

Cleveland, I had invited Jack to our job-challenged region many times. In fact, he was scheduled to open the national rifle matches at Camp Perry this spring.

Jack Murtha was legendary. He never forgot where he came from. He tirelessly served his district and his constituents. He grew to serve our Nation and his reach was global. No one had his grasp of our Nation's defense or his dexterity at ushering the complicated defense appropriations bill, the largest in Congress, with nearly unanimous bipartisan support.

Jack put the soldier first. His unheralded visits to military hospitals to visit the sick and wounded were not designed as photo ops but as heartfelt expressions of appreciation for those who served on the front lines and sacrificed for us. Every soldier knew he understood.

Each branch of the service, plus the Reserve and National Guard, owes Jack Murtha a debt of gratitude. He was indefatigable in their cause. In Toledo, our 180th F-16 Fighter Wing is genuinely the best in the world. Why? Because Jack Murtha helped to build its capability. I daresay he attended to all 435 congressional districts with the same diligence.

Our Guard and Reserve units were modernized with improved pay and benefits because he knew their importance: he advised America cannot conduct successful operations without them. America's blood supply is more robust and deliverable because he fought for it. New weapons, materiel, and technologies are underway in every service branch because Jack knew that some generals tend to fight the last war, so he purposely worked in the future.

Jack Murtha respected the awesome power of the U.S. military, but he also knew its limits.

I have never served in Congress when Jack Murtha wasn't here. Properly, a U.S. flag has been placed on his chair in the "Pennsylvania Corner," where he anchored his work on the floor of the House of Representatives and will remain unoccupied by those who held him in esteem. His knowledge, leadership, measure, and tutelage remain timeless gifts to those who shared his path.

As the first Democratic woman to serve on the defense subcommittee of Appropriations, I can attest it would never have happened but for his support and encouragement. For his faith in me, I shall always be in his debt as I try to emulate his acuity, range and concern.

We, his subcommittee colleagues, who had the privilege of serving most closely with this giant of a man, shall miss him greatly.

When my constituents ask me to describe him, here is what I say in his cadence: Jack. Authentic. Patriotic. Man of the House. Marine. Chairman. Colonel. Dean. Semper fi. Fearless. Keen. Optimistic. Jovial. With an unforgettable glint in his eyes. Alive. Devoted husband to Joyce and proud and caring father and grandfather. Son of Johnstown. Rough hewn. Battle Tested. 2 Purple Hearts. A Bronze Star. Not blow dried nor cosmetic. Fiercely loyal to his district and Pennsylvania. In command. Extraordinarily hard working. Kept Marine hours, rising early, arriving early. Always building others. Trusted. Never gave a word he would break. If he said, I'll talk to you about it later, the subject was closed before you knew it. Acute judge of character. Revered counselor to dozens and dozens of Members and friends. In few golden but choice words, he advised, critiqued, led. Defended his subcommittee's prerogatives.

Don't mess with him. Absolutely loved politics. A ticket maker and analyzer. Lots of real friends. Some really cruel enemies. Always had a good word. Liked bright colors on others. Extraordinarily gifted. Well read. An author. Well traveled too, often to war zones. Visited the wounded and bore that pain close to his heart.

Quite curious. New ideas and insights captivated him. Capable of independent views. Razor sharp mind. Don't tangle with him unless you know your subject. Memory that could recall votes from 10 years ago, and who voted which way. Master of the Rules. Wielded the gavel with authority and certitude. Attentive to the Floor at all times even when you thought he wasn't paying attention. A coach. Possessed all the attributes to be Speaker, except he came from the working class of people and didn't hail from a financial or government enclave.

Not a trust fund baby nor into the cocktail circuit. Self made. Fair. Precise. Garrulous. Politically savvy. Strong, Unflinching. Always humorous, throwing his head back with a sincere laugh, and "is that so?" A brusque manner that didn't suffer fools gladly. Regularly reached across the aisle. Consistently passed his bills with nearly unanimous support. He instinctively knew how to build a majority.

Lived war. Heart always with the soldier. Loyal disciple of Speaker Tip O'Neill and the common man. Soul buddies with twinkles in their eyes. Cussing occasionally. But a good word always. A giant tree has fallen in the forest. A lion is now at rest. How fortunate are we who cherish his friendship and service. We loved him and will deeply miss him. America's defense is the best in the world because Chairman Jack Murtha lived to leave that legacy.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CHAIRMAN JOHN MURTHA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LOWEY. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the life of our dear friend and colleague, Chairman Jack Murtha. Jack was truly an all-American, a committed public servant, decorated veteran of war, small businessman, devoted husband and father and grandfather.

Many have recalled tonight and in recent weeks his service on the front lines of combat. His experience in the military made him a lifelong advocate for our men and women in uniform and a compass for this body when it came to making some of the toughest issues we face, those related to the defense of the United States.

Jack Murtha exercised his power to protect the country he loved, taking seriously the trust of his constituents and his responsibility to the American people.

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I learned so much from Jack Murtha. I witnessed firsthand and benefited from his expertise on military strategy, intelligence, and foreign policy. His compassion and commitment to do

what was right were equally impressive. On his broad shoulders, he carried a great burden to not only provide for our troops and their security but to ensure that we have made this world a better place, a safer place, including for innocent civilians in war zones and vulnerable societies around the world. And with a heavy heart he regularly gave his time to lift the spirits of men and women recovering from injuries in battles, sharing with them the appreciation of a grateful Nation.

Finally, I would like to note his dedication to a goal we shared: Alleviating cancer, especially those unique to women. He not only worked to help adapt military technology to aid in the treatment of cancer, he and his loving wife, Joyce, have supported initiatives to directly support breast cancer patients and survivors.

Jack was a giant among men. He was tough, he was smart, he was committed to this great institution. His lifelong service to our country will be missed.

Rest in peace, my dear friend. I will miss him.

IN TRIBUTE TO REPRESENTATIVE JOHN P. MURTHA OF PENNSYLVANIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ROTHMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROTHMAN of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I've been in Congress now—this is my 14th year.

A lot of people don't know about the quality of some of the people who are here in the Congress. A lot of people in this country find it funny to ridicule elected officials in general—Members of Congress in particular.

I am going to talk to you about a great American, a great human being. But there are many others like him, in a sense, with the patriotism and grace and greatness that he possessed.

Grace, generosity, and greatness: Jack Murtha. This was my fourth year serving on Mr. Murtha's defense subcommittee, and I was wondering how this giant of a man—physical giant, powerful, legislatively powerful man, would accept this guy from Jersey on his subcommittee. But he had such grace. He welcomed me with great civility and gentility. He was tough. He was so generous to me. He was generous to everyone on the committee.

He believed in bipartisanship absolutely, completely and totally, especially when it came to the security of our beloved country, the United States of America. So he took the best ideas from wherever they came—Democrat, Republican, liberal, or conservative. He just wanted what was best for America.

To talk about generosity, he even let me, a New Jersey guy, into the Pennsylvania corner. I was tickled by it. I was honored. For most of my years here when I was not on his subcommittee, I would see him over there in his corner, and I would see the people flocking around him from Pennsylvania and elsewhere, coming as if truly