

grandfather who ran a madrassa religious school.

Ironically Mr. Abdullah's reputation as a respected scholar of the Koran has worked to Mr. Anwar's advantage in the past, and the two men have ties that go back far beyond this week's reunion. In 1980, when Mr. Anwar eloped to Thailand with his now wife, his father-in-law dramatically refused to acknowledge the marriage and disowned his daughter. The young couple recruited Mr. Abdullah as intermediary who was credited with using quotes from the Koran to successfully intercede on Mr. Anwar's behalf and convince his fundamentalist father-in-law to accept the marriage.

Armed with ethnically Arab heritage as well as Arabic language fluency (the name "Badawi" means "Bedouin" in Arabic), Abdullah Badawi comes with a credibility in the terror-plagued Middle East that Asian Muslims seldom have. And as a well-respected expert on the Koran, he cannot easily be yanked around nor intimidated by fundamentalist zealots who are distorting the Islamic faith and the world view.

Mr. Abdullah is starting to gain attention in the Arab world for his vocal and eloquent championing of "Islam Hadhari." Roughly translated as "Civilizational Islam," Islam Hadhari is not a new religion. Rather it is a rallying point for progressive Muslims in Malaysia. Islam Hadhari is committed to promoting ethnic and religious tolerance, equality for women, protecting the religious as well as political rights of minorities, and pursuing economic development based on education and fairness.

With many senior positions held by women in his government and a strong personal commitment to religious and ethnic tolerance embedded in his Chinese, Arab and Malay heritage, Prime Minister Abdullah walks the talk. If he can combine his strong and vocal advocacy of Islam Hadhari with continued progress in Malaysia's economic development based on rule-of-law government and market-based economics, he is well positioned to become an inspiration far beyond the borders of Malaysia.

As chair of both the 118 country Non Aligned Movement and the 57 country Organization of the Islamic Conference until 2006, Malaysia under Mr. Abdullah's leadership can command an international spotlight—especially in the Muslim world.

Clearly no single person can single-handedly defeat the distorted logic and deadly forces being unleashed in the name of Allah around the world, much less the debilitating economics that plague much of the Muslim world. But Mr. Abdullah is clearly working to turn the tide in the most important battle we are facing. For all our sakes, let's hope both Malaysia and its new prime minister take advantage of their unique opportunities.

TRIBUTE TO REPRESENTATIVE STEVEN J. RUDY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to commend a fellow Kentuckian who, like all of us, has asked his neighbors for the honor of representing them in government. Representative Steven J. Rudy speaks for the residents of Ballard, Carlisle, Hickman, Fulton, and McCracken Counties in the Kentucky General Assembly. Amazingly, he won this honor last November at age 26, in his first bid for public office.

Representative Rudy has had a passion for politics and government his

entire life. As a high school student, he once declared to his American government teacher that he would hold elective office by age 30. He has always been eager to share his ideas about issues, and to listen to others. After graduating college he worked as a high school teacher, and then at his family's store, Rudy's Farm Center, where he still works when not in Frankfort. In this way he keeps in touch with his constituents.

Representative Rudy has accomplished much in a short time, and I have no doubt he will continue to excel. I look forward to seeing this bright young Kentuckian mature on the political stage. As so many of our best and brightest, he has the potential to transform our Commonwealth into a worldwide leader in technology, medicine, industry, and the cultural arts. I wish him continued success as he follows in the tradition of public service carved out by distinguished Kentuckians such as Alben Barkley and Henry Clay.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to print in the RECORD an article from The Paducah Sun, "Politician long in the making," about Representative Rudy's accomplishments and respect for public service.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Paducah Sun, Jan. 9, 2005]

POLITICIAN LONG IN THE MAKING

(By Matt Sanders)

KEVIL, KY—By his senior year at Ballard Memorial High School, Steven Rudy had developed such a keen interest in government that he once proclaimed during a county fiscal court meeting that he would be elected judge-executive before turning 30.

Rudy may never get a chance to run the county government because he was elected to the Kentucky House of Representatives on Nov. 2 at age 26. It was his first try for public office.

"Politics has been a lifelong career ambition. There was really no clear goal growing up," said Rudy, who was sworn in Jan. 4 and will begin his freshman term in the General Assembly on Feb. 1.

But Rudy doesn't dwell on his upset in the general election or being one of the youngest lawmakers in Frankfort. Since his victory, he has focused on becoming a good public servant and studying the lawmaking process.

"I've always liked being involved in open discussions—being able to toss around ideas and make decisions that can help people. At times, I haven't minded playing the devil's advocate."

In the mid-1990s, Julian "Whitey" Elliott was Rudy's American government teacher as well as a county magistrate. Elliott had a front-row seat at the meeting when the teenager made his bold prediction. Elliott recalled that he fully expected his student to make good on his promise and was not surprised on Nov. 2 by the Republican Rudy's 1,642-vote upset of 17-year incumbent Charles Geveden in the 1st District.

"I think Steven has always wanted to make things better," Elliott said. "Early on, even at the local level, he was able to see that people could serve and make things better. He never forgot that. Steven saw his chance in this campaign to make things better."

As a magistrate, Elliott frequently incorporated county business into his classroom lectures, which sparked lively roundtable discussions. He said Rudy never held back his political views.

"I kept the students apprised as what was going on in the county, and I thought it was interesting that Steven was always willing to speak his mind," Elliott said. "I liked for the kids to express opinions, but also to respect the opinions of others who did not agree with you. I tried to get them to look at issues from the other perspective."

"I remember Steven leaning toward a Republican stance, and this was when not every Republican was stating his views publicly. There were maybe only 300 Republicans in the county at that time."

The county now has 712 registered Republicans, compared to 5,154 registered Democrats, according to the Ballard County Clerk's Office.

Rudy smiled widely and noted that he was the first registered Republican in his family.

"My philosophy was always in line with the national (Republican) platform," Rudy said.

In fact, it was through Rudy's persistence that the fiscal court conducted a meeting in the high school cafeteria so the students could see government in action.

The fiscal court met twice monthly, in the early afternoon and at the same time as the American government class. A substitute teacher took over Elliott's class on fiscal court days, but Rudy always pleaded with his teacher to allow the students to attend a meeting. Instead, Elliott brought the meeting to the students.

"It was really interesting to watch the magistrates make decisions on what was right for Ballard County," Rudy said.

His interest in government and debate also was nurtured at Ballard Memorial in the Future Farmers of America chapter, which taught parliamentary procedure.

IN THE BEGINNING

Rudy's political ambition was born at the side of his grandfather, the late Bill Rudy, who founded the Ballard County agriculture store that would be the forerunner to the family farm supply business, Rudy's Farm Center.

Nearly every year, Bill Rudy took his grandson to the Fancy Farm Picnic, Kentucky's most important grassroots political event. The often fiery political rhetoric fascinated both elder and younger Rudy, with their only difference being that Bill Rudy was a lifelong Democrat.

"I remember my grandfather talking about the days when the Democrats bashed the Republicans during the speaking," Rudy said. "I didn't like that, but I started going to the picnics at the time (U.S. Senator) Mitch McConnell came along and he said the things that made me proud."

Bill Rudy also was involved in State politics—he served as manager of the State Department of Agriculture's western Kentucky office in Paducah. He also was a history buff and an avid reader, which gave him a wealth of knowledge about American presidents. He could talk for hours about the presidents and did so at family gatherings.

But had Bill Rudy lived longer, he probably would have joined his grandson in the Grand Old Party.

"Dad was really down on Democrats there at the end," said Jack Rudy, Steven's father. "It may have been what was going on with (President) Bill Clinton, but he told me that he had decided on making a change."

But time did not allow Bill Rudy to change parties. He died of a heart attack shortly after that conversation with his son. Bill Rudy's death came in 2000, and ironically on

the first Saturday in August—the day of the Fancy Farm Picnic.

ONCE A REPUBLICAN . . .

It seems natural that Rudy recalled one of his earliest memories was, as a 3-year-old, watching televised replays of the 1981 assassination attempt of Republican President Reagan.

The day he registered to vote was also the day he got into an argument with a deputy county clerk who urged Rudy to register as a Democrat. Republicans, Rudy said he was told, rarely were able to vote in primary elections because it was rare for Republicans to run for elected office in Ballard County.

"I couldn't understand that," Rudy said. "Why would anyone care how you're registered? Voting is what is important."

While in college, Rudy wore his Republican feistiness on his chest during the 1996 presidential campaign. He often wore a Robert Dole-Jack Kemp T-shirt to classes at the then-Paducah Community College, much to the displeasure of his classmates. The Dole-Kemp ticket lost when Democrat Clinton won a second term.

Rudy's Spartan office at the farm store could resemble the GOP archives. Atop his filing cabinet is a bottle of red-white-and-blue labeled "W" ketchup, a souvenir from the 2004 presidential race that poked fun at Democrat presidential nominee John Kerry's wife, Teresa Heinz Kerry, and stepchildren, who are heirs to the Heinz ketchup fortune. The bottle stands next to a hardbound copy of "The Faith of George Bush." Not far away is a photo of Rudy with the State's three most powerful Republicans, Senators McConnell and Jim Bunning and Governor Ernie Fletcher.

In fact, business photos and a St. Louis Cardinals' 2005 baseball schedule stand among the few nonpartisan mementos.

But Rudy said his thinking does not always follow partisan lines. He mentioned two Democrats—former State agriculture commissioner Billy Ray Smith and 2nd District Rep. Frank Rasche of Paducah—whom he admired.

"The Republicans aren't perfect and I don't support everything within the party," Rudy said. "Billy Ray is a real down-to-earth guy who would do what was right for all Kentucky farmers. Frank is someone I feel I can rely on (in the General Assembly). As chairman of education, he does what is right for the children of Kentucky."

HOUSE HUNTING

The new year will continue to be busy. In addition to beginning his freshman term in the General Assembly in February, Rudy and his fiancée, Jessica Patton, are planning a May wedding. Rudy grinned and said he called Fletcher for assurance that there would be no special session, which is usually convened in May.

Searching for a home also presented a challenge. By law, Rudy must reside within his district, which consists of Ballard, Hickman, Carlisle and Fulton counties, and nine western McCracken County precincts. Patton is a receptionist with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Barkley Dam, and the soon-to-be newlyweds decided to live in McCracken County, which would be between their work places. That limits their search to the precincts of Ragland, Woodville, Grahamville, Lamont, Maxon, Lang, Lone Oak 3, Massac-Milan and Melber.

Rudy pointed to a large map of the nine precincts, covering nearly one wall in his office. "Every time she calls and tells me she found a house, I ask for the location and check it on the map to see if it's an option," Rudy said.

RELUCTANT CANDIDATE

Despite his early boasting of political ambitions, there was not much planning by

Rudy prior to announcing his candidacy. As a small businessman, Rudy said, "I have seen things that make Kentucky an unfriendly business state, like the tax structure." He also said he heard much frustration in the community over the inability of lawmakers to pass a budget.

Rudy had been active within the party during several campaigns, including Fletcher's gubernatorial bid, and he received what he called an unlikely phone call from state party leaders wanting him to challenge for the 1st District seat. "If you would have asked me 18 months ago, it would have seemed unlikely that I would run. I was very reluctant. I thought I was too young to be taken seriously," Rudy said. "But then I figured it was a win-win situation, so I gave it a shot. If I won the election, great. If I didn't win, the campaign would have given me plenty of name recognition and I would have met a great deal of people, which would benefit my next campaign."

THE FAMILY BUSINESS

Inside Rudy's Farm Center, customers are treated like family. They are greeted with a smile and a handshake. Conversations easily flow over a variety of topics—planting and harvest, weather, church, community events and, of course, politics.

Retired Barlow farmer Bobby Myers was a frequent customer and the day was never too busy to pass up discussing current events with Rudy.

"We always talked about what was happening, around here and in Frankfort. He always seemed to know what was going on," Myers said.

Although Myers admitted he never thought then of Rudy as a future politician, he's confident the freshman lawmaker will prosper in his new position.

"I knew his daddy and his granddaddy and Steven is just like them, good and honest and fair," Myers said. "Those are the kind of people we need in Frankfort."

The store—which offers farm, home, hardware and industrial merchandise—is a family business started in 1986 by his parents, Jack and Jeanette Rudy. His brother, Matt, also works at the store. Another brother, Jeff, is a seminary student.

Steven Rudy handles the center's industrial sales, which keeps him on his cell phone and behind a computer for much of his work day.

Rudy took his agriculture education degree from Murray State University in 2000 and became an agriculture instructor at Lyon County High School in Eddyville. He used parliamentary procedure to start the same kind of classroom debates that he loved as one of Elliott's students.

But his father had always told Rudy there was an opening for him in the family business. After much prayer and realizing he could jump-start the store's industrial sales, Rudy left the classroom, came home and never looked back.

The store lies on the border in both McCracken and Ballard counties. The front acreage is lined with large merchandise, but there also is room for a soccer field, complete with two goals, which the Rudys set up for a local youth league.

Transactions at the farm store typically are finalized with a bag of freshly popped popcorn, Jack Rudy's favorite snack. A theater-style popper stands behind the counter, and the Rudys hand out 50 pounds of the snack every two to three weeks.

"Everyone tells me that I eat more than half of it, but it's a way of saying thanks," Jack Rudy said.

GOING TO WORK

Since his election, Rudy splits his time by attending sessions in Frankfort for freshmen

legislators, working at the farm store and helping plan the wedding.

The General Assembly will convene Feb. 1 for 25 working days to consider and act upon legislation.

"I'm proud of him and I hope he does well," Elliott said. "The state needs people in Frankfort who care about people."

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

CORPORAL TIMOTHY GIBSON, USMC

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I rise today to remember and honor Cpl Timothy Gibson of Hillsborough, New Hampshire for his service and supreme sacrifice for his country.

Corporal Gibson demonstrated a willingness and dedication to serve and defend his country by joining the United States Marine Corps. Just as many of America's heroes have taken up arms in the face of dire threats, Tim dedicated himself to the defense of our ideals, values, freedoms, and way of life. His valor and service cost him his life, but his sacrifice will have spared millions from lives of tyranny and sorrow.

Tim graduated from Merrimack High School in Merrimack, NH in 2000 and enlisted in the Marine Corps on April 9, 2001. He then reported to Marine Corps recruit training and subsequently received further training as a rifleman in the infantry. Upon completion of this training, he became a member of 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force, Marine Corps Base Hawaii. From this unit's home base in Hawaii, he would later deploy to Iraq in pursuit of those who would threaten our way of life.

Tragically, on January 26, 2005, Cpl Gibson gave his last full measure for our Nation when the CH-53E helicopter he was in crashed near Ar Rutbah, Iraq. Throughout his short career, Tim earned a series of accolades which testify to the dedication and devotion he held for the Marine Corps, his fellow Marines, and his country. Tim's hard work and dedication contributed greatly to his unit's successes and placed him among many of the great heroes and citizens that have given the ultimate sacrifice for their country. Tim was recognized for his service by the Combat Action Ribbon, the Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, Second Award, and the National Defense Service Medal. He was also the recipient of a Certificate of Appreciation, a Letter of Appreciation, and Meritorious Mast for his performance above and beyond expectations while in the Marine Corps.

My condolences and prayers go out to Tim's family, and I offer them my deepest sympathies and most heartfelt thanks for the service, sacrifice, and example of their Marine, Cpl Timothy Gibson. Tim exemplified the words of Daniel Webster who said, "God grants liberty only to those who love it, and are always ready to guard and defend