

HEFLIN represents a rural State, Alabama, and he knows what's needed to maintain quality of life. He knows that everything which makes up the rural way of life—jobs, schools, hospitals, the rural infrastructure—depends on having a vibrant economic base.

As it is in North Dakota, agriculture is key to rural life in Alabama. Senator HEFLIN understands the need to preserve and protect the economic viability of American farmers in fiercely competitive global agricultural markets. He understands the complexities of world agricultural trade and has stood strongly behind U.S. farmers in their efforts to compete. A staunch defender of U.S. peanut growers, The Judge is always willing to go the extra mile to ensure their concerns are heard in the development of agricultural legislation. But more than that, he always works hard to convey to the nonagriculture community the importance of maintaining a strong, broad-based agricultural system in the United States.

Closely linked with agriculture is the rural infrastructure, and Senator HEFLIN knows perhaps better than anyone in this body that a strong infrastructure is absolutely crucial to preserving the economic base of rural areas. Rural electric and telephone cooperatives are the lifeblood of rural areas, and without them many citizens would receive poor service, expensive service, or no service at all. Senator HEFLIN fights off critics of Federal Government rural development efforts with stern determination, clear arguments and effective strategies. I truly admire him for it, and am glad to say I've joined him in that effort.

I'm sure every Member of this body has a favorite story about HOWELL HEFLIN. His character and personality have often brought easy smiles into what many times have been very difficult situations. One of my favorites occurred just last year in the Senate Agriculture Committee during negotiations on the 1996 farm bill. The Committee Democrats were present, waiting for our Republican counterparts to finish their caucus and enter the room. Suddenly, above the din of the Members, staff, and lobbyists came a bellowing call, "Sound the pachyderm horns!" The Judge had made it known he wasn't interested in waiting for the Republicans any longer. They promptly returned.

But it will not be for just his wit that I will miss Judge HEFLIN. He is a good friend, a great Senator, and a remarkable American. I admire him greatly for all that he has done. And knowing that this week he admitted himself into an Alabama hospital, I can only say that I wish him a speedy recovery, my sincerest appreciation for the years we've served together, and my best heart-felt wishes for a long, happy, and comfortable retirement.

#### RETIREMENT OF SENATOR HANK BROWN

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute and bid farewell to

the distinguished Senator from Colorado, Senator HANK BROWN.

Senator BROWN has committed many years to the people of Colorado, spending 10 years in the House of Representatives and 6 here in the Senate. Though he has much to offer this body, Senator BROWN has chosen to limit his time in Washington. The Senate will certainly miss his leadership and commitment.

Senator BROWN and I share a common concern for getting this country's fiscal house in order, though, at times, that involves making difficult choices. I have had the great pleasure of working with Senator BROWN as a member of the Centrist Coalition, a bipartisan group of Senators. This group worked diligently to agree to an alternative budget plan. This plan incorporated the suggestions of the National Governors' Association on welfare and Medicaid issues, while preserving a safety net for our Nation's most vulnerable populations. Though our plan was narrowly defeated, it was the only bipartisan budget effort to receive strong support during the 104th Congress. I was honored to work with Senator BROWN on the effort.

Prior to his time in Congress, HANK BROWN served our country in Vietnam. A decorated veteran, he has maintained a commitment to ensuring that the United States dealings with Vietnam are appropriate and fair. His unique knowledge and perspective have made him an invaluable contributor to the debates on foreign policy and U.S. military involvement in the world community.

Senator BROWN has also exhibited leadership on behalf of ranchers; as a Senator from North Dakota, I fully appreciate his efforts in this area. During debate on the 1994 Interior appropriations bill, HANK BROWN led the fight against an amendment to raise grazing fees. I was proud to join him in this successful fight, and the ranchers of my State are thankful for his leadership.

Above all, it is Senator BROWN's integrity, thoughtfulness, and commitment to principles that make him a valued Member of the Senate. He will be greatly missed in this body, and I wish him well as he embarks on the next stage of his life.

#### HONORING THE TAFTS ON THEIR 65TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, families are the cornerstone of America. The data are undeniable:

Individuals from strong families contribute to the society. In an era when nearly half of all couples married today will see their union dissolve into divorce, I believe it is both instructive and important to honor those who have taken the commitment of "till death us do part" seriously, demonstrating successfully the timeless principles of love, honor, and fidelity. These characteristics make our country strong.

For these important reasons, I rise today to honor Clarence and Ethel Taft

of Springfield, MO, who on September 10, 1996, will celebrate their 65th wedding anniversary. My wife, Janet, and I look forward to the day we can celebrate a similar milestone. Clarence and Ethel's commitment to the principles and values of their marriage deserves to be saluted and recognized.

#### TRIBUTE TO RETIRING SENATOR DAVID PRYOR

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, today I salute one of my Democratic colleagues who is retiring at the end of this Congress, Senator DAVID PRYOR of Arkansas. I have been privileged to serve with David PRYOR not only in the Senate but also on the Finance and Agriculture Committees. Senator PRYOR is a true gentleman, a thoughtful statesman, and a champion for all taxpayers, farmers, and senior citizens. His presence in the United States Senate will be missed.

Senator PRYOR's service to his constituents in Arkansas and the Nation is remarkable. He was elected to the first of three terms as a U.S. Congressman for the Fourth District of Arkansas in 1966. He became Governor in 1974. In 1978, the people of Arkansas elected him to serve in the U.S. Senate. Senator PRYOR was elected to his third Senate term in 1990 without a challenger.

Through his service on the Senate Finance Committee, Senator PRYOR has made a difference in the day-to-day life of every American. The Taxpayer Bill of Rights will be considered as one of Senator PRYOR's lasting legacies. Thanks to his efforts in enacting this legislation, taxpayers are guaranteed certain basic rights when dealing with the Internal Revenue Service.

The Agriculture Committee provided Senator PRYOR with the perfect venue to improve the lives of America's farmers and ensure an abundant and safe food supply for this country and the world. He has been a watchdog for the interests of Arkansas farmers. His work on improving food quality and safety will be remembered by many future generations.

Senator PRYOR is probably best known for his work on behalf of our senior citizens. The Senate Special Committee on Aging was chaired by Senator PRYOR for 6 years and he currently serves as the ranking minority member. Senator PRYOR fought to save the Social Security system and reform the nursing home industry. He also focused the Nation's attention on the soaring prices of prescription drugs. His dedication to the issues facing our senior citizens is inspiring.

Mr. President, dedication, integrity, and humility are characteristics that best describe Senator PRYOR's presence in the Senate. He has worked tirelessly on behalf of his Arkansas constituents