

The same could be said for my service here. It has had its challenges, its triumphs, its disappointments, but everything was worth doing. And I am grateful for every moment.

I love history, and there is wonderful history about the relationship between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. They were rivals, but they respected each other. And that respect grew as they left office and began correspondence that today is some of our most treasured writing.

In one letter to John Adams, Thomas Jefferson wrote, "I like the dream of the future better than I like the history of the past." So it is with me. I have loved these years in the Senate, but I like the dream of the future.

It is with heartfelt gratitude to the people of South Dakota, with great respect and admiration for my colleagues, and with love for this institution and the power it has to make this Nation even greater that I say farewell and look to the future with great optimism, with hope and anticipation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip is recognized.

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#### RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 5:10 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 5:16 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

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#### TRIBUTES TO RETIRING SENATORS

##### TOM DASCHLE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, what we just heard on the floor of the Senate captures the essence of this remarkable, remarkable body, the leadership, which dictates the character, which dictates the fabric of the body that all of us have the real privilege of participating in.

I know several Members want to speak, so I will be very brief. I take a moment to pay tribute to a truly exceptional leader with whom I have had the honor to serve alongside, and whom I have had the opportunity to serve with over the last year. We first began working together 2 years ago, when I suddenly became majority leader of the Senate. Oftentimes, we have been on the opposite side of issues. But I want to say how much I deeply respect his abilities and his judgment as a Senator, as Democratic leader, and as a person.

This environment is fiercely competitive, and as leaders, both he and I are thrust into that competitive environment. Yet Senator DASCHLE has always, always, without exception, handled each and every situation in that

competition with class and with honesty, with integrity, with forthrightness, and with true grace.

Clearly, I have had the opportunity to learn from him much more than I could have ever possibly given him in any way. I was the beneficiary of that each and every day. From that very first day that I became majority leader, he has treated me in that position with respect and with that very same grace. For that, I will forever be grateful.

I wanted to pay tribute to Senator DASCHLE and close with one reference. The great Daniel Webster once remarked that the Senate is a community of equals, of men of individual honor and personal character. Indeed, Senator TOM DASCHLE is no exception. He is the epitome of that and a great credit to this venerable institution. On behalf of all of our colleagues, I wish all the best for TOM and Linda and their entire family in the years ahead.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip is recognized.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, all of us in the Senate have just had an opportunity to hear an extraordinary speech by the outgoing Democratic leader. We are indeed in a very tough and competitive business. On the other hand, when we enter this Chamber, we take on public responsibility and have the obligation to deal with each other in a civil and forthright manner. I think Senator DASCHLE has always met that standard. We all admire his work here. He is one of the longest serving leaders in the history of the Senate. We wish him well in the coming years. He can look back on his extraordinary career here with great pride.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, you can learn a lot about a person by the way he handles winning, and you can learn even more about someone by the way he handles and accepts defeat. TOM DASCHLE does not know that I know this, but I saw an e-mail he sent recently to someone on his staff.

TOM DASCHLE was concerned about a man with whom he talked one day late in the campaign when he was calling undecided voters in his home State of South Dakota. The man was not rich or powerful. He was just an average South Dakota citizen.

This man used to work for the Government. He received many awards at his work. This is what TOM DASCHLE wrote in that e-mail:

One day, the man started to suffer extreme stress and even depression. The psychiatrist told him he had to retire from his work . . . under a medical discharge. Afterwards, (the government) denied him a medical retirement. They said it can only be for physical reasons.

He was denied medical access and retirement pay. He has since also had a heart attack. He asked me for help in getting a medical retirement. I told him we would be happy to try and would follow up.

TOM DASCHLE in his e-mail went on to say:

Could you have someone contact him and look into this? It just doesn't seem right.

The date on that e-mail was November 8, 6 days after the election, 6 days after what had to be one of the most heartbreaking losses in his life.

The reason TOM DASCHLE got into politics in the first place, the reason he ran for leadership positions in the Senate, and the reason he worked his heart out for this job was never to get rich or to get attention. He tried to bring power to help the powerless, the average person, the people to whom life had given some unfair breaks.

Even now, until the minute he has to relinquish his power, TOM DASCHLE is using his power to help people who still look to him as their last best hope.

Golda Meir once famously told a political rival:

Don't be humble. You're not that great.

But TOM DASCHLE is great enough and good enough to be truly humble. He will never talk about all the people he helped, all the people to whom he has given hope, but I can tell you there are people all across South Dakota and all across America whose lives are better because TOM DASCHLE was in the Senate.

"It just doesn't seem right"—that is what TOM DASCHLE wrote in that e-mail, and it just doesn't seem right that we are going to have a Senate without TOM DASCHLE to keep fighting for what is all good and decent about America.

My consolation is that I know TOM and Linda and their family will find another noble way to continue serving this Nation, defending the values we cherish and making life better for people who need a champion.

Someone noted that this is a cruel business, and it is. There are three ways to leave the Senate. Two of them are not very good. In this situation, we have seen a man who has given 26 years of his personal life to South Dakota and to the Nation, and he made a decision a year ago to retire. In the past year, I am sure there would have been a succession of tributes, dinners, schools, and highways and bridges being named after him and maybe statues and plaques commissioned. But instead, he stood for election. He had the courage to stand again. Although he did not succeed, I hope the people of South Dakota realize that he was a man who loved them throughout his political life and those of us who were honored to call him a friend and a colleague love him and will miss him.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, when the 109th Congress convenes this coming January, the Senate will be a poorer place for not having TOM DASCHLE among its Members.

By nature, TOM DASCHLE is a South Dakotan to the core, born and raised and regularly returning to his hometown of Aberdeen, with a population today of not quite 25,000. He was the