

Indeed, I saw two men who could immerse themselves in the most emotional of issues, those causes that rubbed nerves raw in public debate, and I could see them emerge without enemies. Disagreeing without being disagreeable is a high art form, and these two men created a portrait of what informed public discourse should be.

Buzz and Joel took their jobs and their commitments seriously, but never themselves. A rich store of humor, often self-deprecating, was never far from their lips. Successful people rarely lack charm, and each possessed it in abundance. Whether it was the union leadership hammering out a contract agreement with Buzz at the Bath Iron Works or Joel's colleagues on both sides of the aisle negotiating with him on a bill in the Maine Senate, friends and adversaries alike were drawn to both men because they invariably deserved to be trusted. It may be hackneyed to say their word was their bond. But it was. Always.

A friend of mine who knew both men, but was not an intimate of either, tells a story that is illustrative. When my friend's father died in Florida, the first contribution made in his memory came from Joel Abromson. And when Buzzy's sister, Gayle Corey, died of a virulent form of cancer, Buzz did not wait to receive expressions of condolence; rather, he sent notes to Gayle's friends thanking them for befriending her. One does not easily forget gestures such as these, and there were thousands of others. In the final days and weeks of his life, Buzz called other cancer patients trying to cheer them up.

Fortunately for all of us who benefited from knowing them, many Maine leaders, led by Governor King, participated in exceptionally moving public tributes to these two remarkable individuals while they were still alive to hear the accolades. Having spoken to both of them shortly before they died, I know that they were touched by the outpouring of appreciation for lives well lived.

Losing public treasures like Joel and Buzz when they had so much more to give reminds us anew that life is unfair, as President Kennedy often noted. Fair or not, our state has lost two remarkable citizens and we will not see their like again soon.

To me, they are the standard by which we should measure ourselves. Each of us will honor their memory most appropriately if we try to emulate the service they gave so generously to our State and its people.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United

States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-220. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the Legislature of the State of Michigan relative to permit states to promote long-term care insurance under Medicaid; to the Committee on Finance.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 109

Whereas, As the number of elderly in America continues its swift growth, the issue of long-term care will present an increasing number of problems for our Nation. Demographic trends leave little doubt that, without significant changes, the publicly funded Medicaid program may be stretched beyond its capacity to respond adequately to the needs of our country's poor and elderly; and

Whereas, The challenge of paying for long-term care most often ends up being handled by Medicaid. The Federal-State partnership of Medicaid, which is designed to provide health coverage for the poor, ends up covering the long-term care costs for millions of older Americans who become poor only because their resources are exhausted by the high costs of nursing homes or in-home care. Approximately one of every three Medicaid dollars is spent on long-term care; and

Whereas, While each state determines the eligibility requirements for Medicaid based on specific factors, general eligibility thresholds limit the assets that can be preserved by a Medicaid recipient and spouse; and

Whereas, There is a bill before Congress, H.R. 1041, that seeks to permit states more flexibility to enter into long-term care partnerships under Medicaid in order to promote the use of long-term care insurance. Clearly, any measure to increase insurance in this area would be most helpful for our country; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we memorialize the Congress of the United States to enact legislation to permit states to promote long-term care insurance under Medicaid; and be it further

Resolved, that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan Congressional Delegation.

POM-221. A joint resolution adopted by the Senate of the Legislature of the State of Vermont relative to the desecration of the United States Flag; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

JOINT SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 9

Whereas, the flag of the United States is one of the greatest symbols of our nation, and

Whereas, this symbol represents the defining principles of our country, and

Whereas, Americans have placed their lives in harm's way and, in hundreds of thousands of cases, have sacrificed their lives defending these principles, and

Whereas, their willingness to sacrifice their lives in defense of these cherished principles demonstrates one of the purest and most commendable forms of patriotism, and

Whereas, these patriots have focused on the flag as the ultimate symbol for which they and their families have sacrificed, and

Whereas, the flag serves important ceremonial functions at public gatherings, funerals, celebrations of patriotic holidays, parades and countless other gatherings, and

Whereas, respect for the flag and the various protocols attendant thereto (such as proper display, proper folding, saluting, et cetera) serves as an introduction, for many young Americans to the symbol of our nation, and

Whereas, we the American people, accord our flag a unique position of respect, love and admiration for the principles it represents, and recognize the importance of providing dignity and honor to this symbol, and

Whereas, these principles include the protection of individual freedoms enumerated in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution including free speech, free press, peaceable assembly, and petitions for the redress of grievances, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives, That the General Assembly expresses its respect and admiration for our United States Flag, and be it further

Resolved, That the General Assembly expresses its condemnation of all acts of flag desecration, and similar displays of disrespect for the United States Flag, and be it further

Resolved, That the General Assembly urges the Congress of the United States to ensure that proper respect and treatment will always be afforded to the United States Flag, and that the Congress explore all avenues available, which may include a constitutional amendment, a statutory change and a public education program, to protect the United States Flag from physical desecration, and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of State transmit copies of this resolution to the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the President of the United States Senate and all members of the Vermont Congressional Delegation.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-5876. A communication from the Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Melons Grown in South Texas; Increased Assessment Rate" (Doc. No. FV02-979-1 FR) received on March 15, 2002; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-5877. A communication from the Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Onions Grown in South Texas; Increased Assessment Rate" (Doc. No. FV02-959-01-FR) received on March 15, 2002; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-5878. A communication from the Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Kiwifruit Grown in California; Relaxation of Pack Requirements" (Doc. No. FV08-920-1 FIR) received on March 15, 2002; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-5879. A communication from the Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled