

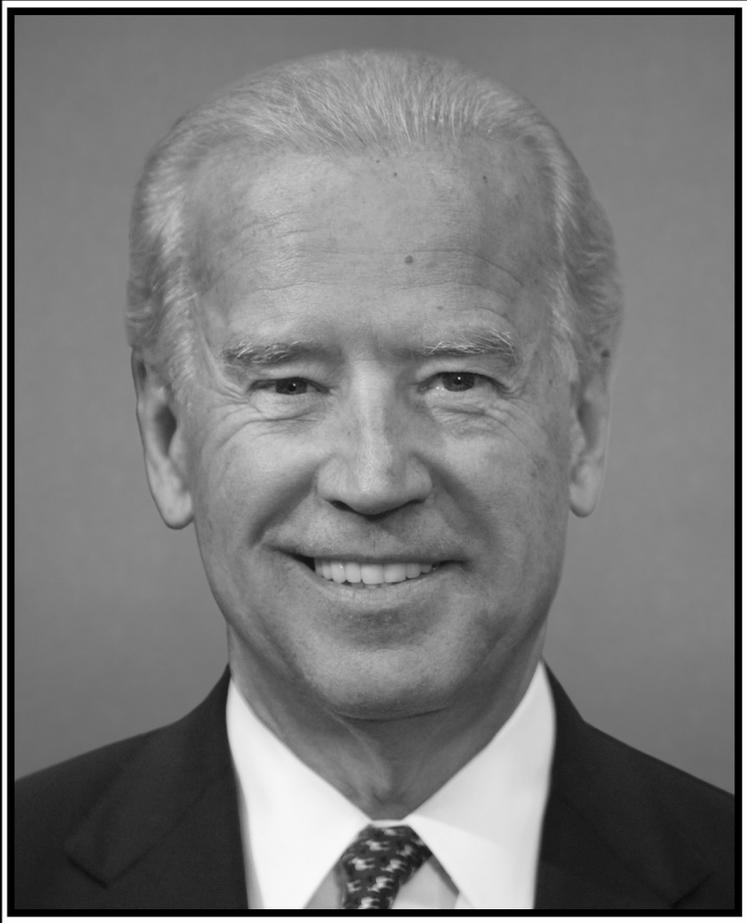
Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

U.S. SENATOR FROM DELAWARE

TRIBUTES

IN THE CONGRESS OF
THE UNITED STATES





Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

Tributes
Delivered in Congress

Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
United States Senator
1973–2009



*Compiled under the direction
of the
Joint Committee on Printing*

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BIOGRAPHY

JOSEPH ROBINETTE BIDEN, JR., was born November 20, 1942, in Scranton, PA, the first of four siblings. In 1953, the Biden family moved from Pennsylvania to Claymont, DE. He graduated from the University of Delaware and Syracuse Law School and served on the New Castle county council. Then, at age 29, he became one of the youngest people ever elected to the U.S. Senate.

Just weeks after the election, tragedy struck the Biden family, when Senator BIDEN's wife, Neilia, and their 1-year-old daughter, Naomi, were killed and their two young sons critically injured in an auto accident. JOSEPH BIDEN was sworn in to the U.S. Senate at his sons' hospital bedside and began commuting to Washington every day by train, a practice he maintained throughout his career in the Senate.

In 1977, Senator BIDEN married Jill Jacobs. Jill Biden, who holds a Ph.D. in education, has been an educator for over two decades. JOSEPH BIDEN has three children: Beau, Hunter, and Ashley. Beau serves as Delaware's attorney general and recently returned home from Iraq where he served as a captain in the 261st Signal Brigade of the Delaware National Guard. Ashley is a social worker, and Hunter is an attorney. Senator BIDEN has five grandchildren: Naomi, Finnegan, Roberta Mabel ("Maisy"), Natalie, and Robert Hunter.

As a Senator from Delaware for 36 years, Senator BIDEN established himself as a leader on some of our Nation's most important domestic and international challenges. As chairman or ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee for 17 years, Senator BIDEN was widely recognized for his work on criminal justice issues including the landmark 1994 crime bill and the Violence Against Women Act. As chairman or ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee since 1997, Senator BIDEN played a pivotal role in shaping U.S. foreign policy. He has been at the forefront of issues and legislation related to terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, post-cold war Europe, the Middle East, and Southwest Asia.

Letter of Resignation

Friday, January 9, 2009

Hon. RICHARD CHENEY,
*President of the United States Senate, U.S. Capitol,
Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. VICE PRESIDENT: I am resigning my seat in the United States Senate as the senior Senator from the State of Delaware to assume my duties as Vice President of the United States of America. My resignation is effective January 15, 2009, at 5 p.m.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR.,
U.S. Senator.

Farewell to the Senate

Thursday, January 15, 2009

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, let me begin by thanking the leaders for their kind comments. It is true that I have been here a long time, I say to my friend from Kentucky (Senator McConnell). As a matter of fact, I say to my friend from Hawaii (Senator Inouye), I remember the first time I stood on the floor as a Senator of the United States. It was the desk directly to your left, Senator, the top row, second in. It was temporarily my desk. I remember standing and being told that the desk on my right was the desk of Henry Clay and on my left Daniel Webster because the senior Senators from the respective States got those desks. I say to my friend from California (Senator Boxer), it was the only time I can remember being speechless when I stood there, as a 30-year-old kid, thinking: Oh, my God.

Well, I never thought I would be standing here today. I never believed serving in this Chamber was my destiny, but it always was a big part of my dreams.

I remember vividly the first time I walked in this Chamber, I walked through those doors as a 21-year-old tourist. I had been down visiting some of my friends at Georgetown University. I went to the University of Delaware. I had a blind date with a young lady from a school they used to call Visi Visitation—which is now part of Georgetown. My good friend, a guy named Dave Walsh, was there. After the evening, I stayed at his apartment. I shouldn't say this probably, but I will—I don't drink. Not for moral reasons, I just never had a drink. There is nothing worse than being a sober guy with a bunch of college guys who have a hangover the next morning.

So I got up and decided to get in the car—this is a true story, Senator Carper—and I drove up to the Capitol. I had always been fascinated with it. In those days, you could literally drive right up to the front steps. I was 21 years old. This was 1963. I say to my friend from Iowa, I drove up to the steps and there had been a rare Saturday session. It had just ended. So I walked up the steps, found myself in front

of the elevators, and I walked to the right to the Reception Room. There was no one there. The glass doors, those French doors that lead behind the Chamber, were open. There were no signs then. I walked into the Chamber and the lights were still on and I was awestruck, literally awestruck. I don't know what in God's name made me do it, but I walked up, I say to my friend from Arkansas (Senator Pryor), and I sat in the Presiding Officer's chair. I was mesmerized.

The next thing I know, I feel this hand on my shoulder and the Capitol policeman picks me up and says: "What are you doing?" After a few moments he realized I was just a dumbstruck kid. He didn't arrest me or anything. That was the first time I walked onto the Senate floor. It is literally a true story.

By the way, just 9 or 10 years later, I walked through those same doors as a Senator. A Capitol Hill policeman stopped me walking in and he said, "Do you remember me?" I said, "No, sir." He said, "I welcome you back to the Senate." He was a Capitol Hill policeman. He was retiring 2 weeks later. He said, "Welcome to the floor, legally."

Well, it is sort of fitting to the way I started my career here. I may not be a young man anymore, but I am still awestruck by this Chamber. I think it brings my career full cycle, to know that while I was once detained for sitting in the Presiding Officer's chair, I will now occasionally be detained in the Presiding Officer's chair as Vice President of the United States of America.

The Senate has been my life, and that is not hyperbole; it literally has been my life. I have been a Senator considerably longer than I was alive before I was a Senator. I may be resigning from the Senate today, but I will always be a Senate man. Except for the title "father," there is no title, including Vice President, that I am more proud to wear than that of a Senator of the United States.

When I arrived here, giants loomed over the landscape of the Senate, people with names such as Danny Inouye, Hubert Humphrey, Ed Muskie, William Fulbright, Jacob Javits, Mike Mansfield, Stuart Symington, Scoop Jackson, Sam Ervin, John McClellan, Warren Magnuson, Claiborne Pell, and a few others who are still here: Bob Byrd, and the lion of the Senate, Ted Kennedy. In those days, chairmen dominated. Literally, as Senator Inouye will remember, if a chairman said he wanted a vote, almost without exception, every other chairman voted with that chairman on a vote on the floor of the Senate in 1973. But the old ways of doing busi-

ness and the old ways of thinking were, at that very moment in the Senate's history, beginning to change.

As my colleagues know, there is a long-standing tradition in the Senate—I think honored in the breach now more than the rule—but when I got here in 1973, it was mandatory that a new Senator would pay respects to the “old bulls of the Senate.” I never dreamed I would be an old bull of the Senate.

I remember the first appointment I made. It was to go see Senator John Stennis, then-chairman of the Armed Services Committee. I now have Senator Stennis' office. I remember I walked in—and Senator Stennis had a great and large mahogany conference table that was a gift from the President of the Philippines to Vice President Barkley for the liberation of the Philippines. He used it as his desk. He had a blotter at one end of it. It seated—I don't know how many people it seats—15 people. It was a desk with a group of leather chairs around it.

I walked in—and those who remember John Stennis know he talked at you like this when he talked; he always put his hand up like this—he looked at me and he said, “Young man, sit down, sit down.” And he patted the leather chair next to him, so I dutifully sat down. He said, “Congratulations.” He said, “May I ask you a question?” I said, “Yes, sir, Mr. Chairman.” He said, “What made you run for the Senate?” Being tactful, as I always am, I answered honestly without thinking. I said, “Civil rights, sir.” As soon as I did, I could feel the beads of perspiration pop out on my head, and I thought: Oh, my God. He looked at me and he said—absolutely true story—he said, “Good, good, good.” That was the end of the conversation. Well, that was 1973.

In 1988, time had transpired; he had become my good friend. We shared a hospital room, a hospital suite at Walter Reed for a number of months. He had lost his leg to cancer. It was during that period when President Bush was coming into office. As the tradition is, as all my colleagues know, you get to choose your offices based on seniority, as offices come open. I have always thought—we all think our offices are the finest—of his office, which had been the office of a man whom he never referred to by his first name that I can remember, and the man after whom the Russell Building is named, Chairman Russell. It had been his office.

I walked down to look at his office. It was that period in December when no one was around. The elections were over. I walked in, and his secretary of 30 some years—I think her

name was Mildred—was there. My memory is not certain on that. I walked into the anteroom to his office, and all these boxes were piled up. He was packing up 40-some years of service.

She said, "Senator, welcome. Welcome. You all are going to take our office?"

I said, "I don't know, Mildred, I am going to check." I said, "Is the chairman in?"

She said, "No, you go right in the office."

I went in the office. Without her knowing it, Senator Stennis had come in through the other door of the hallway and was sitting there in his wheelchair in the same exact spot, with one leg, staring out the window of that office that looks out onto the Supreme Court.

I said, "Oh, Mr. Chairman, I apologize. I apologize for interrupting."

He said, "No, JOE, come in, sit down, sit down."

I sat down in that chair, and what astounded me, I say to Senator Boxer, is he looked at me and said, "JOE, do you remember the first time you came to see me?" I hadn't. I told this story about Senator Stennis to my friend from Mississippi before, as he walks on the floor.

He asked me, "Do you remember?"

I said, "No, I don't."

He said, "I asked you why you ran for the Senate."

I said, "Oh, I remember. I was a smart, young fellow, wasn't I."

He looked at me and said, "You all are going to take my office, aren't you, JOE?" He caressed that table, the table he loved so much. He caressed it like it was an animate object.

He said, "You are going to take my office?"

I said, "Yes, sir, I am."

He said, "I wanted to tell you then in 1973, and I am going to tell you all, this table here was the flagship of the Confederacy."

If you read "Masters of the Senate" about Johnson's term, you will see in the middle of the book a picture of the table in my office with the famous old Southern segregationist Senators sitting around that table chaired by Senator Russell.

He said, "This was the flagship of the Confederacy. Every Tuesday, we gathered here under Senator Russell's direction to plan the demise of the civil rights movement from 1954 to 1968. It is time this table passes from a man who was

against civil rights into the hands of a man who is for civil rights.”

I found it genuinely, without exaggeration, moving. We talked a few more minutes. I got up and when I got to the door, he turned to me in the wheelchair and said, “One more thing, JOE. The civil rights movement did more—more—to free the White man than the Black man.”

I looked at him and said, “Mr. Chairman, how is that?” Probably Thad will only remember as well as I do.

He said, “It freed my soul; it freed my soul.”

Ladies and gentlemen of the Senate, I can tell you that by his own account, John Stennis was personally enlarged by his service in the Senate. That is the power of this institution. Men and women who come to Washington, who come in contact with folks in different parts of the country that we represent, with slightly different cultural backgrounds, different religions, different attitudes about what makes this country great, all races, all religions, and it opens a door for change. I think it opens a door for personal growth, and in that comes the political progress this Nation has made.

I learned that lesson as a very young Senator. I got here in 1973, and one of the people, along with Danny and others on this floor who kept me here, was Mike Mansfield, the majority leader. Once a week he had us report to his office, which is where the leader’s office is on the other side. In retrospect, he was taking my pulse, to see how I was doing.

I walked in one day through those doors on the Republican side, and a man who became my friend, Jesse Helms—who came in 1972 with me, and his wife Dot, who is still my close friend and I keep in contact with her—were standing in the back excoriating Bob Dole for the Americans with Disabilities Act.

I walked through the floor on my way to my meeting with Senator Mansfield. I sat down on the other side of his desk. Some of you remember he smoked a pipe a lot of times when he was in his office. He had the pipe in his mouth and looked at me and said, “JOE, looks like something is bothering you.”

I said, “Mr. Leader, I can’t believe what I just heard on the floor of the Senate. I can’t believe that anyone could be so heartless and care so little about people with disabilities. I tell you, it makes me angry, Mr. Leader.”

He said, “JOE, what would you say if I told you that 4 years ago, maybe 5, Dot and Jesse Helms were reading, I think the *Charlotte Observer*, the local newspaper, and they saw a piece in the paper about a young man in braces who

was handicapped at an orphanage. He was in his early teens. All the caption said was the young man wanted nothing more for Christmas than to be part of a family.”

He said, “What would you say if I told you Dot and Jesse Helms adopted that young man as their own child?”

I said, “I would feel like a fool, an absolute fool.”

He said, “Well, they did.”

He said, “JOE, every man and woman sent here is sent here because their State recognizes something decent about them. It is easy to find the part you don’t like. I think your job, JOE, is to find out that part that caused him to be sent here.”

He said, “JOE, never question another man’s motive. Question his judgment but never his motive.”

I think I can say without fear of contradiction, I have never questioned any one of your motives. I learned that lesson very early at the hands of Iron Mike Mansfield who had more character in his little finger than the vast majority of people we know have in their whole bodies.

That advice has guided me, and hopefully well, and I hope it guides this Congress because those who are willing to look for the good in the other guy, the other woman, I think become better people and become better and more able legislators.

This approach allowed me to develop friendships I would never have expected would have occurred. I knew I would be friends with Danny Inouye who came to campaign for me. I knew I could be friends with Ted Kennedy. And I knew I could be friends with Fulbright and Humphrey and Javits, men with whom I shared a common view and a common philosophy. But I never thought I would develop deep personal relationships with men whose positions played an extremely large part in my desire to come to the Senate in the first place to change what they believed in—Eastland, Stennis, Thurmond. All these men became my friends.

As Senator Hatch will remember, after every executive session of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I used to go into Jim Eastland’s office, which was catercorner, and sit down. He allowed me to ask him a lot of dumb questions that a young kid would want to ask: “What is the most significant thing that has ever occurred since you have been here?”

On that score, he looked at me and said, “Air conditioning.”

I said, “I beg your pardon?”

He said, "The most significant thing that happened since I got here was air conditioning."

I thought: Wow, that is kind of strange.

He said, "You know, JOE, before we had air conditioning, all that recessed lighting all used to be great big pieces of glass like in showers." He said, "Come around May, that Sun—he used to use a little bit of profanity which I will not use for appropriate reasons—that darn Sun would beat down on that dome, hit that glass, act like a magnifying glass and heat up the Chamber, and we would all go home in May and June for the year. Then we put in air conditioning, stayed year round and ruined America."

(Laughter.)

Senator Stennis was my genuine friend. But one of the most unlikely friendships was Strom Thurmond. Some of you knew my relationship with Strom. Did I ever think when I got here I would become friends with Strom Thurmond? He stood for everything—I got started because of civil rights. Yet on his 100th birthday, certainly thereafter, on his deathbed I got a phone call from his wife Nancy. She said, "I am standing here at the nurse's station, JOE, with the doctor. I just left Strom. He asked me to call you. He wants a favor."

I said, "Of course, Nancy, whatever he wants."

She said, "He would like you to do his eulogy."

Well, I never thought in my wildest dreams that this place, these walls, the honor that resides here, would put me in a position where a man whose career was one of the most interesting in modern American history asked me to do his eulogy. I never worked so hard on a eulogy in my whole life. I think I was completely truthful—truthful to the best of my knowledge.

As I said, he was a man who reflected the ages. He lived in three different ages, three different parts of American history. I remind people, which some will not remember, by the time he resigned, he had the highest percentage of African-Americans working in his office as any Senator. He voted for the reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act. He had, in my view, I believe, changed.

This is an incredible place, I say to my colleagues, an incredible place. It has left me with the conviction that personal relationships are the one thing that unlocks the true potential of this place. Every good thing I have seen happen here, every bold step taken in the 36-plus years I have been here, came not from the application of pressure by interest groups but through the maturation of personal relationships.

Pressure groups can and are strong and important advocates, but they are not often vehicles for compromise. A personal relationship is what allows you to go after someone hammer and tongs on one issue and still find common ground on the next. It is the grease that lubricates this incredible system we have. It is what allows you to see the world from another person's perspective and allows them to take the time to see it from yours.

I am sure this has not been my experience alone. In a sense, I am probably preaching to the choir of the very men and women sitting in this Chamber who have experienced similar things.

One of the most moving things I ever saw in my life was on the floor of the Senate. The year was 1977. We were about to adjourn for the year. There was a vote cast, and as we all do, we assembled in the well to vote.

One of my personal heroes, Hubert Humphrey, was literally riddled with cancer. He died very shortly thereafter. He showed up, like Dewey Bartlett of Oklahoma, every single day knowing he literally had days to live. He walked down this aisle—because I was standing back here. I have been on this back row for 34 years, with my good friend Fritz Hollings.

So he walked down the aisle, and Barry Goldwater came through the doors and was coming down the aisle to vote. Barry Goldwater and Hubert Humphrey shared virtually nothing in common philosophically. They had a pretty tough campaign in 1964. Barry Goldwater saw Hubert and walked up and gave him a big bear hug. He kissed him and Hubert Humphrey kissed him back. And they stood there in a tight embrace for minutes, both crying. It brought the entire Senate to tears. But to me it was the mark of a storied history of this place. Hubert loved it here. He once said, "The Senate is a place filled with good will and good intentions, and if the road to hell is paved with them, then this is a pretty good detour."

Friendship and death are great equalizers. Death will seek all of us at some point, but we must choose to seek friendship. I believe our ability to work together with people with whom we have real and deep and abiding disagreements, especially in these consequential times, is going to determine whether we succeed in restoring America. I think it is literally that fundamental and basic.

Things have changed a great deal since I first arrived here. There were no women in the Senate. Margaret Chase

Smith had just retired and it would be 6 years until the next woman was elected in her own right, and that was Nancy Kassebaum. Today, there are 16 women in the Senate, and we need many more, but that is progress.

Our proceedings in those days were not televised. They didn't have fax machines, let alone e-mail. I remember the fights we used to have in conference about whether we would actually spend money for computers. Remember those fights? Some of the older guys thought: Computers? Why are we going to waste the taxpayers' money and put computers in our offices? I am almost embarrassed to acknowledge that. That makes me a "pretty old dude," as the kids would say.

I often hear Senators lament today that the 24-hour news cycle and the need to go back home every weekend—or in my case every night—makes it harder than it used to be to get to know one another, to share a meal. Not long after I first was elected, there was an accident in my family, and I didn't want to stay. Senators Humphrey, Kennedy, Mansfield, and Hollings, among others, said, "Just stay 6 months." It was not unusual in those days for there to be groups of Senators who, with their spouses, would take turns once a month having dinner for the rest of the Senators. Senator Eagleton of Missouri, who recently passed away and was a good friend; Senator Gaylord Nelson and his wife, who was incredible and who has also recently passed away; Senator Hollings; and my friend Senator Ted Stevens from Alaska had one of those groups, along with a guy named Saxby from Ohio, who became Attorney General. While I never, ever, stayed in Washington, particularly in those days, they insisted I come, and I would go to those dinners. I was a kid, I was single, but they included me. The truth of the matter is, they went a long way toward saving my life, changing my life.

You know, for the first time in 36 years, I am going to have a home in Washington—"public housing"—and I hope Jill and I can use it to help bring us all together. I hope it can be used to foster deepening relationships. We all are so busy in our own careers it is awfully hard to do it anymore.

I have seen Senators who have come to this institution to attack it—because that is how they got here, they attacked it. They called it useless and venal. Attitudes such as that, which have been observed in the past, can sometimes become self-fulfilling prophesies. But if you come here with a dedication to hard work, an open mind, some good faith, and to make progress, that, too, can become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

In 1837, Ralph Waldo Emerson, in his Phi Beta Kappa address to Harvard, said:

Meek young men grow up in libraries, believing it their duty to accept the views which Cicero, which Locke, which Bacon have given, forgetful that Cicero, Locke, and Bacon were only young men in libraries when they wrote those books.

I am told today by the Senate Historian that there have been over 1,900 Senators who have served. I have served with more than 320 of them, and I have learned something from every one. As a matter of fact, I was also given a piece of discouraging information as well; that only 19 Senators in the history of the United States of America have ever served as long as I have, one of whom is in this Chamber. As I said, I have learned a lot from them, and I can tell you from experience that most of them are only seen as giants in the hindsight of history. At the time, they were legislators trying to do their best.

I look in my desk and I see the names carved in the drawer. Maybe the public doesn't know how much like kids we are. We come over here after the Senate is closed and we sit there, somewhat embarrassed, and we actually carve our names in the drawers of the desk, in the bottom. It is a tradition. Maybe there is someone who didn't do it, but I don't know of anyone, even the most sophisticated among us. I look in the desk drawer I have and I see names of famous Delawareans, such as the longest serving family in the history of the State of Delaware—the Bayards. Six have been Senators. But I also see the names of Scoop Jackson and John F. Kennedy and others in my drawer. Look in your desk and you will see names you recognize as well, and you all know them. Forty years from now, when someone opens your desk and looks at your name, will they think of you the way I think of these men? To me, that is a test we each are going to have to meet.

With the gravity of the challenges we face today comes—as every similar moment in our history—the most significant opportunity for change, the most significant opportunity for progress. I firmly believe this, too, can be an era of legends, of giants. But this much I know: Our Nation desperately needs it to be.

During my first term in the Senate, when I spoke out in favor of campaign finance reform at a Democratic caucus—and Senator Inouye may remember this; he was then Secretary of the Senate—the President pro tempore, Jim Eastland, listened intently in what is now called the Mansfield

Room. When I got finished with my impassioned speech about the need for public financing, he stood—and he hardly ever spoke at the caucus, as Senator Inouye will remember—and he always wore a glen plaid suit and always had a cigar in his mouth about as big as a rubber hose. He leaned up at the table in the front—and he never stood completely straight—he sought recognition and he leaned up, put himself halfway up, took the cigar out of his mouth, and he said, “JOE, they tell me ya’ll are the youngest man to ever get elected to this august body.” I wasn’t. There was one younger than me popularly elected, but I didn’t dare correct him. He said:

Let me tell you something, JOE: Ya’ll make many more speeches like you did here today, you’re going to be the youngest one-term Senator in the history of the United States of America.

I walked out of that conference, as I have said to Leader Reid, and walked in here—and we didn’t use to have those booths by the phone—and Warren Magnuson, who also smoked a cigar, pulled out his cigar and said, “BIDEN, come here.” Can you imagine calling to a Senator and saying, “Come here.” He said:

Stop this stuff. I didn’t work this darned hard—a little different language used—I didn’t work this darned hard the past 30 years to have some sniveling little competitor get the same amount of money as me. Stop it. Stop it.

I walked away as politely and as quickly as I could. I never dreamed that nearly four decades later I would be elected to a seventh term to the Senate of the United States. Never, ever dreamed it. Thirty-six years ago, the people of Delaware gave me, as they have given you in your States, a rare and sacred opportunity to serve them. As I said, after the accident, I was prepared in 1973 to walk away from that opportunity. But men such as Ted Kennedy and Mike Mansfield and Hubert Humphrey and Fritz Hollings and Dan Inouye convinced me to stay—to “stay 6 months, JOE.” Remember that? Just stay 6 months. And one of the true giants of the Senate, who thank God is still with us, Robert C. Byrd, without any fanfare, in late December, in a cold, driving rain, drove to Wilmington, DE, stood outside a memorial service at a Catholic church for my deceased wife and daughter, soaking wet in that cold rain, and never once came to see me, just to show his respects, and then got back in the automobile and drove back to Washington, DC.

This is a remarkable place, gentlemen and ladies. And as I healed, this place became my second family, more than I

suspect it is for most. I needed it, and for that I will be forever grateful. So to the people of Delaware, who have given me the honor of serving them, there is no way I can ever express to them how much this meant to me. To my staff, past and present, and all those on the floor, past and present, dedicated to making this institution run, including the young pages, wide-eyed and hopefully going home and wanting to come back someday in our spots, thank you for everything you have done for me. I suspect you have done for me more than you have done for most.

To my children, Hunter and Ashley and Beau, if I was nothing else, I would be content to be the father of such wonderful people. To my grandchildren, who constantly remind me why the decisions we make in this august body are so important, and to my Jill, you once saved my life, and you are my life today, I thank all of you. I thank all my colleagues for making my Senate service possible and this next chapter in my career in life so hopeful.

I came here to fight for civil rights. In my office now sits that grand conference table that once was used to fight against civil rights, and I leave here today to begin my service to our Nation's first African-American President. The arc of the universe is long, but it does indeed bend toward justice, and the Senate of the United States has been an incredible instrument in assuring that justice.

So although you have not seen the last of me, I say for the last time, and with confidence in all of you, optimism in our future, and a heart with more gratitude than I can express, I yield the floor.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

TRIBUTES

TO

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR.

Proceedings in the Senate

FRIDAY, *January 9, 2009*

Mr. REID. Mr. President, what a sad but happy day it is to have that letter (of resignation) read before the world. JOE BIDEN, from the day I came to the Senate, was the most gracious, helpful person one could imagine. Having chosen him speaks volumes about Barack Obama. We will miss Senator BIDEN, with his many years in the Senate, but we look forward to his working arm in arm with Barack Obama for the next 8 years.

THURSDAY, *January 15, 2009*

Mr. REID. Mr. President, Senator BIDEN is here to give his farewell address to the U.S. Senate. Over the many decades he has served in the Senate, he has given many speeches on the floor. We all look forward to his final remarks, recognizing the loss of his service in the Senate is significant. However, being Vice President, he will still be President of the Senate.

I will always remember Senator BIDEN telling me, after the time he had been selected to be Vice President: "I am a Senate guy. I will always be a Senate guy."

Mr. REID. Mr. President, let me say about Vice President-elect JOE BIDEN, Senator JOE BIDEN, JOE BIDEN: Everyone knows about his courage, his wonderful family, his remarkable career in the U.S. Senate. We know he overcame a tremendously difficult personal tragedy during the first few days after his election. I am not sure many could have had the strength he had to conquer this tragedy. Then, of course, he got sick many years later and fought back. It was when Tim Johnson was in the hospital in a coma that JOE BIDEN visited him and his family and talked to him about the fact that there will be times when, as he is recovering, he may be embarrassed by his inability to speak very well. JOE

BIDEN is one of the great orators in the history of the country. No one would have ever known he had a problem very similar to what happened to Tim Johnson. He was such a role model to build Tim's confidence to be able to come back to the Senate.

We here in the Senate know his wonderful family, and now, because of his exposure to America, our country has been introduced to this great family. We know he is now in his seventh term in the Senate, in which time he has served as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, and that he is a champion of rights for women, the environment, a strong military, and the rule of law.

I have known JOE BIDEN since I came to Congress in 1982. I came to the Senate a few years later. But in all of this time, the picture in my mind is during the heat of the Presidential campaign. I am driving down through the capital of the State of Nevada, Carson City, and I look out on a corner there, and there is JOE BIDEN in Carson City, NV, campaigning. He had a number of people around him. I stopped the car, got out, and gave JOE a handshake and a big hug. It was so JOE BIDEN to be there. He was there pressing the flesh and talking to voters.

The people of Nevada have come to know and love JOE BIDEN for that very reason. He is kind of a regular guy; whether it is at one of the sandwich shops which came from Delaware to Nevada, Capriotti's—now they are all over Nevada—they all have a picture of JOE BIDEN in them because it was a Delaware-based sandwich shop. He is a regular kind of guy who shows up on a street corner just to talk to people.

I will always remember with gratitude the kindness he showed when I first arrived in the Senate in 1986. I will be forever grateful that he was one of the very first colleagues to support my candidacy for Democratic whip. I can remember; I was in his office. He called in his secretary, and I do not remember her name, but he said, "I take no more calls on this. Reid's man."

Well, I have always been his. I am a Senate guy, just like JOE BIDEN. We cannot get that out of our blood. I wish him well. He is going to be a great representative of our country, and I am very proud to be able to say to JOE BIDEN: "You are my friend."

MR. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I turn now to the issue of the moment, which is the celebration of the career of our good friend from Delaware and wishing him well in the fu-

ture. I remember being sworn in, in January 1985, thinking I had gotten to the Senate at a pretty early age. I was 42 years old. At the same time I was sworn in for my first term, the Senator from Delaware was being sworn in for his third time. He was barely old enough to vote when he got here. We were born in the same year, but you got a 12-year head start on me, I would say to my friend from Delaware, he has had an extraordinarily distinguished career.

When we think about Senator BIDEN, certainly we think about his marvelous personality, his demeanor, his friendliness. He can have a good riproaring debate without being disagreeable, as we all say. He has been a pleasure to work with. I say that as somebody who has rarely voted on the same side as he has. We say goodbye today to an outstanding individual who has been a fixture in the Senate for 36 years and a friend to everyone in the Chamber. He now, of course, is going to enjoy an even greater achievement as he becomes the Vice President of the United States.

I remember right from the beginning in 1985, as I was discussing a few minutes ago, that Senator BIDEN made everybody feel comfortable. Although we were born in the same year, as I indicated, he certainly got here at an early age, and it has allowed him to spend most of his adult life in the Senate.

America got to know JOE pretty well over the course of the last year. They got a chance to witness his humor, his compassion, and, yes, his extraordinary decency. They learned first hand his not entirely undeserved reputation for loquaciousness. They met his wonderful family. Barack Obama decided he liked what he saw in JOE BIDEN as well and invited him to be his running mate in what turned out to be a spirited Presidential campaign.

So next week, after the peaceful transition of power from one political party to another that has distinguished our democracy since 1801, JOE BIDEN will become the 47th Vice President of the United States. This inauguration marks the first time in almost 50 years that two Senators moved directly into the offices of President and Vice President. So no matter what outcome some of us may have hoped for in the election, I think my colleagues and I can feel a little institutional pride at that accomplishment—the fact that two Senators will be sworn in as President and Vice President.

Everyone knows by now JOE's famous loyalty to his beloved Amtrak and his regular commute by rail 80 minutes each day from his home in Wilmington to the Capitol. We

know of his commitment to being home with his family every night.

I am sure every single one of my friends in this Chamber has a story to tell of working with JOE. For my part, one of several efforts JOE and I worked together on is the Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act passed in 2006. After the election of the Hamas-dominated government in Gaza, JOE recognized, as I and others did, the threat that situation posed—and continues to pose as we have seen up close over the last weeks—the threat it poses to peace in the region. Thanks to his efforts, we were able to pass and have signed into law this important bill which restricts U.S. and foreign assistance to the Hamas-led government unless and until it takes serious steps to renounce terror and publicly recognizes Israel's right to exist. That bill was the right thing to do to confront terrorism. I am proud of my work with JOE BIDEN on it, and I know he is too.

I have also worked with JOE on tightening sanctions on the dictatorial, illegitimate regime currently ruling in Burma. Among other efforts, the Tom Lantos Block Burmese JADE Act, which we collaborated on, restricts the importation of Burmese Jade into America through other countries. That takes a large bite out of every lucrative source of profit for the Burmese regime.

JOE is well versed in these issues and many others, thanks to his years on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, with much of that time as either chairman or ranking member. I know he is particularly proud of his role in pushing for NATO expansion in Central and Eastern Europe in 1998 and in 2003.

We will all certainly miss JOE's presence as 1 of 100. It will take some getting used to, to have a Senate without him, but the good news is he is not going very far. Obviously, Senator BIDEN's election as Vice President is a great honor and a fitting tribute to his 36 years of public service. I look forward to working with him as a key player in the incoming administration, as Congress and the new President work together to tackle the many difficult issues this Nation faces.

Let me say, on a personal basis: JOE, it has been a pleasure knowing you and working with you over the years. Elaine and I wish you and Jill the very best in the coming years.

I yield the floor.

[Senator BIDEN's farewell address may be found on page vii.]

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I was elected State treasurer at the age of 29, 4 years after JOE BIDEN was elected to the Senate. For the last 30 years or so, I have had the honor and in some cases the misfortune of following him as a speaker, throughout the State of Delaware and in some cases around the country. It is a tough act to follow and I wouldn't pretend to be able to do that.

Over the last 200 years that we have had a Senator, we have seen any number of great orators come here and speak in this Chamber, in some cases to mesmerize us, in other cases to inspire us and to change our minds. JOE has done all of those things again today and he does it perhaps as well as anybody.

People speak here today, as in the years in the past, and they quote Churchill; we quote John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King. I am surprised he didn't quote one of his favorite Irish poets, Seamus Heaney, I think. He quotes him a lot. But the person I think I have heard JOE quote the most in his life has been none of those folks, none of those Irish poets, but it has been his mom and his dad. I wish I could ask for a show of hands, how many times have you had JOE BIDEN say to you: "I give you my word as a Biden." If we could count them all up today in this room and if we could get a dollar a week—maybe we couldn't pay for the stimulus package but we could make a pretty good down payment. Many times I have heard him say—he quotes his dad—I will paraphrase it: "It is a lucky man who gets up in the morning, puts his feet on the ground, and knows the work he is about to do has consequence, substance, is meaningful."

A guy doesn't turn out like this by chance—to become the youngest, not only one of the two youngest Senators elected in the history of our country, he is also the youngest seven-term Senator in the history of our country.

His mom is still living. She lives in a property close to JOE and Jill's home. His dad is deceased. But I know we owe them a huge debt of gratitude because the values they instilled in him, the need to serve other people, and the Golden Rule. This is a man of deep faith. You wouldn't always know it, he doesn't talk a lot about it, but this is a person whose life and values were shaped as much by his family and his faith as anybody I know. I know his parents taught him to treat other people the way he would like to be treated. That led to his great involvement and support of the Civil Rights Act and underlies everything he does today.

All of us have families. All of us love our families. I do not think I know anybody in public life or outside of public life who is more committed to and who loves his family any more than JOE: Jill, his first wife Neilia, whom I never had the pleasure of knowing—I tell you he has a wonderful wife in Jill. It is clear he loves her with all his heart. The three kids are not kids anymore; they are in their thirties and twenties. Beau is over in Iraq today serving in the National Guard. But there is an extraordinary bond between a father and a child.

It has been said the greatest gift that a father can give to his children is to love their mother. He doesn't just love their mother, he loves the kids, he loves the grandchildren. This is a loving guy with a family that is as strong as any I have ever seen. You heard the old saying I would rather see a sermon than hear a sermon. When it comes to family values, you see the sermon. You don't just hear it, you see it. We see the sermon.

In politics, I like to say our friends come and go but our enemies accumulate. When you think about the people JOE has talked about here today, from Eastland to Jesse Helms to Senator Thurmond—he didn't mention Phil Gramm—you would never imagine a guy who has his convictions, his philosophy, his commitment to civil rights and other causes—you would never imagine he would become their friend, confidant—and not so much for them to change him, but for him to change them and in fact this country.

JOE, you have been part of the glue that holds this place together. As we have said goodbye to a lot of good men in the last several weeks, it is a real sort of sense, not of bitterness, not of sweetness, but maybe bittersweet that we say goodbye to you today. The 8 years I have been here, I know there have been a lot of times when we sought to try to make sure the Vice President didn't come and cast a tie-breaking vote. My guess is in the time you serve for Vice President—4 years or 8 years, however long it is going to be; I hope it is 8—my guess is there will be times we orchestrate the votes so you will have to be here. I don't know if we can do it in a way that will allow you to come to the floor and give another speech like you have just given. Maybe we can figure it out.

But as a friend, as we say goodbye and move on to this next assignment in life: God bless our President-elect. He has made a terrific choice not just for Delaware, which is hugely happy and excited, but I think for our country and I

think for the world. I want to say, for the last 8 years, thank you for being my friend, my confidant. Thank you for being my adviser. Thank you for asking for my advice from time to time and listening to my advice. To your staff that is gathered here today, and your family up in the balcony, thank you for sharing with us a wonderful human being, for nurturing and bringing him along. The staff has provided such terrific support, almost like an extension of my own staff. We love your family and we love your staff and we are going to miss you. Thank you for always having my back, and for looking out for me and for making possible the extraordinary experience as a junior Senator for the last 8 years.

I understand your resignation becomes effective, is it 5 p.m. today? As I look at this clock here, I know for the next 5 hours, 49 minutes, I get to be a junior Senator and then after that I move up in the pecking order. But I will always be your junior Senator and your colleague and I hope your friend. God bless you in all your life ahead and thank you for all you have done for us and for me especially. God bless you.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. BIDEN. Thank you very much. You have been one of my closest friends and confidants and you will continue to be, and I appreciate your sentiment.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Utah is recognized.

Mr. HATCH. I am only going to take a few minutes, but I want to say a few things about my friend JOE BIDEN, certainly from this side of the aisle.

Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Senator JOE BIDEN as his service in the Senate representing the great State of Delaware ends and his service as our Nation's next Vice President is about to begin.

Like everybody else, when I think of JOE BIDEN, I first think of his family. As important as the Senate has been in defining his illustrious career, the man we know has been defined by his wife Jill and his children. Senator BIDEN, were he never elected to the Senate or the Vice Presidency, has succeeded and accomplished much in this life when you see the tremendous job he and Jill did in raising Beau, Hunter, and Ashley.

Today, however, our remarks will focus on Senator BIDEN's legislative and other professional accomplishments. I can tell you first hand that anyone would be hard pressed to find a more distinguished and effective legislator. In an age of endless cynicism toward our elected officials, let there be no doubt that the word "distinguished" is a truly fitting description of this extraordinary public servant. He is a friend of mine. I have been privileged to serve 32 years side by side with JOE BIDEN on the Judiciary Committee and I have nothing but respect for him.

Most of our work together was on the Senate Judiciary Committee, where Senator BIDEN served as chairman from 1985 until 1995. I served as ranking member for many of those years, and when I first served as chairman from 1995 to 1997, I had the good fortune of having JOE BIDEN as my partner on the committee, serving as ranking member. It was on the committee that I saw Senator BIDEN at work and learned a great deal.

I can think of no chairman of the Judiciary Committee who had a better sense of what he wanted to accomplish—a vision for the committee—than Senator JOE BIDEN. No one was more interested in the details of legislating than he was. The Violence Against Women Act, the Violent Crime Control Act of 1994, the Drug Czar's Office and the COPS Program all would not exist today were it not for his talents and leadership.

In one of my proudest moments as a U.S. Senator, I was joined by Senator BIDEN here on the Senate floor to hail the passage of the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act, which President Bush signed into law a week later, June 2006. Senator BIDEN and I had introduced the bill only a year earlier, and we worked hard to see its passage in a relatively short amount of time. The bill was very significant and the law has changed the landscape with regard to sentencing, monitoring, adjudicating, registering, and tracking sexual predators.

As chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Senator BIDEN mastered the Senate's dying art of legislating because he valued legislating. JOE BIDEN is not just a speech giver—though he is good at giving a long speech—he is an exceptional legislator. Majority Leader George Mitchell said he was the best Senate floor strategist he had ever worked with, and coming from George Mitchell, that's saying something, because George Mitchell was one of the best majority leaders we have had in the Senate. There are few like Senator BIDEN left in

the Senate who have the skill and patience to carefully and thoughtfully develop an idea for policy reform; craft what he believes to be the ideal bill; patiently—and with the long view—establish a record through hearings, reports, and media engagement; build institutional support by corralling colleagues and crafting compromise; and skillfully managing the bill’s passage on the floor.

Political pundits and the media have for decades tried to get a handle on what makes JOE BIDEN tick. Too often, they settled for the easy answer—JOE’s a “wild stallion that never felt the bridle” or he is an “unguided missile.” That’s nonsense. Senator BIDEN has proven himself to be an accomplished statesman with enormous personal vision.

I am proud he is going to be our next Vice President of the United States serving with, as he said, the first African-American President. We are all proud of that and we should be, and we should do everything in our power to help.

No one better captured the JOE BIDEN we know than the author Richard Ben Cramer, who won the Pulitzer Prize for his political reporting of the 1988 Presidential race in the classic book “What It Takes.”

As a kid growing up in Scranton, “there was (to be perfectly blunt, as JOE would say) a breathtaking element of balls.” That was Richard Ben Cramer, not me. “JOE BIDEN had balls. Lot of times more balls than sense What he was, was tough from the neck up. He knew what he wanted to do and he did it.” Later in life as a lawyer, he applied that mental toughness and, another quote, “cocky self-possession” to his chosen career—politics. There, JOE BIDEN would envision what he wanted to achieve and how he wanted to achieve it. While the experts, staffers, and consultants we Senators come to rely on would buzz around him with advice and direction, JOE BIDEN would listen but know in his gut what to do. “JOE could see the whole thing in his head, and what’s more, he could talk it.”

In the end, what JOE BIDEN chose to take on and how he succeeded all rested on JOE’s certainty. As Richard Ben Cramer wrote:

Once he’d seen it . . . he knew what was supposed to happen . . . Hell, it was a done deal . . . and then it wasn’t imagination, or even balls. Not to JOE BIDEN. It was destiny.

That is from “What It Takes,” Richard Ben Cramer’s book from 1993.

The record of JOE BIDEN’s life is clear. Mr. Vice President-elect, you have had “what it takes” to be an accomplished

Senator, and you have “what it takes” to be our Nation’s Vice President.

Your tenure here has been marked with hard work, and much success, much pain, and much grief, much difficulty. Yet you remain humble and hard working. The skills and abilities our Lord bestowed on you have been used mightily by you. Your integrity, truthfulness, and passion will continue to serve you and this great country of ours.

I thank you for your service, and thank you for your friendship, thank you for your continued sacrifice on behalf of this great Nation, and I tell you personally that I love you. I appreciate you very much. I care for you. I care for your family. We are going to be helpful to you as Vice President of the United States. And we hope you will not screw it up too badly there. We are going to be right there with you, if we can.

JOE, we are proud of you and we ask God to bless you.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. BIDEN. I would like, if I may, Mr. President, to thank my friend from Utah for his kind comments. We have been buddies for a long time. I hope that continues in my new job.

Mr. KERRY. It is hard to imagine, at least for me it is hard to imagine, the Senate without JOE BIDEN—at least as a Senator on the floor, in the thick of the fray. That is not just because he came here as a kid, so to speak, not just because he chaired some of this institution’s most important committees, but it is because of this particular moment that we find ourselves in, in the country.

This is the kind of moment JOE BIDEN loves to be in the middle of, legislating. Obviously, we take a very special pride in knowing that one of our own is about to become Vice President. While this makes him President of the Senate, for once I actually wish Dick Cheney was right and that JOE was still a part of the legislative branch. But, make no mistake, the Senate’s loss is President Obama’s and the country’s gain. JOE will bring a terrific strategic thinking and legislative experience to the challenges we face.

This is a special moment in so many ways, and it is an emotional moment. I have known JOE since we were both kids, in terms of this journey, since we first ran for office in 1972. We learned about each other then, reading the press clips of each other’s races, hearing stories from mutual friends and joint campaign workers. The conventional wis-

dom of that year is that JOE couldn't win his race against an incumbent, Hale Boggs, who had been in office and winning elections in Delaware for 6 years. I, on the other hand, was favored to win mine. True to conventional wisdom, it turned out exactly the opposite way.

To this day, I like to kid our longtime friend, our New Jersey friend, John Marttila, who was deeply involved in both of our races back then, that if he had just spent a little more time in Lowell, MA, and a little less time in Wilmington, things might have turned out differently. But for JOE and me, both in politics and in life, things have actually turned out pretty well, and I have loved sharing this journey with him.

In a lot of ways, JOE BIDEN is an old-fashioned kind of guy. He lives life and politics by what a lot of people think are the old rules, regrettably: Unfailingly loyal, your word is your bond, you tell the truth, you act on principle not ideology, and you keep faith with family and home, you never forget where your roots are or who you are, and you are consistent and honest in all your endeavors.

JOE BIDEN is all of that and a lot more in many personal ways. He is a patriarch to the core, in the best time-honored understanding of the meaning of that word. He never smiles more broadly or picks up more personal energy than when he is talking about his family. Frankly, to know JOE BIDEN is also to know a lot of Bidens.

Dozens of our colleagues, hundreds over the years, know that if you call JOE BIDEN with a late-night question, the odds are pretty high you are going to find him on that train, riding Amtrak home to be there with Jill, Beau, Hunter, Ashley, and the grandchildren. There is something pretty great about a Senator who makes sure to stop by his mom's house for ice cream or a kiss good night on his way home. That is exactly what JOE BIDEN would do with his 92-year-old spitfire mother, Jean Finnegan Biden. It is the lessons of that big, Irish, warm, protective family that JOE brought to the Senate. He is the big brother whose sister Val remembers him as her protector on the playground, the dad whom Beau and Hunter remember urging them to get up when they got knocked down on the soccer field, the boss who calls a staff member when they have a sick parent or who threatens to fire you if you miss your kid's birthday because you are working late for him.

This is someone in the Senate who had a reputation for not just talking about family values but living them. As JOE

BIDEN said so movingly this morning: He saw the Senate as an extended family and here he applied the lessons his dad taught him in Scranton, that everything comes down to dignity and respect. He has always respected the institution, and he always respected the dignity and individuality of every single one of his colleagues.

One of the great stories that JOE told today, which has always spoken to me personally, is one that tells a lot about ushering in a new era of bipartisanship. When JOE first arrived in the Senate, he complained to the majority leader, Mike Mansfield, about a speech that another new Senator named Jesse Helms had made. Mike Mansfield told him, "JOE, understand one thing. Everyone is sent here for a reason; because there is something in them that their folks like. Don't question their motive."

Every one of us who has worked with JOE BIDEN knows how much he took this lesson to heart and how much we gain by applying it today. His example is clear. If you treat people decently, look for the best in them, you can sit down and work through divisive issues; not just score more political points but actually get something done.

JOE likes to talk about his first impression of Jesse Helms, but he is often too modest to talk about what happened later. Some people might have been surprised that JOE BIDEN, Jesse Helms, and I teamed up in the fight against global HIV/AIDS. Some never would have believed that together we could bring about what is today the largest public health expenditure or effort by any single country in world history. That is what happens when JOE BIDEN takes to heart the message of a wise warhorse such as Mike Mansfield, looks past the stereotypes, past the party labels, and throws out all the ideological language to find the common ground.

Nowhere did I see that more than on the issue of crime. Coming from the vantage point of being a prosecutor in the 1970s, who then became a Senator in the 1980s, I can tell you there was no more divisive, ugly wedge and emotionally charged issue than crime until JOE BIDEN and the 1994 crime bill. JOE put an end to the "Willie Hortonizing" of this issue. We worked closely together and put more cops on the streets of America. I remember JOE's passion and tenacity on that bill.

It was a huge, landmark piece of legislation, complicated, divisive—but not so because of JOE's enormous skill that shepherded it through the ideological minefields that otherwise might have been impossible. JOE was simply not going

to accept defeat. He made dozens of trips to the White House, had dozens of meetings with congressional leadership, all to find a way to create common ground and ultimately pass a bill that resulted in the lowest crime rates in a generation. Every step of the way he sought out friends, he crossed the aisle, he worked the process and built allies and invited them to share not just in the work but also to share in the credit, which is, in the end, the best way to get things done here. That is leadership in the Senate and that is exactly how we make progress.

He also brought great skill to his stewardship in the Foreign Relations Committee. I served on that committee for the full 25 years I have been here, all of it with JOE BIDEN and some of it with JOE BIDEN as our chair. Let me give an example.

When Russian tanks rolled into Georgia, respecting Georgia's sovereignty became a sound bite for a lot of people, but for JOE BIDEN it was a moment to pick up a phone, call up an old friend, someone he had met as a young Parliamentarian, who was then in his twenties. So JOE BIDEN got on a plane, took that flight all night, and sat on a hilltop in Georgia with his old friend, Mikheil Saakashvili, and together they talked not just about the security of Georgia but the security of a man who was then in very real danger, a man JOE BIDEN believed was willing to die for democracy.

This is just one small example of the emotional intelligence and personal touch that had been the calling cards of JOE'S career in public life for decades.

As we all know, JOE is blessed with a big, all-encompassing Irish sense of humor, an ability to have fun amidst all the rest of the tensions and stress and chaos. We still joke about the trip we took with Chuck Hagel to a forward operating base in Kunar Province in Afghanistan in the middle of winter and our helicopter wound up getting caught in a blizzard. We had just received a briefing that, where the modern road system ends, the Taliban begins. Lo and behold, the next thing we knew, we had a forced landing high on a mountaintop on a dirt road with nothing around us. We sat around swapping stories for a while and came up with a few contingency plans in case the Taliban attacked. First, we thought—use the hot air of three talkative Senators and the helicopter will rise. Then we figured failing that we will talk the Taliban to death. Ultimately, we figured we would let JOE BIDEN lead a snowball charge and that would be the end of the deal. But our superb military protectors, efficient

as always, soon had us out of there, safe and rescued, and we have had a good time laughing about it ever since. Later, when I told him my plan to have him lead the brigade, JOE, reliving his Blue Hen college football glory days, flexed his right arm and said in that inimitable BIDEN way, “The Taliban? They are not worth my rocket arm.”

As chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, JOE applied a no-holds-barred, unvarnished truth telling to many politically sensitive issues. In the middle of his own Presidential campaign, he didn’t hesitate to ask whether our counterterrorism policy had turned a deadly serious but manageable threat, a small number of radical groups that hate America, into a 10-foot-tall existential monster that dictates nearly every move we make. It was not a poll-tested or popular question, but it was a sign of leadership and a mark of vision that will serve America well when he takes the oath as Vice President of the United States.

Let me share one last story involving my senior Senator, Ted Kennedy, who has been an incredible mentor, both to me and to JOE, since we both got into this business.

Years ago, when Ted Kennedy joined the Armed Services Committee, Senate rules dictated that TED had to step down from the Judiciary Committee. That would have made JOE the chairman. So JOE had all the interest in the world for that to happen. But, instead—and I suppose I should say what Senator in their early forties, presented with the choice, wouldn’t have loved to have had the responsibility of the Judiciary Committee? But JOE BIDEN went to the caucus and he gave them an ultimatum. He said point blank: “This is ridiculous. I wouldn’t serve as a chairman unless I have Teddy Kennedy on my side on this committee.”

Make no mistake, Ted Kennedy moved to Armed Services, but he stayed on the Judiciary Committee. Together, they fought some of the greatest confirmation battles in the history of the Supreme Court. No one can imagine the Judiciary Committee without Ted Kennedy’s decades of focus and fire. But the Senate should know it would not have been possible if it had not been for JOE BIDEN’s youthful challenge to the leadership to get him to be able to stay there.

JOE is one of the people in the Senate whom I have had the privilege of enjoying now for a quarter of a century and one of the people, obviously, I have enjoyed serving with the most. We have been through a lot. We have shared a lot, good and bad, ups and downs. What is exciting is, frankly, we still have a lot more to come. While JOE is making that

short ride up to the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, I know there is one thing that is not going to change. We are always going to be able to count on him to be the same JOE BIDEN, and I know we can take that to the bank. When JOE works with us in these next months—and he will work with us intensely—and when he says to you, “I give you my word as a Biden that this is going to happen,” we can take that to the bank and know it will happen.

We are very proud of our colleague, Senator BIDEN. We wish him well and Godspeed. We look forward to seeing him as the presiding official of this body, but, more important, we look forward to working with him on the enormous challenges this country faces.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I rise to honor my good friend and our distinguished colleague, JOE BIDEN, who will be ending his remarkable Senate career to assume the office of the Vice President of the United States. It has been my great privilege to serve with JOE BIDEN in the Senate for 32 years. He and I have served together on the Foreign Relations Committee for all of the 30 years that I have been a member of that panel. He entered the Senate as the sixth youngest person ever elected to this body, having been elected at age 29 and seated soon after he reached the constitutionally required 30 years of age. He leaves as the longest serving Senator in the history of his State and the 14th longest serving Senator in U.S. history. He has cast more Senate votes than all but nine other Senators in history.

JOE BIDEN comes from a modest Irish-Catholic background. He started out in Scranton, PA, where his father was a used car salesman and his mother was a homemaker. The oldest of four children, JOE and his family moved to Claymont, DE, where his father had found a better job. It may be hard for many to believe today, but as a teenager, JOE had trouble speaking because he had a stutter. But showing the grit and determination we all have come to know, he undertook to give a speech to his entire school as a way to force himself to overcome his impediment. At the University of Delaware, he majored in history and political science, and he received a law degree from Syracuse University.

He started practicing law and worked as a public defender, but perhaps because his grandfather had been a State senator in Pennsylvania, he was soon attracted to politics. At the young age of 27, he was elected to the county council of New Castle County in Delaware. Two years later he sur-

prised all the political experts in his State, as well as his opponent, by defeating an incumbent Senator in a presumably “safe” seat. The margin of victory was just over 3,000 votes, but JOE went on to increase his vote totals in subsequent re-election races.

Although JOE was elected at an especially young age, it would be wrong to say that he led a charmed life. In fact, just the opposite is the case. Just weeks after his election, his wife Neilia and his youngest child Naomi were killed in a car crash while Christmas shopping. His two other children, Beau and Hunter, were critically injured. Naturally, the tragedy was devastating to JOE, and he considered dropping the Senate seat to tend to his stricken family. The distinguished majority leader at the time, Mike Mansfield, persuaded JOE to reconsider, and he took the oath of office at his sons’ hospital bedsides.

It was the start of a long career of dedicated service in the Senate. It also was the start of a tradition for which JOE has become famous—his regular commute on Amtrak from Wilmington down to Washington when the Senate was in session.

When I arrived in the Senate 4 years later, JOE had already established a reputation as a dynamic presence on Capitol Hill. In 1979, I joined him on the Foreign Relations Committee, where he had become a member in 1975. We have served together ever since, and I have benefited greatly from JOE’s friendship during that time. I have always believed that foreign policy is most effective when it is done in a bipartisan manner, and in JOE I found an able partner willing to work across the aisle to achieve important victories on behalf of the country and the American people. Some of the battles have not been easy. I recall, for instance, the difficult job we had in achieving passage of the Chemical Weapons Convention during President Clinton’s administration. We celebrated another major victory last year with the passage of the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act. Recently, our collaboration led to the joint sponsoring and introduction of the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act. We have worked closely on legislation related to Iraq, Afghanistan, climate change, tropical forest conservation, international violence against women, the control of global pathogens, and numerous arms control measures.

Each of us has twice been chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, and we and our staffs have worked with

special purpose during those times. We share the belief that the Foreign Relations Committee occupies a special place in history and is an essential component of a successful U.S. foreign policy. It is because of JOE's wide experience, keen mind, steady hand, and strong advocacy that he was chosen by our committee colleague, Senator Obama, to be his Vice Presidential running mate.

While I will deeply miss working with JOE on the committee, I look forward to joining with him to achieve further accomplishments while he is Vice President. Besides a new commuting routine, he will face many challenges, and I know he will gain strength from the support and affection of his family: his lovely wife Jill, their daughter Ashley, and his two sons, Beau and Hunter, as well as their five grandchildren. I wish them all the best as they begin this exciting new chapter in their lives.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, on this cold January morning, I am being kept warm by four glorious words that keep running through my mind—those four words are: “Vice President JOE BIDEN.” I love the sound of that. It is music to my ears.

I have known JOE BIDEN for nearly four decades, since he was first elected to the Senate in 1972. I have been enriched by his friendship. I have appreciated his commitment to public service. I have watched his work as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Senate Committee on the Judiciary. I have admired the enthusiasm and dedication he has brought to his work every single day he has been a U.S. Senator.

His years of service in this institution will be one of his greatest assets in the years ahead. During his tenure in the Senate, JOE has gained a priceless working understanding of the importance of our constitutional systems of checks and balances and separation of powers. He has stood on this floor and argued long and hard—with fire in his belly—against executives of both political parties when he felt it was in the best interests of this Nation. We have all watched him, time and again, pacing this floor, speaking in that rhythmic JOE BIDEN way—drawing us in with a shout and then punctuating his point in whispered tones. I can see him now, putting the White House on notice, and defending the advice and consent authority of Senators. JOE has seen how this part of the government—the people's branch—lives. He will assume his new job fresh from membership in the world's

greatest deliberative body. Those Senate years will, I believe, serve him, the country, and the people, well.

Senator BIDEN is moving on, and while I regret losing him as a colleague here, I am heartened by the experience and wisdom he takes to his new duties. I believe that he will be a great Vice President. My good friend and former colleague, President-elect Obama showed outstanding judgment when he selected Senator JOE BIDEN to be his running mate.

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, I am so honored to be here at the same time with my friend and colleague whom I admire so much and have such great affection for, the Vice President-elect, JOE BIDEN.

I listened with enthusiasm and a lot of sentiment to the speech he delivered a few minutes ago. And the way he evoked the Senate and the relationships that are developed here and the work that is done on behalf of our country was as good as I have ever heard it.

FRIDAY, *January 16, 2009*

Mr. REID. . . . There is only one JOE BIDEN. Senator Kaufman will replace him, but no one will ever fill the shoes of JOE BIDEN. As was said on this floor yesterday at great length, JOE BIDEN is a unique individual. . . .

We who work in the Senate know of the strength of JOE BIDEN, but one of the reasons he has had the strength he has had over these years was because his back was always protected by Ted Kaufman. . . .

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, actually it is not the first time I have been recognized as senior Senator. For about 2 months now, since JOE BIDEN was nominated and elected as Vice President, people have been referring to me as the senior Senator. I always have to correct them and I say no, it is 4 days, 3 hours, 12 minutes away. Today we counted down, today we counted down to zero.

Yesterday, when Senator BIDEN resigned at 5 o'clock, I think for 17 hours I was both the junior and senior Senator. Dick Durbin was that for almost 2 months, from Illinois.

I asked one of my colleagues, Do you think I will get paid more for that? He said no, probably not. You shouldn't be.

We lament the loss of JOE BIDEN from the Senate. I am thrilled he is going to have the opportunity to become the

first Delawarean ever to be the Vice President of the United States. As wonderful as he is as a Senator, he will do more good for his country in his new role than he could have done in this service, so it is a good thing for the administration and for the country and ultimately for Delaware. . . .

I was talking about JOE BIDEN when he stepped down yesterday and gave a beautiful speech. I said JOE is the real deal in terms of family values—a loving father, grandfather, and Ted is very much out of that same mold.

While we lament the departure of JOE and are thrilled about his opportunity to be our Vice President, we very warmly welcome Ted to this family. I think in the history of this country there are maybe 1700 or so people who have been privileged to serve as Senator. Add a few extra ones this week out of the regular order. But this is a good thing for our State, for the Senate. As a point of personal privilege, it is a special joy for me.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I welcome and commend Senator Kaufman as he succeeds Senator JOE BIDEN.

I particularly want to say a few words about JOE BIDEN. He has had an extraordinary career in the Senate, and he is going to be an extraordinary asset for President-elect Barack Obama.

Senator Obama, the President-elect, said very clearly why he chose JOE BIDEN. He said that when the tough decisions come, and they will come quickly and often, JOE BIDEN is the guy he wants in the room with him. And I think that choice was extraordinarily inspired because no one can bring the breadth of knowledge and experience, not only with respect to the Senate but with respect to domestic policy and indeed international policy, as JOE BIDEN.

The other assets JOE brings to this great challenge of the country is his profound decency and sense of fairness and his commitment to make sure America is still a place of opportunity for all citizens. Those values were shaped in Scranton, PA, where he grew up. They were shaped by his mother and father. His mother, Jean Finnegan Biden, is still an inspiration to him today, and I am sure one of the reasons he is the guy who should be in the room with the President is because if he needs advice, his mother is still there, and I think that is something he cherishes.

JOE has served in this body for many years. He was the author of the Violence Against Women Act to ensure that our criminal justice system, our system of law, recognized the particular dangers posed to women. He was the chief archi-

tect of the COPS bill, which put hundreds of thousands of police officers on the street, recognizing that the basic responsibility of government is to provide safety and security to its citizens. There are a lot of people who talked about that, but JOE recognized that if there are more police on the streets, that would happen, and indeed it has. We have seen that statistic over the last few years.

As the preeminent expert on foreign relations, he has traveled the world and brought his wisdom to foreign leaders but also sought their candid advice with respect to our leadership in the world, and he will continue to do that. He has just concluded a trip to Iraq and Afghanistan. I had hoped to be with him, but duties here prevented me. But that is typical of JOE—hands-on, go to the source of the issue, examine the problem, and move forward.

He has had an illustrious career. Beyond his success as a Senator, his success as a master of foreign relations, a leader in terms of domestic policy, has been his extraordinary family: his wife Jill, an extraordinarily gifted professional in her own right; Ashley, Hunter, and Beau; and I know the five grandchildren are particular joys to JOE. We are particularly respectful that today his son Beau serves in the uniform of the United States overseas and is someone JOE thinks of constantly. Once again, in those tough decisions in the White House, I think JOE will have a special equity because his son serves along with the sons and daughters of other Americans, and he will recognize that when they make difficult decisions regarding the deployment of our forces.

It has been an honor to serve with him. It is an honor to call him a colleague and a friend.

WEDNESDAY, *January 21, 2009*

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, it has been a pleasure to serve with Senator JOE BIDEN for the last 16 years. He is an outstanding colleague and a good friend, and I know that he will make a terrific Vice President. I have been pleased to work with him on so many issues over the years. For instance, I was proud to support him in his tremendous work on the COPS Program. In turn, I appreciate his steadfast support of campaign finance reform issues over the years.

Most of all, I want to say how much I have enjoyed serving with Senator BIDEN on the Foreign Relations and Judiciary Committees. I also can attest to his mastery of the com-

plicated issues he faced in both committees. It is a huge challenge to take on the chairmanship of a Senate committee, and to do it well, but to serve with such distinction as chair of two of the Senate's most important committees is very rare, and it speaks volumes about JOE BIDEN's service in this body.

I have always found Senator BIDEN to be someone who I could talk with seriously about issues of mutual concern, or when we disagree. He is open-minded and he really listens. That quality will surely serve him well in his new position. He also can be uniquely persuasive. He is one of the few Senators who I have actually seen change people's minds during a committee debate. In a policy fight involving complex issues, JOE BIDEN is someone who you want to have on your side.

Now Senator BIDEN becomes Vice President, and I know he will serve the Nation with the same outstanding commitment and skill with which he served the people of Delaware. I thank him for his many years of distinguished service in the Senate, and look forward to continuing to work with him, and President Obama, in the years to come.

WEDNESDAY, *December 8, 2010*

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there be printed as a Senate document a compilation of materials from the *Congressional Record* in tribute to retiring Members of the 111th Congress, and that Members have until Thursday, December 16, to submit such tributes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

WEDNESDAY, *December 15, 2010*

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the printing of tributes be modified to provide that Members have until sine die of the 111th Congress, 2d session, to submit tributes and that the order for printing remain in effect.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

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