

HONORING JOEL SOUTHERN

• Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, today I bid farewell to a broadcast journalist who has done more to keep Alaskans informed of the happenings in Washington, DC, over the past 21 years than any other single journalist in the State. I rise to honor Joel Southern, the Washington, DC, correspondent for the Alaska Public Radio Network, and to wish him well in his future endeavors.

I entered politics in Alaska only in 1998, but by that time I had been listening to Joel's radio reports on Washington developments for nearly a decade. Most of my early knowledge of the political battle over the opening of the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to potential oil and gas development came from Joel's reports, starting in 1987—the year when the environmental impact statement on ANWR first was released by the Department of the Interior.

My understanding of the efforts in Washington to change oil spill regulations in the wake of the Exxon Valdez oil spill of 1989 came from Joel's reporting. Growing up in Wrangell, I knew a good deal about Alaska's southeast timber industry, still Joel's reporting over efforts to pass the Tongass Timber Reform Act in 1991 gave me a breadth of understanding that has been invaluable during my 6 years in the U.S. Senate. I could go on and on and on with other examples.

Joel Southern has been the eyes in the Nation's Capital for tens of thousands of Alaskans who live across the far-flung reaches of our State; where local newspaper coverage is sparse, where TV coverage consists of cable coverage sometimes lacking in statewide or local news, and where only public radio is the source of information and public affairs.

Joel, a native of Winston-Salem, NC, moved to Washington in 1986, earning his master's degree in journalism and public affairs from American University. While an undergrad student he worked as a student announcer starting in 1981 at WFDD-FM, the Wake Forest University radio station, where he learned to pronounce the names of classical composers for his DJ stints, a skill that served him well when pronouncing Inupiat and Native names, such as Tuntutaliak or Atqasuk or Atmautluak.

Formerly an employee of the famed Berns—News—Bureau, a starting point for a number of great journalists, he moved onto the full-time staff of the Alaska Public Radio Network in 1991 and since has provided more radio reports for the network's main news program, Alaska News Nightly, than any other single individual. Over time Joel has learned more about the arcane areas of Alaska public land law, more about oil and gas production, more about commercial fishing and mining and more about the complex arena of politics in the 49th State than most anyone else.

Rather than show off his expertise simply to promote his own ego, Joel uses his knowledge to constantly explain complex stories in simple, understandable terms. While he always asks tough, probing questions of politicians and newsmakers, Joel asks them in a fair, balanced and nonopinionated way. He does better at separating his personal opinions from his reporting than most anyone. He has been fair, unbiased and totally objective for the entirety of his two decades of Washington reporting—and that is a record he can be proud of.

Over the past 21 years Joel has covered everything from the impeachment of a President to the contamination of Senate buildings by anthrax spores. He has covered the swearing in of three different Presidents, and reported on more changes in political leadership in Congress than veteran journalists twice his age. His range has been shown by both covering more congressional hearings than most any congressional correspondent and by working in subzero degree temperatures while covering the 1996 Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race in Alaska.

Along the way he has covered the Supreme Court and specialized in agricultural news, producing the European Community Farm Line in conjunction with the European Union, produced stories for CBC Radio affiliates and the Australian Broadcasting Corp., provided pieces to National Public Radio on a variety of topics, and done some stringing for the AP. He has done interviews for C-SPAN and Canadian Broadcasting Corporation radio stations. And he has written columns on Alaska oil and natural gas/energy policy for a Canadian publication, *Far North Oil and Gas Journal*.

In between working seemingly constantly, he has found time to marry his charming wife Helene, to be a devoted dad to two beautiful children, and still do more to inform Alaskans about the events in Washington that affect their future and the future of their children and grandchildren than most any other single journalist. And he has done it while displaying a keen curiosity, an impressive intellect, an insightful mind, a balanced sense of fairness and decency and a never-failing sense of good humor that is far too lacking both inside the U.S. Capitol and outside its walls.

I will miss his presence in Washington, but I know Alaskans from Kaktovik to Adak and from Ketchikan to Point Hope will miss him even more. I can only wish Joel and his family the very best on their coming European adventure and thank him for having done the best possible service to his adopted State; that of informing the citizens of Alaska with wisdom and wit for over two decades.

Thank you, Joel, and God's speed. I suspect I will be hearing your voice from Copenhagen during next year's climate change COP 15 negotiations. Just remember while Alaska is cold,

the wind in Denmark's Jutland Peninsula blowing in from the North Sea can be almost as biting as Alaska's North Slope. Again, best wishes and good luck in the future. •

HONORING DOLPHIN MINI GOLF

• Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, today I recognize a small business from my home State of Maine that recently hosted the 2008 U.S. ProMiniGolf Association's U.S. Open Tournament. Dolphin Mini Golf, an 18-hole, par 50 miniature golf course located in the charming Midcoast town of Boothbay, is the first location in the Northeast to host this exciting annual event.

Dolphin Mini Golf is no ordinary miniature golf course. A nautical theme pervades the landscape, with each hole having a unique decoration. Laden with challenging obstacles, from a fisherman's house to a whale's eye, and dotted with dolphins, lighthouses, and anchors, the course is a taxing test for even the most advanced miniature golfer. Additionally, the rotating ship's wheel and spinning lobster buoys provide the course with an added level of difficulty.

A perfect attraction for tourists to the Maine coast and locals alike, Dolphin Mini Golf has earned its reputation as one of the country's premier miniature golf entertainment complexes. In fact, Dolphin has been rated as one of the top 10 mini golf courses nationwide by several professionals on multiple occasions in *USA Today*. This made Dolphin Mini Golf an ideal location for the recent 11th annual U.S. Open Tournament, which was held on May 17 and 18 and organized by the U.S. ProMiniGolf Association, which promotes the increased play of miniature golf and sanctions several tournaments each year. This year's U.S. Open featured entrants from across the United States and Europe and consisted of six separate events, including a junior tournament, as well as senior and amateur divisions.

Dolphin's owner, Lee Stoddard, decided to use the opportunity of hosting the event to highlight something bigger than sports. He selected Operation Recognition, a non-profit organization that recognizes America's servicemembers by providing them with a week of relaxation in Maine, to receive proceeds from the U.S. Open. Operation Recognition was founded in May 2007, and its vacations provide military families with all-expense-paid trips, including lodging, scenic boat tours, and, naturally, passes to play at Dolphin Mini Golf.

In addition to this year's U.S. Open, Dolphin Mini Golf hosts its own tournament each September. This 14-year tradition draws players from near and far to benefit a good cause: the tournament raises money for Shriners Hospitals for Children in New England. These crucial facilities provide treatment for children with a variety of illnesses and ailments, including burn