

Federal Relations. She is retiring from her position after 20 years at Johns Hopkins.

I wish her the best as she continues to serve the people of Maryland and fights the good fight for the issues she believes in.

TRIBUTE TO DENISE NOOE

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, today, I wish to honor my long-time staff member, Denise Nooe, on the occasion of her retirement.

Denise has been a part of my team for 30 years. She began working for me in 1983 as a constituent services representative when I was representing Maryland's Third District in the U.S. House of Representatives, and she was a key part of my team when I transitioned from the House to the Senate. Denise has been the outstanding director of my Annapolis office since 1987.

Denise and I have similar backgrounds. We both believe in the power of community organizing to make a difference. We believe the best ideas come from the people. We both have master's degrees in social work, and believe in the importance of helping individuals and serving our communities. We believe that the people have a right to know, to be heard and to be represented.

Throughout her career, Denise has strived to make a difference in people's lives. She has utilized her social work skills every day in understanding how she can best serve the people of Maryland, and help them to the best of her ability. As a caseworker, she has helped thousands of veterans and military personnel negotiate the labyrinth of the Federal bureaucracy. She has brought solace to families when their loved one has died in the line of duty. She has made sure that the brave soldier who died for his Nation could be buried at Arlington. She was vigilant in getting the widow and children the benefits that the servicemember earned for them.

Our wounded warriors could always come to her with a problem and be confident that it would be managed for them. She has represented me on hundreds of occasions on Veterans Day and Memorial Day and any day that veterans and our brave military needed me. She has also been the link to my Veterans Advisory Board and the Governor's Commission on Veterans.

Denise also represents me throughout Maryland, most especially in Anne Arundel County. She was instrumental in the creation of the BWI partnership and the Fort Meade Alliance. State and local officials in Anne Arundel County know she is my catcher's mitt. Actually they think she is the Senator, because we are both short in height. But Denise is also tall in stature among her colleagues, for certainly she has no peer.

Denise has recently been in a key advocacy role assisting me in my efforts

to reduce the horrific backlog of Veteran's disability claims in Baltimore. She has been my boots on the ground in Baltimore and played an important role in rallying and assisting the Veterans Service Organizations during this difficult time.

Throughout these wonderful 30 years, Denise has been an invaluable member of my staff. Not only has she helped me immensely in my work as a U.S. Senator, but she has also stood sentry with me and served the people of Maryland with distinction for three decades. Today I want to recognize her for all of the important work she has done, tell the world that I hold her in the highest regard and wish her the very best on her retirement.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF JOHN F. KENNEDY'S ASSASSINATION

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, 50 years after the assassination of John F. Kennedy, America still mourns his loss. For those of us who were inspired by his Presidency, it is easy to understand why. In a time of indifference, he reawakened this Nation to the finest meaning of citizenship—placing public service ahead of private interest.

That is why a half a century later, he remains a powerful symbol of a time of soaring idealism in America, when our people believed our country could do anything—even go to the moon.

John Kennedy also inspires Americans who know him only from history books or from the stories their parents and grandparents tell of that all-too-brief shining moment that was his Presidency.

John Kennedy was in the White House for only 1,000 days, not even 3 years. But his achievements exceeded his years. It's easy to dismiss his Presidency as one of rhetoric more than results. But to do so ignores the New Frontier he pioneered—a new era of economic growth, space exploration, civil rights advancements, conservation of natural resources, nuclear disarmament and generations of Americans who have made public service a way of life.

John Kennedy's immortal words, especially those of his Inaugural Address, still call us to action—to think beyond our own self-interests, and to do what is best for our country and the people of the world.

Like millions of Americans, I vividly recall the exact moment on that cold day of November 22, 1963, when I heard the shocking news from Dallas that the President had been shot. I was a junior at Farmington High School. By the time we were told of the tragedy, it was just after lunch and my classmates and I walked into English class. Mr. Simon Matthews, our English teacher who also was one of our football coaches, broke the unspeakable news.

Mr. Matthews announced austerely, "The President has been shot." We thought he was joking and teased him to quit kidding us. He said again, "The

President has just been assassinated," and we were sent home from school early.

When I arrived home, I was stunned to walk in to my living room and find it filled by my entire family. I had never seen my grandfather or father or my uncles leave work early. It was a somber time for every member of my family as we tried to come to grips with the terrible news. It was just so hard to believe our President could be taken from us. But he was.

Three days later, it was decided that our family would go to Washington to pay our respects to the President. As an eager 16 year old who had just gotten my license a few months before, I volunteered to drive us in Papa's '58 Cadillac. Six of us piled into the car and made the trip to our Nation's capital.

I will never forget, as the caisson bearing the President's casket was led down Pennsylvania Avenue on its way to Arlington Cemetery, my cousins and I climbed into the trees for a better view of the procession. We saw the President's stricken family and friends, the somber Washington dignitaries and world leaders, and Black Jack, the riderless horse with boots turned backwards in the stirrups, a heartbreaking symbol of the loss of a great leader. As I watched the procession move slowly to the sad cadence of military drums, I thought of the time I had been fortunate enough to meet members of the Kennedy family.

I was working on my go-cart downstairs in the garage when they visited my family in Farmington as then-Senator Kennedy was preparing for the West Virginia presidential primary. My hands were dirty and greasy, but my mother insisted that I wipe them clean and come upstairs to meet a few people. As I climbed the steps, I smelled my grandmother, Mama Kay's, spaghetti. Everyone had gathered at the table for dinner and an exciting discussion about the political race ramping up in West Virginia. That was the day I shook hands with the Kennedys.

John Kennedy and his family spent so much time campaigning in West Virginia that he once quipped that "West Virginia" was the third word his daughter Caroline learned to pronounce. He once boasted that he was the only Presidential candidate in history, other than West Virginian John Davis in 1924, "who knows where Slab Fork is and has been there."

John Kennedy came to West Virginia to show that a Catholic could win in a predominantly Protestant State. Americans worried that a Catholic President would be controlled by the Pope and that Catholic Mass would be held in the White House every day. Let me just note here that John Kennedy carried the West Virginia primary in a landslide—with 60.8 percent. He won our votes and our heart. He went on to become, as he put it, "not the Catholic candidate for President," but "the