

people of Marin County well in this capacity, and earned a reputation for being one of the most exemplary teachers in her field.

Kate Byrnes has devoted countless hours to her students and demonstrates an uncommon commitment to her educational mission. Time and time again she has intervened on behalf of her students and their families. In addition, she has coordinated overnight ski trips for the blind and visually impaired in order to increase their recreational opportunities.

Kate Byrnes has been active in organizations, including the Low Incidence Regional Network for Northern California and the shared decision-making Leadership Team of teachers and administrators for the Marin County Office of Education's special education division. She has been an instructor and guest lecturer at San Francisco State University, helping to motivate others to become exceptional teachers for the visually impaired.

Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to pay tribute to Kate Byrnes for being selected as the 1995 California Teacher of the Year. Marin County owes a great deal of gratitude for the tireless efforts of Kate Byrnes over the years. I extend my hearty congratulations and best wishes to Kate.

MACK GERALD FLEMING

HON. G.V. (SONNY) MONTGOMERY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 6, 1995

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, Friday, March 31, 1995, marked the end of an extraordinary career in public service. After 26 years on Capitol Hill, serving 21 years as chief counsel and 14 as staff director of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Mack Gerald Fleming retired.

Superlatives just naturally come to mind when describing Mack. As stated in the resolution presented to Mack by BOB STUMP and me, his service with the committee and the Veterans Administration was distinguished by visionary leadership, profound wisdom, sound political judgment, and a passion for meeting the needs of America's veterans.

His was the deep commitment of the true believer tempered by a unique practical sense of political possibilities and opportunities. His intuitive sense of timing and ability to reach an effective compromise resulted in the enactment of far-reaching veterans' legislation. Under his guidance, the measure elevating the Veterans' Administration to the Department of Veterans' Affairs was signed into law. Additionally, the new GI bill, which profoundly improved the ability of the Armed Forces to recruit smart, capable young men and women, was nurtured into reality by Mack Fleming. I think Mack would also say he is particularly proud of his efforts to provide an entitlement to inpatient health care for service connected and low-income veterans.

We all know Mack thrived in and was energized by the rough and tumble of politics, and he loved nothing better than a good fight on behalf of a cause he championed. He nevertheless was not swallowed up or overwhelmed by the sometimes heady Capitol Hill existence. There was something in his background or the way he was raised that kept him solidly grounded, and that made the difference.

The difference between a boastful person and one whom people boast of knowing;

The difference between a cynical man and one who only sees the good he can do for other people;

The difference between a man who looks for credit for his accomplishments and a man who accomplishes much.

Mack Fleming is a person who is still filled with wonder and seeks to learn new things every day. He has the quintessentially American outlook first observed by de Tocqueville that although man is not perfect, with a decent amount of effort, he can be improved.

Mack came from a humble background in Georgia and South Carolina. He graduated from Clemson University in 1956 and was commissioned as an officer in the U.S. Army. He served on active duty for 2 years with the Second Armored Division in Europe. He subsequently returned to South Carolina where he was a supervisor in a textile mill for 2 years. After coming to Washington in 1960 to serve as administrative assistant to William Jennings Bryan Dorn, Mack graduated from the Washington College of Law at American University in 1966.

Mack also met his wife Libby in Washington, whom he married in 1963. He has been a devoted husband and a supportive and proud father of their children, Katie (Katharine) and John. Mack has long been an active member of the Capitol Hill United Methodist Church and regularly serves as a volunteer at the soup kitchen sponsored by his church.

Mack Fleming loved his work. He was as loyal as they come—smart, tough, a savvy politician. He particularly admired Speaker Sam Rayburn and Presidents Abraham Lincoln and Lyndon Johnson—and one could see Mack's respect for these practical politicians reflected in his strong character and deep sense of personal honor. Now, I don't want anyone to get the idea that Mack was a saint. He was occasionally more passionate than logical, and serene is not a word I associate with Mack, but he never retreated from the consequences of his conviction.

Mack brought old-fashioned values with him when he arrived in Washington 35 years ago. Through his influence and powers of persuasion, those values are integral markers for much of the work carried out by the committee and its staff. I often said he was the best, and we will certainly miss him.

“TAKING” IT TOO FAR

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 6, 1995

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, and fellow Members, I bring to your attention the attached article by Charles McCoy, from the April 4, 1995, edition of the Wall Street Journal.

Mr. McCoy presents an even-handed report of the congressional debate on the issue of private property rights and the “takings” issue, which, after passing the House, is now underway in the Senate. As Mr. McCoy notes, the House bill would require the Government to pay landowners full compensation when certain environmental protection actions trim the value of any portion of their land by 20 per-

cent or more. In the Senate, majority leader BOB DOLE has introduced a measure (S. 605) that would lift the threshold to 33 percent and would apply to all Federal actions.

Proponents contend that the Republican bills aim merely to put common sense back in Government's attitude about private property. Perhaps these advocates can explain the logic behind these examples of litigation currently being fought under the guise of private property rights:

Summitville Mine. The Canadian company that operated Summitville Mine created a Superfund site that will cost the taxpayers about \$120 million to clean up, filed bankruptcy and left the country. Now the owners of the mine site are suing the Governor of Colorado on the grounds that because the State permitted the mine, that gave the owners significant profit but also polluted their property, the value of the land was decreased due to regulatory action.

California Central Valley [CVP]: Big agricultural corporations now receive huge amounts of public water at subsidized rates to pour on their crops. Under the CVP legislation enacted in 1992, Federal and State regulators intend to divert some of that water to save and restore salmon runs. Now, the agriculture bigwigs are claiming that if these plans go through, and the takings legislation is enacted, they will claim reimbursement for any diversion of their subsidized water allotments—at market rates—not the subsidized rates.

The argument for “takings” legislation is not simply about that bedrock of American values: protection of private property. Unfortunately for those citizens who honestly believe in the rightness of their cause, it is more a ruse being played on the American people by the proposal's strongest supporters: industries such as mining, ranching, timber, oil and gas, and agriculture. These corporate players and their lawyers know that if enacted, this bill will not bring common sense to governmental actions, but will flagrantly inflate the number of lawsuits crowding our courts and cause governmental gridlock at all levels.

I urge you to take the time to read Mr. McCoy's article.

[From the Wall Street Journal, Apr. 4, 1995]

THE PUSH TO EXPAND PROPERTY RIGHTS STIRS BOTH HOPES AND FEARS—SOME CALIFORNIA FARMERS SEE WINDFALL IN GOP BILLS; OFFICIALS FRET ABOUT COSTS

DO GRAZING ELK “TAKE” GRASS?

(By Charles McCoy)

The new Republican-controlled Congress is on its way to passing the biggest expansion of property rights in U.S. history. In California, this could very well radically drive up the cost of saving salmon—and add to the tide of litigation those rescue efforts have already spawned.

Indeed, the Republican proposals, depending on their final form, promise a procession of policy zigzags and lawsuits at all levels of government, both critics and even some proponents agree.

MURKY CONSEQUENCES

Consider the salmon example: Big agricultural corporations in California's arid Central Valley now get huge amounts of public water at subsidized rates to pour on crops. But some of the state's historic salmon streams are drying up; under previous congressional mandates, federal and state regulators want to divert some of this water to restore salmon runs.