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CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—SENATE

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wherever he chooses after the great service he has provided to the Congress.

I want to take a moment to say goodbye on behalf of the Senate to a man we know quite well. I know Senator Daschle is going to join me in this and make some comments, either in a few minutes or later. I am talking about Jim Talbert, as is Superintendent of the Senate’s Periodical Press Gallery and is retiring this week after 32 years of service.

Jim and I came to the House of Representatives in the same year, 1968. He was hired in the House Daily Press Gallery, and I was hired as an aide to then-Congressman Bill Colmer, chairman of the Rules Committee. Twenty-three years and five Speakers later, Jim crossed the DMZ in the Capitol to the Senate to be Superintendent of the Periodical Press Gallery.

Early on, Jim figured out what it took to get things done here: know the rules. He knew them. That is why he became such a valuable resource. His expertise on congressional procedure was widely recognized and consulted by rookie reporters, veteran correspondents, and, yes, even by an occasional Senator or House Member who knows that he spent those many years in the House. His generosity in sharing his knowledge and time has brought him a great many friends on the second and third floors of this Capitol.

I have a letter from the Executive Committee of Correspondents that describes in the reporters’ words all Jim has accomplished on their behalf in the Senate. I ask unanimous consent that that letter be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the letter ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:


DEAR JIM: The Executive Committee of Correspondents conveys its gratitude on behalf of the more than 250 publications and 1,700 reporters who benefitted from your nine years as superintendent of the United States Senate Periodical Press Gallery.

The transformation you have made running this press gallery has been nothing short of historic. The gallery has never operated in a more professional manner. The gallery staff was never better educated about the legislative process nor more knowledgeable of what is happening at any given moment on the Senate floor. Reporters never had a better opportunity of snagging a seat and testing the nerve center of the Senate floor. Reporters never had a better opportunity of snagging a seat and testing the nerve center of the Senate floor.

The gallery is the nerve center for Capitol Hill. It is one of three press galleries in the Senate, and is the nerve center for Capitol Hill reporters representing national and local magazines and newsletters. More than 1,700 journalists representing 250 different news organizations are credentialed to use the Periodical Press Gallery. Jim Talbert, as the majority leader, has indicated, is retiring at the end of this week as the Superintendent of the Senate Periodical Press Gallery. He is one of hundreds of members of our Capitol family whom C-SPAN viewers never see but without whom this institution would simply not function. He has served Congress with distinction for 32 years.

Mr. MCCAIN would object to that, but I assure Senator Daschle that the periodical gallery staff he serves so hard to train is committed to maintaining his same high standards.

Besides his retirement, Jim will celebrate another happy milestone this year. In 1965, Jim was diagnosed with throat cancer. In his 5-year fight to beat cancer, he endured several rounds of radiation treatment and surgery and missed only 1 month of work. Recently, Jim was declared cancer free.

Finally, I always sensed that there was something unusually wise about Jim. That hunch was confirmed recently when I learned that he and his wife, Judy, will be moving to their hometown, Brookings, S.D., home of South Dakota State University. I am confident Jim will feel that he has a better place to retire. I am glad to call them constituents and look forward to seeing them many times in my State and now their State.

I wish Jim and Judy well. Jim has served this Senate with dedication and distinction. I look forward to being able to serve with him, for a change, as his Senator. I wish him and Judy all the best as they begin their new life in South Dakota.

UNANIMOUS-CONSEN'T AGREEMENT

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Virginia be recognized to offer a series of cleared amendments to the pending DOD authorization bill, and following the disposition of the 41-plus cleared amendments, the DOD authorization bill be laid aside and that the Senate then turn to the House Transportation appropriations bill and the Senate bill be immediately offered as an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I also had intended to ask consent that when the Senate resumes the DOD bill, the Smith amendment be laid aside and that the Senate DOD be on the floor. As head of the periodical gallery, Jim approves credentials for reporters covering Capitol Hill. He acts as a liaison between the press and Senate staff and keeps us up-to-the minute information on what is happening on the Senate floor.

Reporters do not turn to Jim simply for information about where a press conference is being held or when a bill might be coming to the floor. They also depend on his knowledge of Senate history and legislative procedure to make sense of our sometimes confusing parliamentary rules. He is a professional, an efficient and fair-minded person in carrying out all of his duties. He is also generous and always has a humorous story to share.

While his retirement will have reporters scrambling to find a good source on Senate procedure, he can leave knowing that the periodical gallery staff he has worked so hard to train is committed to maintaining his same high standards.

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