

"I love dealing with people more than anything," he said. "Since I was a kid I loved to be out among people."•

IN MEMORY OF GEORGE A.
ATHANSON

• Mr. DODD. Mr. President, on January 11, 2000, with the passing of George A. Athanson, the state of Connecticut lost a faithful and companionate public servant and one of its most colorful political figures in recent memory. Often called the "people's mayor," George was one of the longest serving and most beloved mayors in the history of Hartford, Connecticut. I would like to take a few moments to reflect on his many contributions to the city of Hartford.

George Athanson was a product of the city he came to love and serve so well. A Hartford-born son of Greek heritage, he attended Hartford Public High School, where his intelligence and personal charm won him the admiration of his peers and teachers alike. He went on to Amherst College where he graduated cum laude with a degree in political science. Following a short stint in the Marines, George returned to academia, this time to the University of Chicago law school where he received a law degree in 1955. George would also earn a masters in international relations from the University of Connecticut in 1958.

George's love for his home town and affinity for learning lead him to teaching at the University of Hartford. As a professor of history and political science, George was known for a dramatic flair that enlivened his classes—a flair that George would bring to the mayor's office with his election in 1971. His magnetic personality, energy, creativity and verve for the dramatic contributed to his tremendous popularity and resulted in one of the longest mayoral tenures in Hartford's history, from 1971 to 1981.

He considered himself a liberal Democrat and was confident that government could play a role in solving social and economic problems. George was a colorful politician with a flamboyant style. While he was hard working, his efforts were often overshadowed by the creative and novel actions he undertook to promote the city. On one occasion, George rowed across the Connecticut River holding a state flag and dressed as George Washington to protest a General Assembly vote. On another occasion, he stepped into a boxing ring with a Republican opponent to raise money for charity. And in perhaps his best known act of political theater, George showed up to promote development at Brainard Airport in Hartford dressed as the Red Baron and climbed into the cockpit of a bi-plane for photographers.

It wasn't these dramatics that made George Athanson so popular, however,

but his underlying dedication to the city of Hartford. He humanized the mayor's office. George was a man of great personal strength and he used his talent and energy to bring the city together. He built and maintained lines of communication among the city's diverse racial and ethnic communities and in the process became the people's mayor.

It was fitting that in his final days in office, George continued what had become a tradition during his tenure, the delivery of the annual New Year's poem. The poems were symbolic of the man who composed them—witty, humorous and full of political insight. With tears in his eyes, George delivered his last New Year's poem in 1981 entitled Ode to the People of Hartford, which read in part:

Those stunts for charity, I did my part
"Buffoon," critics said, but where's THEIR
heart?

Resolutions by the thousands, I've made my
mark

Now it's time for a stroll through the park.

Indeed, George did leave his mark. He will long be remembered as a political leader of great insight, compassion, wit, and enduring affection for the people he felt so privileged to serve. My thoughts and prayers go out to his wife of 37 years, Zoe, and their son Arthur.●

CONGRATULATING THE
COMMUNITY OF FILLMORE

• Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, I rise to offer my congratulations to the community of Fillmore, New York on the occasion of its sesquicentennial, and to wish them great success with their May 27 to 29 celebration of this milestone.

What is now Fillmore was originally a small settlement nestled into the corner where Cold Creek joins the Genesee River. The land was once part of the Caneadea Indian Reservation. By 1826, the Seneca Indians, who owned the land, had sold off all of the reservation. In 1850, during the Presidency of Millard Fillmore, the second New York State native to hold that distinguished office, a post office was established. Local lore has it that the citizens decided to name the settlement Fillmore in order to convince the government to establish the post office.

The first settlers were attracted to the area by timber, but the building of the Genesee Valley Canal Line connecting the Erie Canal to the Allegany River brought an economic boom to all the areas along the line, including Fillmore. With its fertile soil, the Community eventually also became a farming area.

The citizens of Fillmore are proud of their backgrounds, their community, their State and their country. It is a community with a strong work ethic. It places a high priority on education and for years has supported a superior

school system that is the envy of many larger communities. It is proud of the success of its young people, both those who leave and those who stay and believes that the values instilled by the citizens of the community is one of the reasons their young people are successful in their careers, be they farmers or educators in Fillmore, government workers in Washington, business leaders in Fillmore or across the country, or professors in America's great colleges and universities.

Fillmore has contributed many of its finest young men and women to serve this country in war and peace. All of them have served their country and their community with distinction and honor. During the Memorial Day weekend sesquicentennial celebration, Fillmore will remember with pride all of those service men and women who have served and are serving. It will pay special homage to those whose service required the ultimate sacrifice.

The community is planning for its future. It is hopeful of attracting new and modern businesses to the community. It is developing community projects to improve key services and improve the environment. It intends to continue to improve its already outstanding public school by adding any needed facilities and continuing to attract outstanding teachers.

It is anticipating with excitement its next 150 years.●

THE FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE 1996 TELECOMMUNICATIONS
ACT

• Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, 4 years ago, Congress passed a landmark measure, the Telecommunications Act of 1996. This bill was passed in an attempt to break down some of the regulatory barriers among various communications sectors. It is one of the sparks that ignited our booming new economy in this information technology age.

In New York especially, the 1996 law has created competition in local telephone networks, areas previously dominated by monopolies. After an 18 month marathon of hard work by the New York State Public Service Commission and a thorough review by the Federal Communications Commission, Bell Atlantic became the first Bell operating company in the country to offer long distance service. Already, nearly one million New Yorkers have exercised their right to choose a new local telephone company. Creative new packages of local/long distance and "all distance" telecom services are being offered by many different carriers. To date, there are more than 350 competitive local exchange carriers, CLECs, in the country that are able to provide local telephone service, furthering consumer choice options.

Competition and innovation is working as we intended with the Telecom