



Gibbons Capitol Report
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Saying Farewell to Senate Retiring Members

Since the onset of term limits, every two years the Senate must say farewell to more members that are no longer eligible to run for re-election. To honor their service, we hold a retirement ceremony where their peers speak about their service and the retiring members say their farewell remarks on the Senate floor. This week, we said goodbye to four current members, and recognized three others who have moved on from the Senate in the past two years. We also recognized Sen. Larry Gene Taylor who passed away last year after a battle with cancer.

The Honorees

In 2004, we honored the retiring senators who served in the Legislature a total of 288 years. This year, our eight retiring members served 80 years. Sen. Patrick Dougherty contributed a third of that time with 28 years of public service to his name. The age of the “Senate Lions” is gone and now no one will serve more than two terms in the Missouri Senate. Still, these individuals, both Republicans and Democrats truly embodied the state’s motto, “to let the welfare of the people be the supreme law.” The people in this state have benefited as they worked to move the state forward in the way they believed was best.

Lessons Shared

Many comments were shared by our outgoing members that I took note of. But one in particular will stay with me for some time. During his tenure, Sen. David Klindt has often referred to “Grandma Millie.” Although fictional, she is a voice of common sense and he would often say what “Grandma Millie” would think of a bill or amendment as we were debating it. David did say that his constituent did not always agree with the legislation we passed, but that she was always impressed with the civility and respect we treated one another with, even in our most divisive debates. I know I will work to continue to make “Grandma Millie” proud of the way the Senate conducts itself.

Honoring Senate Staff

Farewells are not the only new thing to come because of term limits. This week we also honored our Senate employees, the men and women who work hard behind the scenes to make our representative democracy run. Their duties range from ensuring we follow procedure to proofreading bills to using 21st Century technology to inform the public of the actions we have taken, as well as what we debate. We honored all the Senate staff, but

singled out 42 individuals who have served more than 10 years, 24 of whom have served more than 20 years, and one who has served 30 years. As new faces join the Senate, their institutional knowledge is the key to maintaining the traditions of the Senate that have made it such an august body over the years.

Together, senators from both parties and senate staff work to make our representative government work for the people. Above all else, we put people before politics. An example of this was that each senator who was honored chose which senator they would like to lead their tribute at the retirement ceremony. This year several of our senators chose senators from the opposite party to make remarks on their behalf. This has also been true in the past. Many who aren't familiar with the Senate probably find this odd, but it is an example of the Senate's ability to vigorously debate the issues of the day, to later join together as bipartisan friends. This makes us truly, a Senate family.