

#### TRIBUTE TO NICK WALTERS

• Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I want to take a moment and wish best of luck to an accomplished, young and promising Mississippian who is leaving federal service to pursue private sector opportunities.

Nick Walters, originally of Wiggins, MS, was appointed as Mississippi's USDA Rural Development Director by President George Bush in 2001. Since then, Nick has done a great job supporting Mississippi's communities, helping to secure resources needed for public facilities, utilities, and for economic development.

This is a key Federal position for my State. As Nick likes to say, this is the "nonfarm," or "nonfood" part of USDA. It is about new water and waste water systems, so people can have clean, dependable running water. It is about new community centers, town halls, and even high-tech or educational assets like broadband service, telemedicine and long-distance learning.

Since taking office, Nick has presented scores of oversized checks, in countless, photos for local papers telling stories about a new water tower or a new police car or fire truck.

Some people might think these things are small, and they often are in terms of Federal dollars. But these modest services will reverberate for years to come. As Nick says: USDA Rural Development is really about economic development, helping to encourage and sustain job creation—paving the way for communities to grow.

Nick has helped administer more than \$100 million to Mississippi's cities and towns through this agency.

He hasn't sat on his laurels waiting for mayors, supervisors, town alderman or CEOs to approach him. Nick has been proactive, innovative, and he has actively sought cases and ways to meet individual community needs through USDA's various Rural Development Programs.

We've all heard the old saying: Don't tell me what you can't do, tell me what you can do. That has been Nick Walters' approach to public service. His first inclination is to act.

That is something we Mississippians appreciate. After Hurricane Katrina, we saw many Federal bureaucrats in FEMA and elsewhere strapped by indecision, blinded by tunnel vision, stuck on what they could not do, obsessed with the word "no," when they should have been saying "yes."

Nick isn't that type. He has provided a great example of what someone in this office can do using its authority to the utmost, and we are working hard to find a successor who will continue this strong leadership.

Nick Walters will be missed, but my guess is that he will be back in public service one day. In what capacity? I don't know. That's a decision for him, his wife Lisa and his young children, Porter and John Garrett.

But now with this success behind him and given his previous experience in

the private sector, his work with former Mississippi Governor Kirk Fordice, his stint as chief of staff for the Mississippi Public Service Commission—Nick Walters will be successful in wherever his endeavors may lead.

I hope my colleagues will join me in thanking Nick Walters for his exemplary service to the Federal Government and, more importantly, to America as Mississippi's USDA rural development director.●

#### TRIBUTE TO BRAD EXTON

• Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Brad Exton, an individual with a long and outstanding record as member of the U.S. Forest Service. Over the course of his 29 years in the Forest Service, Mr. Exton has held many demanding posts, including deputy forest supervisor and acting forest supervisor of the Black Hills National Forest, BHNF, in South Dakota. He has also been instrumental in helping the Forest Service improve relations with Native American tribes, and helped to create a closer relationship between the Forest Service, National Park Service, and the State park system.

Before his tenure in South Dakota, Mr. Exton served in several States and numerous positions within the Forest Service. He was a graduate forester in Oregon; a river ranger in the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness in Idaho; a district ranger in Caribou-Targhee National Forest, encompassing 3 million acres in Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and Utah; and a recreation staff officer in the Ashley National Forest in Utah. He brought this wealth of experience with him to BHNF in April of 2003.

As deputy forest supervisor and acting forest supervisor at BHNF, Mr. Exton took a leadership role in confronting some of the most difficult challenges facing the organization. For example, Mr. Exton was a BHNF spokesman and negotiator on issues of concern to Indian tribes. The Black Hills area is sacred land to 22 tribes, including the Lakota people, and there has often been tension with the Forest Service over the role of the tribes in land management and usage. Through meetings and the formation of an advisory group, Mr. Exton has partnered with tribal members to seek a more active role for the tribes in maintaining healthy forests and creating an atmosphere of respect for indigenous cultures and knowledge. His commitment was reflected in 2005, when he was awarded a Regional Forester Honor Award for his work with the Rosebud Sioux Tribe in developing a program of fuel reduction.

While it is unfortunate for BHNF to lose a valuable public servant such as Mr. Exton, I am confident he will thrive in his new position as manager of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in Utah. I wish to congratulate Mr. Exton on this excit-

ing new opportunity, and wish him all the best. The cooperation and respect Mr. Exton has fostered in South Dakota will remain as a worthy legacy.●

#### HONORING RUDY GARCIA

• Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to honor the memory of Rudolph "Rudy" Garcia, a quintessential entrepreneur and fixture in the St. Paul community, who passed away on August 27, 2006, at the age of 61. As Rudy's close friends have noted: "He truly personified the American Dream." Having grown up in an orphanage without any formation education, Rudy decided at an early age to chase his dream of owning and operating his own restaurant a dream that went hand in hand with his great love of cooking.

At the age of 21, he opened his first establishment, Garcia's Casita on the West Side of the city, becoming St. Paul's first Latino businessowner. Through a combination of Rudy's personality and commonsense business practices, he was able to grow Garcia's Casita into a string of six different St. Paul eating establishments during the 1990s. From steakhouses to nightclubs, Rudy's perseverance continually led him to success even in the face of several failures and a St. Paul that was still on the edge of revitalization.

Rick Aguilar, a St. Paul businessman and longtime friend, described Rudy as "a man with a million ideas" whose energy helped him roll with the punches and make his dreams a reality. Rudy continued to stay the course as both he and St. Paul grew alongside each other through the years. In 1994, while serving as the mayor of St. Paul, I had the distinct privilege of proclaiming a day in his honor. While the St. Paul community mourns Rudy's passing, we can't help but celebrate his life that should serve as a model for not only Latinos, but all Americans who are looking to make their dreams a reality.

The St. Paul area and I will sincerely miss Garcia's great commitment to our community. Whether it was his work in the restaurant business or his participation in the early 1960s band the Jaymars a popular area band that played a mix of jazz, rock 'n' roll and blues—Garcia's impact on St. Paul is immeasurable.●

#### TRIBUTE TO LYN MCCLELLAND

• Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Lyn McClelland, a highly respected leader in the maritime community, who is retiring this month after 21 years of service as the Maritime Administration's Seattle representative. Lyn has helped support the success, safety, and security of the U.S. maritime community in the Pacific Northwest.

Over the years, we have turned to Lyn time and again for her expertise, her judgment, and her ability to come