

Senate had a productive and beneficial session under his helm. I ask unanimous consent to print in the RECORD an article that appeared in the Lexington Herald-Leader on May 8, 2006, that details his recent accomplishments. I ask my fellow Senators to join me in thanking David Williams for his service to the people of Kentucky.

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

POWER POLITICS HAS A NEW CAPTAIN
(By Ryan Alessi)

FRANKFORT.—For better or for worse, this was Senate President David Williams' General Assembly session.

Williams, the commanding and strategic-minded Republican from Burkesville, has gradually established himself as the dominant personality in the legislature since taking the helm of the upper chamber six years ago.

But during this year's session, which wrapped up last month, Williams played multiple starring roles.

He was the deal maker—adding more money in the budget for the University of Kentucky and ensuring that one of Gov. Ernie Fletcher's priorities, the addition of two school days, was approved.

He was a facilitator. Just when most everyone thought a seat-belt enforcement bill was dead, Williams tacked the measure—another key priority of Fletcher—on to less controversial legislation, which eventually passed.

And early in the session, Democrats praised him for allowing bipartisan proposals relating to mine safety and a ban on protests at military funerals.

He also was a lightning rod for criticism, notably the controversy over the University of the Cumberlands.

It was Williams who inserted \$10 million into the budget for construction of a pharmacy school on the campus of the Baptist-run university in Williamsburg, which is in his Senate district. Another \$1 million would go to scholarships at the pharmacy school.

The revelation about public funds going to a private university sparked some outcries, particularly after the school expelled a student for announcing on a Web site that he is gay. Williams has defended the funding.

And an ongoing rhetorical feud between Williams and Supreme Court Chief Justice Joseph Lambert provided an interesting sidebar to the legislature's work, as Williams sparked debates about separation of powers between the legislative and judicial branches.

Throughout the 60-day session, all roads seemed to lead through Williams.

"They led through me or over me?" joked Williams, who at times comes off as affable and self-deprecating, and at others as defiant and argumentative.

He acknowledged that he tried to approach 2006 differently than recent sessions that digressed into bickering and stalemate among the legislative leaders over key issues—especially the budget.

"I felt like in the past, I had been drawn into a few confrontations that I shouldn't have gotten into. I don't think it was constructive to the institution," Williams said.

That's not to say he remained above the fray.

The last week of the session was a particularly grueling test of Williams' restraint. Lawmakers were trying to finalize details of the budget while scrambling to pass the last batch of other bills, including a proposal to lessen the tax burden on certain small businesses.

As Williams attempted to ram through the Senate's version of that tax-relief plan, Democratic Sen. Tim Shaughnessy vehemently objected, at one point declaring: "I don't trust you guys."

So Williams switched off Shaughnessy's microphone.

In the end, negotiations between Senate Republicans and House Democrats crumbled on the small-business tax issue—one of a handful of key priorities pegged by both parties that failed.

But the main goal—passing the state's two-year, \$18.1 billion spending plan—was achieved. And negotiations between House Democratic and Senate Republican leaders again proved to be a stage for Williams.

For instance, House Democrats first included \$17.5 million in their budget draft to repair a dam on the Kentucky River.

The Senate stripped that funding in its version.

During later closed-door negotiations between the two chambers' leaders, Williams was the first to emerge to tell reporters that they had restored the funds and allowed the Kentucky River Authority to use \$33 million in additional fee money to fix more dams.

Senate Republicans often gain the upper hand during such budget negotiations because Williams and Majority Floor Leader Dan Kelly of Springfield usually convey a united front, lawmakers say.

Sen. Ernesto Scorsone, a Lexington Democrat, said that's because Williams "controls the party caucus."

But Williams noted that it's easier for Senate Republicans to get on the same page because there's just 21 of them, compared to 56 House Democrats.

"It would appear to me that the Democratic negotiators generally do not have a unified plan or plan of action. There are about five or six strong personalities," he said. "They don't seem to come to a consensus before they come to the table."

Others say that the Senate Republican leaders have a knack for putting their own stamp on just about every key bill.

"David and Sen. Kelly are the driving force behind all the legislation that comes out, no matter where it originates," said Rep. Stan Lee, a Lexington Republican.

As a result, many legislators have dubbed Williams the most powerful man in Frankfort, with more effect than even the governor.

"David knows what he wants and goes out and gets it. I don't think the governor knows exactly what he wants, and certainly doesn't know how to get it," said Scorsone. "Fletcher's future, in terms of legislative success, is very much in the hands of David Williams."

The governor's staff disagreed, saying Fletcher has stood on his own.

"Governor Fletcher's record of accomplishments speaks for itself. His style is to build consensus and find areas of common ground with members of the assembly," said chief of staff Stan Cave in a statement.

Williams, who has said he supports Fletcher's re-election bid in '07, is deferential, noting that Fletcher missed a month of the session battling complications from a gallstone and pancreatitis.

"It's hard to compare management styles," he said. "Obviously the governor, because of his illness, was not around a lot at crucial times."

Williams, meanwhile, rarely missed a cue at those critical points.

"I feel I had the most productive session I've ever had," he said.

that I inadvertently missed the vote on cloture on the motion to proceed to S. 22, the Medical Care Access Protection Act of 2006, due to unavoidable airline flight delays. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

Americans are going to spend \$2.3 trillion this year on health care. One out of every three dollars does not go to help anybody get well. We are never going to be able to compete globally if we cannot control the health care costs in this country. The threat of medical liability raises the cost of health care for everybody in this country.

Only 16 percent of the lawsuits that are filed across the entire country have any merit whatsoever—84 percent of them are filled with the idea that we can intimidate people into settling a case so a lawyer can make money. It has nothing to do with the patient. It has everything to do with enriching the trial bar. I have experienced that personally as a physician who has delivered over 4,000 children into this world.

We have a problem with out of control medical liability—the cost of defensive medicine alone is up to \$126 billion per year. We can fix those problems. But we can't fix them by protecting special interest groups that have been protected for years—special interest groups that claim they want to do something great for people but who most of the time are motivated to do something great for themselves.

The Medical Care Access Protection Act of 2006 is based on the successful Texas model of medical liability reform. It's a solution to the problem that is already getting results.

NATIONAL POLICE SURVIVORS
DAY

Ms. MURKOWSKI. In 1962, the Congress enacted and President Kennedy signed into law a joint resolution designating May 15 as Peace Officers Memorial Day and the week in which May 15 falls as National Police Week.

National Police Week is observed with numerous events here in our Nation's Capitol and parallel events in communities across the Nation. The two most moving of these events are the Peace Officers Memorial Day ceremony, on the Capitol grounds, and a candlelight vigil at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial on Judiciary Square. At that candlelight vigil, the name of each officer who perished in the line of duty during the preceding year is read aloud to an assembly numbering 10,000 or more.

These events emphasize the heroic acts of the law enforcement officers who lost their lives in the line of duty. The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial bears the inscription that our fallen officers are not heroes for the way that they died but for the way they lived their lives. Heroes, as we know, live on forever in our hearts, our spirits and our collective memories.

But for the families, friends and co-workers of law enforcement officers

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I ask that it be submitted to the RECORD