CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—SENATE

November 19, 1999

SENATOR HOLLINGS

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, on occasion I have noted the birthdays of some of my colleagues by sharing a few observations about them. But, like those poor schoolchildren whose birthdays fall in the middle of the summer vacation, thus denying them the pleasure of a day when the Senate can be virtually guaranteed not to be in session. I do not wish to let the whim of the calendar prevent me from honoring a man whose many sterling qualities compare to his more nataly auspicious brethren.

Senator Ernest F. "Fritz" Hollings was born on January 1, 1922, denying by just a few hours an extra year's tax deduction to his hardworking parents. That may have been the only disacknowledgement to his more nataly auspicious brethren. The reason, of course, is that January 1, 1922, denying by his doctorate of law from The Citadel in 1942, and serving proudly for thirty-three years and 2 months of his impressive 42 years and 10 months of his impressive 42 years and 10 months, Senator Hollings has surpassed even the legendary Senator John C. Stennis, who served 31 years and 2 months of his impressive 42 years of service as a Senator from Mississippi. 

Senator Hollings has long been a force on the Commerce Committee, and his energy is felt on the Senate Floor any time trade legislation or treaties are in order. As a member of the Appropriations and Budget Committees, he is very well versed in the intricacies of fiscal policy-making. And on telecommunications matters few would dare tangle with him without first arming themselves with unassailable arguments at one's trigger finger, for fear of being completely done in by his quick-draw ripostes!

We have been on opposite ends of the main street legislative shoot-outs over periodic end of the year reconciliation, Budget Amendment and the nefarious Line Item Veto, but never has courtesy or friendship fallen victim to our philosophical disagreements. To the contrary, we have found common ground in our opposition to unfair trade practices and unequal trade agreements that hurt Americans. On the whole, I must admit I prefer to have Senator Hollings on my side, rather than against, as he is such a formidable foe. I have highlighted some of Senator Hollings's many honors, but there is one that still eludes him. For though he continues to make his parent's proud in heaven, and his family and constituents proud here on Earth, he remains the most senior junior Senator in our nation's history. At 32 years and 10 months, Senator Hollings has surpassed even the legendary Senator John C. Stennis, who served 31 years and 2 months of his impressive 42 years of service as a Senator from Mississippi. 

I know that Senator Hollings wears his title with pride and good humor, and his home state of South Carolina is all the better for it. As these last weeks of this congressional session come to a clattering and noisy end and legislation, floor debates, and appropriations conferences, I am proud to keep a resolution I made last New Year's day to remember and pay tribute to a good friend and a remarkable, well talented Senator. I hope during his next birthday, come January 1, the year 2000, hidden among the hoopla and hyperbole surrounding the year 2000, that Senator Hollings and his lovely wife, Peatsy, can celebrate his birthday knowing that it was not past unnoticed or unacknowledged by his friends here in the Senate.

So, on behalf of my wife Erma, I say to Senator Hollings these words:

Count your garden by the flowers
Not by the leaves that fall.
Count your days by the sunny hours,
Not remembering clouds at all;
Count your nights by stars, not shadows,
Count your life by smiles, not tears.
And on that beautiful January day,
Count your age by friends, not years.

SENATE FAMILY APPRECIATION

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I also want to thank the members of staffs of Senators, and the Members, the Senate family who sit here before us every day, who work so assiduously and in such a dedicated fashion. They make our lives easier than they would otherwise be, and they make it possible, whereas it would be otherwise impossible, for us to do the work of serving our constituents. I hope that they will all have a very happy Thanksgiving and very pleasant Christmas.

Let me also thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. The lovely lady from Maine sits in the majority leader's chair at this moment; she does the work of the Senate in such a beautiful manner, and who does so with such skill and dignity as rare as the day in June.

I want to thank everyone. I want to thank my own colleague, Jay Rockefeller, for being my colleague, and I want to thank the official reporters for doing their difficult work and doing it so well and so promptly and always so courteously.

So I thank, in closing, the two leaders who make it possible for all of us to get our work done. They are courteous; they are very helpful. I particularly thank the distinguished majority leader for his assistance in regard to the amendment I offered yesterday and which was cosponsored by my senior colleague and by the senior Senator from Kentucky and the junior Senator from Kentucky, Mitch McConnell, and Mitch McConnell, and all the Senators on both sides of the aisle who worked with me on behalf of that amendment. I thank my own leader for also helping to pave the way for us to have a vote, have the Senate vote on that amendment.

When Thanksgiving Day comes and the turkey is being carved and my dear wife of 62, almost 62½ years, and my lovely daughter, their husbands, our grandchildren, and our great grandchildren are all around me, we will think of the blessings of the good Lord, and one of those blessings is that of being in the company of and associated with so many wonderful people who are part of the Senate family every day.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, SENATOR BYRD

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, first I thank the distinguished Senator from West Virginia for his very kind comments. I also want to bring to my colleagues' attention the fact that the