out-lived its predecessors which were all destroyed by fire.

And over the past century, it has seen many fine men and women elected by their fellow citizens to honorably serve Butts County. It is good to see so many of those who have served here today for this celebration. I myself had the privilege to have served as Chairman of the County Commission.

It was 22 years ago Julie, my family and I began our public service. But I had public service running through my veins long before I ran for office. As most of you know, I was born here in Jackson at the O.B. Howell Clinic. In fact, I was spanked to life by three-term Commissioner O.B. Howell himself. I was raised by a mother who was a Flovilla City Councilwoman and a father who always said he wanted to serve on the County Commission. I was destined to be in politics.

But my career in public service would never have occurred without the support, hard work and endurance of my wife, Julie, and my children. I began that career right here at home as Chairman of the Butts County Commission. Then I served in the Georgia State Senate where I served two terms.

Today, I have the honor of serving as a United States Representative in the peoples' house in our nation's capital. I would not have been able to persevere unless my family had been at my side through all of those years and all those campaigns. I also owe the people of Butts County a debt of gratitude for the support you have given me. I regret that state politics prevented me from representing you in the United States Congress.

I have often been asked, "Was it worth the time, the effort and the money?" My answer is always, "Yes."

I have always had a strong desire to give something back to the community, the state and the country that have been so good to me. And, at each step of the way, I have grown a little more.

In many respects, the most challenging and rewarding office I have held is County Commissioner. I was young, energetic and a know-it-all. Serving as a Commissioner taught me the right and the wrong of service, and it taught me humility. During my first month in office, January of 1977, a winter storm with freezing rain brought the rural roads of our county to a standstill. Many fine citizens volunteered to help the county meet the challenge of getting our roads open and people moving again.

I have laughed and joked that we broke up DUIs in Butts County by bargaining with Probate Judge Gene Blue to sentence all of those convicted of DUI to 30 days on the County Commission. DUI arrests declined dramatically.

The accomplishment for which I am most proud was negotiating the contract to install water lines connecting Jackson with Flovilla and Jenkinsburg.

The saddest experience I had as Commissioner was my defeat for reelection in 1980. I had many goals I still wanted to accomplish for the people of Butts County. My good friend and fellow Commissioner, Mr. Everett Brisco, and I knew we would be defeated. I told him during one of our many rides around the County that "a loss in this election may lead to a more prominent job in the future." Time and the people of Butts County were good to me. You elected me to represent you in the Georgia State Senate.

During my four years there, I had the opportunity to participate in shaping the laws on issues of great importance to us all—education, taxes, crime, the economy and many others.

In 1983, I took on a new challenge—United States Representative for Third Congressional District of Georgia. I have found that many of the issues and concerns in which I was involved as a Butts County Commissioner and as a Georgia State Senator are also issues that concern the Congress—only on a national scale. But while we in Congress engage in great debates over our national defense, the direction of our government, the fate of the President and the future of our children, I am always reminded from where I come.

Shortly after my election to Congress in 1982, I received a letter from my childhood friend, Frank Duke. In that letter Frank wrote, "It is a long way from Flovilla, Georgia to Washington, D.C." He also enclosed a photograph of the town of Flovilla. We are now gone and gone our separate ways. But Frank's letter and photograph remind me of the hopes and ambitions we had.

And it reminds me of the values and principles we were taught by our parents, our teachers, and the wonderful people of a small town. I have kept that letter and photograph to remind me of the lessons learned with Frank and the others so many years ago.

As I conclude, I would like to read to you the quote by the great poet Longfellow which is printed in the dedication of the History of Butts County Georgia. It is worthy of reflection by all those who are elected to serve. It reads: Each one performs his work and then leaves it Those that came after him estimate His influence according to which he lives. Thank you and God Bless You.