

VETERANS AFFAIRS HOSPITAL  
VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

HON. MIKE WARD

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 16, 1996

Mr. WARD. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Veterans Affairs [VA] Hospital Volunteer Program is one of the oldest and largest nationally coordinated programs and is an outgrowth of a movement that began during World War II. During that time, volunteers came, unsolicited, to VA hospitals to visit and entertain war-injured patients. After the war, national organizations and the VA formulated this effort by creating the VA Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee.

This year is the 50th anniversary of VA Voluntary Service. That organization has coordinated the donation of more than 400 million community volunteer hours at VA medical centers since 1945.

At the VA Medical Center [VAMC] in Louisville, 585 volunteers worked a total of 58,225 hours last year. This is equivalent to 26 full-time employees and valued at \$706,269.

Last year, Louisville VAMC volunteers gave \$150,372 in material donations, such as personal hygiene items, art supplies, books, equipment, and vehicles to the medical center. In addition, our volunteers gave \$58,321 in monetary donations last year.

Volunteers are vital to the delivery of health care to our nation's veterans. They assist at the Louisville VAMC by transporting patients to different areas of the hospital, transporting records and files, visiting patients, assisting with recreation programs, and helping with clerical work.

The most valuable contribution given to veteran patients by Louisville VAMC volunteers cannot be measured in any way. It is the gift of themselves—their compassion, caring, understanding, and dedication. Their very presence in the medical center contributes to putting frightened patients at ease and creating a comfortable environment for them.

I salute the Louisville VA Medical Center's volunteers for their tireless service to our Nation's veterans.

A TRIBUTE TO UTAH STATE  
SENATOR WILFORD "REX" BLACK

HON. BILL ORTON

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 16, 1996

Mr. ORTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment today to honor Utah State Senator Wilford "Rex" Black of Salt Lake City, who is retiring from the Utah Senate after representing his west Salt Lake district for 24 years.

Senator Black has earned the high respect and admiration of his colleagues on both sides of the aisle as he has worked in the Utah Senate. An article, published in the Thursday, February 29, 1996, edition of the Salt Lake Tribune written by staff writer Tony Semerad, does a good job describing Senator Black. I would like to include portions of this article in today's CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

Wilford "Rex" Black Jr., trusty locomotive driver of Utah Democratic legisla-

tors, pulled into the retirement yard Wednesday after a quarter-century of service.

Part statesman, part grump, part warm-hearted grandfather, Black, 76, ended a 24-year Senate career when the gavel fell. As the longest-serving senator in the chamber, he leaves an indelible mark on state government and the politicians who stay behind.

The Senate had been a dry-eyed place in 1996. That is, until Monday, when senators began speaking up at a Black farewell ceremony. One by one, leading Republicans and Democrats folded in tears as they bade farewell to the retired railroad engineer-turned-senator, his firm manner and, above all, his integrity.

"When Rex tells you something, you can take it to the bank," said Sen. John Holmgren, R-Bear River City. "That's just the way it is."

Through six Senate terms, the Rose Park resident has served as majority whip when Democrats dominated Capitol Hill, and held the post of Senate minority leader for a decade. From key committee seats, he has influenced nearly every major piece of legislation since the late 1970s, focusing on public safety, transportation, credit unions and the state's retirement system.

Senate President Lane Beattie, R-West Bountiful, calls Black and his experience one of strongest arguments against the idea of term limits. "I can't imagine a worse mistake than limiting the expertise, knowledge and wisdom of a man like this," said Beattie.

Many find it impossible to imagine working in the Utah Legislature without Black's leather-tough, sometime gruff, sometime humorous presence.

"He is as much of a part of my mental visualization of what goes on in here as anything or anybody in the chamber," said Gov. Mike Leavitt, whose father, Dixie Leavitt, served alongside Black.

But the years catch up with everyone. "It's my time to go," Black said.

While still fit after surviving a bout with cancer six years ago, the gray-haired senator shows an icy bluntness and lack of self-consciousness befitting someone who has spent his golden years making state laws.

He is renowned for reading every bill, even the most mind-dulling, and for being a stickler for correctness in procedure.

He was born in Salt Lake City in 1920 and named for his father, a Hercules shell-house foreman. Seven months after marrying Helen Shirley Frazer in May 1942, Black entered the army, eventually driving supply and prisoner trains across Europe.

Upon his return, Black resumed working for the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad, reaching the ranks of union leadership in the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen and its successor, the United Transportation Union, until retirement.

He has eight children, 34 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren, a clan a fellow senator said 'was practically the entire population of Rose Park.' Black also is a devout Mormon.

Eddie Mayne labored in the Bingham open-pit mine 25 years ago, when he and a delegation of other workers approached Black about running for the Senate. Black's wife was decidedly cold to the idea. 'I won't tell you her exact remarks,' he said, 'but it was a definite 'no.'

Mayne, now head of the Utah AFL-CIO and a senator himself, said Black has come to symbolize a Democratic brand of respect and compassion for the elderly, disabled, veterans, workers, and the state's downtrodden.

On their behalf, Black has charged into some of the major political fights of the age.

The only filibuster of his career came under the late Gov. Scott Matheson. Repub-

licans proposed altering state procurement code in a way Democrats felt jeopardized the Intermountain Power Project, an immense coal-fire power plant near Delta, a boon for blue-collar jobs.

Black stalled Senate debate for an hour and 45 minutes, enough time to allow Democrat Matheson to pressure the bill's supporters into backing down.

Finally, they asked me to call it off,' he said with a wry smile.

Mr. Speaker, I add my congratulations and thanks to Senator Black, on behalf of the people of Utah, for his many years of service in the Utah Senate. He will be missed but not forgotten.

MANOJ ILLICKAL WINS FIRST  
PLACE IN ANNUAL ESSAY CONTEST

HON. PETER T. KING

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 16, 1996

Mr. KING. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to salute a young constituent of mine, Manoj "Manny" Illickal, who is working toward his college degree with the assistance of the Gateway Job Corps. Manny recently took first place honors in the Joint Action in Community Service, Inc. [JACS] National Essay Contest.

I offer for inclusion in the RECORD, Manny's award-winning essay, "How Job Corps Changed My Life." It's an inspiring story of how he learned self-discipline and the value of hard, honest work. After reading this essay, I am certain that you'll agree with me that Manny's future is limited only by how far he wants to take himself. He seems to have the right attitude for success.

HOW JOB CORPS CHANGED MY LIFE

(By Manny Illickal)

While my classmates were cleaning other parts of the workshop, I was spending my Friday afternoon mopping the office of my instructor; that is, I was supposed to be mopping his office. What I was actually doing was trying to figure out how best to get out of Building and Apartment Maintenance, out of Gateway Civilian Conservation Center and (most importantly) out of the U.S. Job Corps. I was a really smart kid when it came to quitting things, probably because I had a lot of practice.

After the student-foreman had told me to mop the office I asked, "Don't you have someone who does that type of work here?" "Yeah, we have you." I was rather discouraged, because the floor didn't seem to be getting any cleaner. Every few minutes, I would spill a few drops of dirty water onto the floor, and I would halfheartedly move the mop around whenever a classmate walked by the window. Mopping the floor as part of my jobs was beneath me. I was a really smart kid.

Why should I have to do this work? I wasn't even building anything. Enough was enough. I was going to get my pay and get out of this place so fast that they would have to change their name to Getaway. I had quit better places than this one, and it got easier every time. I came to Job Corps because I wanted to get a good job. I hadn't come to the Job Corps work. After all, I was a really smart kid who had never had to work too hard when I was in school.

Of course, I didn't really understand why being smart didn't seem to help too much with my grades. Back in school, I knew I was