Senator and as Governor of his State.

Senator NICKLES, obviously, is a man of great capability, too. As a matter of fact, he is the first Oklahoma Republican Senator to be elected for four terms. He has had a commit-

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ment to his constituents and to his colleagues. He, as I, served as assistant Republican leader. That is the highest leadership position ever held by a Member of the Senate from Oklahoma.

I particularly remember his role as chairman of the Budget Committee and his role in the Finance Committee because no one has been more strenuous in expressing his views concerning the level of spending in the United States and the necessity to have firm budget control over the processes of the Senate, particularly the appropriations process where I have served a great many years.

I do believe his commitment to making Federal Government more responsible and less intrusive, his commitment to the basic Republican principles that government nearest the people is best, has been demonstrated by his service in the Senate. We are going to have a tough time without his guidance. He, I am sure, will be somewhere near us—at least that is indicated.

But having met him even before he ran for the Senate, I felt really a great warmth of friendship for him because I know how hard he worked to become a Member of the Senate, and I know his commitment, having left his business and coming here to make a new life.

Linda and their four children have been known to all of us in one way or the other. I think he has a wonderful family, a wonderful wife, and we wish them well.

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