TRIBUTE TO BOB CLARKE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today I rise to recognize Bob Clarke, who has served for nearly 15 years as President of Vermont Technical College in Randolph. Under Bob's leadership, VTC has seen its annual budget quadruple, its annual donations have increased twelvefold, and the college has grown immensely.

Bob brought to VTC a new perspective for technical education. He has established unique relationships between VTC and the high-tech community. Currently, Vermont Technical College is providing training to employees of companies such as IBM, BF Goodrich Aerospace, and Bell Atlantic. In addition, Bob has listened to the concerns of small businesses in the state. When Vermont faced a shortage of skilled machinists, he established a training program in automotive technology. His willingness to listen to the needs of the business community has resulted in increased opportunities for VTC students and alumni alike, and VTC has created a qualified pool of applicants to meet the growing needs of Vermont's high-tech industry.

Over the years, I have worked closely with Bob and VTC on issues including education, workforce retraining and business development. I have been most impressed with Bob's innovation in addressing the evolving needs of the business community. His work is truly inspiring and the results have been felt across the state. Bob has truly raised the bar for technical colleges around the country.

An article recently appeared in the Vermont Sunday Magazine which details Bob's accomplishments during his tenure as President of Vermont Technical College. I ask that this article be printed in the RECORD.

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he ended on a different, bolder note. “Much still needs to be done,” he said. “Consider that:“

“Vermont ranks 49th among the states in per capita support of higher education.

“Unlike most states, Vermont’s two-year college system is supported by general revenue from the state, not by a local property tax.”

“Vermont has no post-secondary vocational education system.”

“Thus there is a tremendous state need for workforce education and training."

“There is a shortage of skilled Vermonter’s to fill high-paying jobs."

At the end of the banquet, the Chamber of Commerce’s chair, Millie Merril, announced that the organization’s board that day had unanimously and strongly endorsed the concept of additional funds for higher education. When Clarke arrived the next morning at a meeting of the Higher Education Financing Commission, the assembled college presidents and some legislators gave him a standing ovation.

The chief feather in Clarke’s off-campus cap is the IBM Educational Consortium, under which the University of Vermont and the other state colleges, manages all employee education and training for the state’s largest private employer. The Consortium has 23 full-time employees on-site at IBM. Gov. Dean lauds it as “a model program, not only for the state but for the whole country.”

Lambert said the IBM contract was a major coup for Clarke and VTC. The big computer manufacturer has for many years taken great pride in running its own training department, and it took some serious horse-trading and a trial period before IBM officials agreed to turn over all their training to the consortium.

In many workplaces, a small two-year college would be expected to be only a junior partner in such an arrangement, not the organizer. But, says Clarke, with obvious pride: “We do education and training. We’re good at it. Often businesses are not. That’s why I job out my campus food service and bookstore operations to outside experts.”

That’sVTC’s only full-time training contract. Clarke has developed a slew of them, and he’s been willing and able to make special arrangements for companies with whom VTC has contracts. Whenever the two programs overlap, training programs seem unlikely to work.

Two examples: He’s delivering a program that leads to a two-year degree in engineering technology on the premises of BF Goodrich Aerospace in Vergennes. In that partnership, Goodrich executives are working with the VTC faculty to develop the curriculum, and faculty members travel to the campus to teach the courses.

He’s arranged for selected Bell Atlantic employees who are scattered all over the state, to come to the VTC campus in central Vermont once a week to work toward a degree in telecommunications technology. The telephone company orchestrates the work schedules of student-employees to accommodate the program.

Clarke likes to point out that “90 percent of Vermont’s businesses have fewer than 20 employees. We need better training not linked to specific programs.” So in 1992, the college took over the Vermont Small Business Development Center, which is housed at the University of Vermont. Since then, it has served more than 7,000 clients, providing small Vermont companies with connections, help in marketing and management, and assistance in finding money for startups or expansion. As part of its outreach program, the center maintains offices at five different sites around the state.

The center helps put on trade shows and seminars and works in conjunction with other colleges, state agencies, trade associations, and the Small Business Administration (which provides most of its operating funds). It also maintains an environmental assistance program, which conducts workshops and confidential environmental assessments for businesses that Clarke maintains might be reluctant to work with government agencies, which have the power to levy penalties for rules violations.

Vermont Interactive Television is another pioneering Clarke innovation. Headquartered on the VTC campus in Randolph, it coordinates 12 sites around the state, where businesses, government officials, educators, and non-profit organizations can conduct meetings, training, and hear and see what folks at the other sites are saying and doing, all without the costly statewide travel that can be required by one-person or one-site programs. VIT has been in operation for more than 10 years. It has a contract with the state for meetings and training, and it collects user fees for that purpose. Individual sites donate the use of their facilities. A 1996 study reported that the state government was saving some 55 percent on meetings conducted over the winter season.

A more recent innovation is the Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center, a joint venture among VTC, the state’s Department of Economic Development, and a couple of units of the U.S. Department of Commerce. In three years, this center has worked with more than 500 Vermont manufacturers in projects involving a number of trade associations, colleges, and other non-profit organizations.

The center has been in the forefront of efforts to raise Vermonters’ awareness of the potential problems of Y2K or the Millennium Bug, which could cause most computers to malfunction on Jan. 1, 2000, because they may not be able to recognize the date. VMEC is closely affiliated with the state’s Y2K Council and it’s working with businesses that Clarke maintains might be reluctant to deal directly with government officials.

Clarke offered land to the Wood-Stock-based Vermont Institute of Natural Sciences, and the college now operates a veterans’ cemetery. He agreed to maintain the cemetery—and VTC still does—in order to get the remainder of the land for campus expansion.

Meanwhile, back on the campus, Clarke encourages innovation, but he runs a tight ship. Too tight for some faculty members, who over the years have chafed at the directions he wants to take the school, the speed with which he likes to make changes, and his occasional intolerance with those who disagree with him.

Early in his tenure, one teacher who was vocally less than enthusiastic about Clarke’s plans to change the place took a deal with the New Hampshire Institute of the Arts. In 1992, he agreed to take full-time leave to work on a master’s degree in marketing and management, and assistance in finding money for startups or expansion. As
in Vermont. He admits that when he first took office he viewed it as a stepping stone, but he says the people here have been so welcoming and unlike the flinty New England stereotype, that he and his wife Glenda have fallen in love with the state and plan to live out their lives here.

On the college front, he’s planning more relationships with businesses. He’s working to develop one with IDX, the Burlington-based software company, which recently announced an expansion. He hopes to provide a six-month program of technical training to liberal-arts graduates.

Clarke also wants to assist Vermont businesses to get into what he calls “e-commerce,” selling their wares over the Internet. “We know the technology and we can help,” he says. “Most businesses are barely scratching the surface.”

And he wants to encourage the state to come up with a coordinated effort to deal with vocational-technical education.

He applauds the efforts of the Higher Education Financing Commission on which he sat, but feels the key to having its recommendations work is a multi-year commitment by the state. For example, he notes that the new Trust Fund just passed by the Legislature is about $8 million to start and its use is limited to the earnings from the amount.

“It’s an important first step,” he says, “but one that will have marginal impact until it grows.” For each of the state colleges, the fund will provide about $20,000 a year for scholarships as it now stands. He’s disappointed this year there are no “workforce development” funds. Most states provide funds for training and re-training workers, but in Vermont the cost must be borne entirely by the companies.

Unless, of course, some clever entrepreneur somewhere—someone like Bob Clarke—can find the money and the backing to put a package together.

HONORING COLORADO STATE SENATOR TILMAN BISHOP

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I’d like to take a moment to honor an individual who, for so many years, has exemplified the notion of public service and civic duty and an individual the western slope of Colorado will find difficult to replace.

Senator Tilman Bishop, a true Coloradore, represented Colorado’s 7th District in the Colorado State Senate for 24 years and before that, 4 years in the Colorado House of Representatives. From 1993 to 1998 he also served as president pro tem of the senate. His years of service rank him 4th in the State’s history for continuous years of service and he is the longest serving senator from the western slope of Colorado.

Senator Bishop has, for decades, selflessly given of himself and has always placed the needs of his constituents before his own. I had the honor of serving with Senator Bishop in the Colorado State Foresters. From 1993 to 1999 and have always valued his advice and counsel.

The numerous honors and distinction that Senator Bishop has earned during his years of outstanding service exemplify his dedication to the legislature and his constituents. Senator Bishop’s wisdom and knowledge will be sorely missed.

Senator Bishop’s tenure in the State legislature ended in 1998. There are too few people in elected office today who are prepared to serve in the same selfless and diligent manner of Tilman Bishop. His constituents owe him a debt of gratitude and I wish him and his wife Pat the best in their well-deserved retirement.

TRIBUTE TO TONY BURNS OF FLORIDA

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to salute a special milestone involving one of America’s premier business and civic leaders, Mr. Anthony “Tony” Burns of Miami, Florida.

A quarter-century ago, Tony Burns began his career with Ryder System, Inc. in 1974, as the Director of Planning and Treasurer. Under his guidance, Ryder expanded to become the largest truck leasing and rental company in the world, and the largest public transit management company in the United States. Not only serving as Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer, Tony celebrates his 25th anniversary with the firm on June 3, 1999.

While elevating Ryder’s corporate status, Tony has helped lead the effort to make the workplace more family friendly. He has implemented programs such as Kids’ Corner, the Diversity Council, and a flextime policy to allow parents greater schedule flexibility.

In addition, Tony Burns personifies community involvement, including service to the Boy Scouts of America.

Mr. President, as we approach a new millennium and look back on the all-but-complete 20th Century, we are reminded of the importance of the dedicated people who strive to improve both their workplace and their community. I commend Tony Burns for his business acumen, his leadership, and his commitment to his company and the south Florida community. As he prepares to celebrate his 25th anniversary with Ryder, I ask you to join me and his many friends in extending congratulations and best wishes.

ON BEHALF OF THE LATE JIM BETHEL, DEAN EMERITUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON’s COLLEGE OF FOREST RESOURCES

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I rise to acknowledge the passing of an eminent teacher, scientist and academic administrator in my state. On Tuesday, May 18, Jim Bethel, Dean Emeritus of the University of Washington’s College of Forest Resources, died in a Seattle hospital.

Dean Bethel was one of the Nation’s most prominent and influential forestry leaders and was recognized both nationally and internationally. During his 17-year tenure as Dean from 1984 to 1991, he was a principal architect of creative educational innovations and related research programs that have endured in one way or another to this day. Furthermore, his extensive experience and leadership in international forestry affairs has contributed greatly to the College’s involvement in international academic and research activities.

As an administrator, Dean Bethel set an undeniably high standard for his successors, faculty and administrators to emulate. Dean Bethel was responsible for initiating the College’s pulp and paper program and the Center for Quantitative Science. Under his leadership, the College was repeatedly ranked among the top five forestry institutions in the U.S. Incidentally, while Dean, Bethel never gave up teaching two undergraduate courses, conducting personal research and advising graduate students.

Bethel received a BS degree from the University of Washington and advanced degrees at Duke University. In fact, he was one of the first individuals to be granted a Doctor of Forestry. Bethel held faculty appointments at Pennsylvania State University and Virginia Polytechnic University. During a 10-year stint at North Carolina State University, he was Professor and the Director of the Wood Products Laboratory and acting Dean of the Graduate School. He worked at the National Science Foundation for three years prior to becoming the Associate Dean of the Graduate School at the University of Washington where he served as Professor and subsequently the Dean of the College of Forest Resources.

Several organizations recognized Bethel’s scientific contribution: he was elected fellow of the Society of American Foresters, the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the International Academy of Wood Sciences. He served on various boards and was a consultant to the National Academy of Sciences. Bethel also served on the President’s Council on Environmental Quality. He was one of the founders of the Forest Products Research Society.

Bethel has significantly influenced the lives of many professional foresters. Perhaps his greatest and most enduring professional legacy are his graduate students who went on to responsible and successful positions, and the impressive list of professional journal articles and books.

Dean Bethel will be missed by those concerned about the scientific stewardship of forest resources in my State and the world.

PLIGHT OF THE KURDISH PEOPLE

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today out of concern for the plight of the