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# J. James Exon

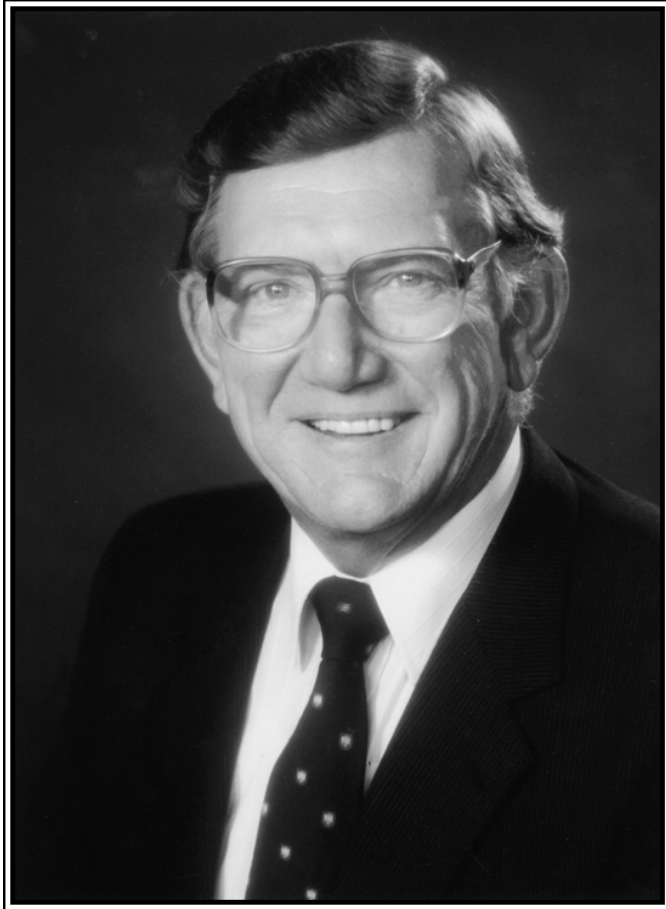
LATE A SENATOR FROM NEBRASKA

MEMORIAL ADDRESSES AND  
OTHER TRIBUTES

IN THE CONGRESS OF  
THE UNITED STATES



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J. James Exon

Senate Historical Office

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S. Doc. 109-6

# Memorial Addresses and Other Tributes

HELD IN THE SENATE  
AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
OF THE UNITED STATES  
TOGETHER WITH A MEMORIAL SERVICE  
IN HONOR OF

## J. JAMES EXON

*Late a Senator from Nebraska*

One Hundred Ninth Congress  
First Session



U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE  
WASHINGTON : 2005

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*Compiled under the direction  
of the  
Joint Committee on Printing  
Trent Lott, Chairman*

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## BIOGRAPHY

JIM EXON was born in South Dakota, on August 9, 1921, to John and Luella Exon. He was raised in the rural community of Lake Andes, SD. He moved to Nebraska and attended the University of Omaha from 1939 to 1942. He was awarded an honorary doctor of law degree by Creighton University in 1991. He also has honorary doctor of law degrees from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and Doane College, Crete, NE.

He volunteered for the U.S. Army Signal Corps and served 2 years overseas in New Guinea, the Philippines and Japan. He was honorably discharged as a Master Sergeant in December 1945 and served in the Army Reserve until 1949.

Prior to leaving for the South Pacific, JIM EXON married Patricia Pros of Omaha. They celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 1993. The Exons have three children, Steve, Pam and Candy, three grandsons and five granddaughters.

Following World War II, JIM EXON returned to Nebraska and started his business career in 1946 with the Universal Finance Corporation. In 1954 Pat and Jim founded Exon's Incorporated, which grew into one of Nebraska's best known office equipment companies.

Throughout his career JIM EXON was a member of the Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Lincoln, NE, and was active in a wide range of professional and civic activities.

JIM EXON was introduced to politics at an early age by his parents and his grandfather who served as a county judge in South Dakota. Campaigning for his grandfather was his first experience in grassroots politics. His parents were active leaders in the South Dakota Democratic Party. He became a prominent leader of the Nebraska Democratic Party, serving as State vice chairman and national committeeman.

In his first bid for public office, JIM EXON was elected Governor of Nebraska in 1970 and was re-elected in 1974 to a second term. He served as Governor of Nebraska longer than any other person in the State's history. As Governor, he applied his business skills of fiscal responsibility to State government, where he balanced the State's budget for 8 consecutive years.

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In 1978, Governor EXON marked a milestone by being the only Governor Nebraskans elected directly to the U.S. Senate. He was re-elected to a second term in 1984 and a third term in 1990. He continued his history of fiscal responsibility in the Senate, where he returned almost \$4 million allocated to run his Senate office. The book "Politics in America" produced by *Congressional Quarterly* magazine said this about Senator EXON:

EXON makes a real contribution to the Senate as a mirror of public opinion in America's heartland. It is hard to think of anyone else in the chamber who seems as attuned to the questions and concerns of the typical middle-American.

In the Senate, EXON was recognized nationally as a spokesman for fiscal responsibility, agriculture and rural America and an authority on national defense, commerce and transportation issues.

Known as a fighter for fiscal responsibility, Senator EXON, as a senior member of the Budget Committee, authored and secured passage of the only spending reduction in 1994, a \$13 billion real cut.

Senator EXON was the author of the Communications Decency Act, a law which protects children from computer pornography by making it illegal to send indecent material to a child or to display it on-line in areas where kids can get to it. The law also strengthened and updated other protections against telecommunication harassment and pornography.

Senator EXON, as a senior member of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee with jurisdiction over the U.S. strategic command in Bellevue, oversaw the U.S. nuclear arsenal and nuclear weapons production clean-up effort.

As a senior member of the Subcommittee on Surface Transportation, EXON played a key role in railroad safety. A bill originated by EXON and passed in 1992 mandated high-tech braking devices for trains, authorized funds for railroad safety and research programs and doubled the minimum penalty for safety violations.

Senator EXON was a leader in promoting ethanol fuels as a new market for agricultural products and as a way to strengthen our Nation's energy security. In the Senate, he beat back an attack on new Federal gasoline formulas and assured the expanded use of ethanol as a fuel additive.

He wrote the law that designated the Niobrara River in Nebraska a National Scenic River.

Senator EXON fought to expand markets for U.S. food products by opposing restrictions on agricultural exports and



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by fighting for fair international trade agreements for Nebraska agriculture.

Senator EXON, as a senior member of the Armed Services Committee, co-authored historic legislation passed in 1992 requiring a nuclear testing moratorium and an end to all nuclear testing by 1996.

He fought for changes in numerous Medicare rules which treat rural areas unfairly, including making Medicare reimburse rural and urban doctors in Nebraska at the same rate. EXON also co-sponsored legislation that made Medicare reimburse rural and urban hospitals at the same rate in 1995.

Senator EXON authored a 1994 law that allowed direct flights to resume between Omaha and Washington, DC.

As a senior member of the Budget Committee, Senator EXON worked hard to ensure that funding for crop insurance reform would be available and helped the stalled bill win Senate passage in 1994.

Senator EXON authored the essential air service law which ensured that rural areas continued to have commercial air service.

In 1990, EXON won a 3-year battle to block construction of the proposed Two Forks Dam in Colorado. EXON fought the dam to protect Nebraska's water interests and the EPA agreed with him, killing the proposed dam in 1990.

Passed in 1988, the Exon-Florio law gives the President authority to investigate and stop a foreign takeover of an American company if the takeover threatens national security. Under this law, hundreds of foreign takeovers have been reviewed for national security implications.

Senator EXON sponsored legislation to keep the Nation's only nationwide passenger railroad system operating. This legislation, which passed in 1992, allows AMTRAK to establish new service routes across the United States. The bill also promotes high-speed rail and encourages improved safety and training for AMTRAK employees.

Senator EXON sponsored the law which authorized the minting of the first regular issue U.S. gold coins in more than 50 years. These "American Eagle Gold Coins" have become popular gold investments, increasing investment in the U.S. economy. Profits have reduced the national debt by over \$180 million.

Transportation legislation authored by Senator EXON has strengthened truck safety inspection efforts. EXON also supported making random drug and alcohol testing for transportation workers the law.

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Senator EXON was the Senate sponsor of a 1993 bill which gave relief to small businesses, charities and shippers from excessive shipping charges, saving billions in liability costs.

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MEMORIAL ADDRESSES

AND

OTHER TRIBUTES

FOR

J. JAMES EXON



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## Proceedings in the Senate

MONDAY, *June 13, 2005*

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am terribly saddened by the death of JIM EXON. Those of us who had the opportunity to serve with him are very troubled by his death. He was an outstanding Senator. He was fair. He worked on both sides of the aisle. He protected the State of Nebraska and our country so well.

I have so many fond memories of him. His enthusiasm for the work he did here was contagious. His sense of humor was wonderful. JIM EXON loved Nebraska football. He cared about a lot of issues, but other than his family, Nebraska football came first. He is going to be buried in Lincoln, NE, on this Wednesday. He died, I believe, on Friday night. Ben Nelson called me Saturday morning. JIM EXON was certainly a mentor of Ben Nelson. We will all miss him very much.

I hope those who have some knowledge of Senator EXON will recognize we hope to take an airplane trip to Nebraska Wednesday afternoon to attend his funeral. He was a wonderful man. I miss him so much.

### SENATE RESOLUTION 170

Mr. FRIST (for himself, Mr. Reid, Mr. Hagel, Mr. Nelson of Nebraska, Mr. Akaka, Mr. Alexander, Mr. Allard, Mr. Allen, Mr. Baucus, Mr. Bayh, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Biden, Mr. Bingaman, Mr. Bond, Mrs. Boxer, Mr. Brownback, Mr. Bunning, Mr. Burns, Mr. Burr, Mr. Byrd, Ms. Cantwell, Mr. Carper, Mr. Chafee, Mr. Chambliss, Mrs. Clinton, Mr. Coburn, Mr. Cochran, Mr. Coleman, Ms. Collins, Mr. Conrad, Mr. Cornyn, Mr. Corzine, Mr. Craig, Mr. Crapo, Mr. Dayton, Mr. DeMint, Mr. DeWine, Mr. Dodd, Mrs. Dole, Mr. Domenici, Mr. Dorgan, Mr. Durbin, Mr. Ensign, Mr. Enzi, Mr. Feingold, Mrs. Feinstein, Mr. Graham, Mr. Grassley, Mr. Gregg, Mr. Harkin, Mr. Hatch, Mrs. Hutchison, Mr. Inhofe, Mr. Inouye, Mr. Isakson, Mr. Jeffords, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Kerry, Mr. Kohl, Mr. Kyl, Ms. Landrieu, Mr. Lautenberg, Mr. Leahy, Mr. Levin, Mr. Lieberman, Mrs. Lincoln,

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Mr. Lott, Mr. Lugar, Mr. Martinez, Mr. McCain, Mr. McConnell, Ms. Mikulski, Ms. Murkowski, Mrs. Murray, Mr. Nelson of Florida, Mr. Obama, Mr. Pryor, Mr. Reed, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Rockefeller, Mr. Salazar, Mr. Santorum, Mr. Sarbanes, Mr. Schumer, Mr. Sessions, Mr. Shelby, Mr. Smith, Ms. Snowe, Mr. Specter, Ms. Stabenow, Mr. Stevens, Mr. Sununu, Mr. Talent, Mr. Thomas, Mr. Thune, Mr. Vitter, Mr. Voinovich, Mr. Warner, and Mr. Wyden) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 170

Whereas J. JAMES EXON served in the United States Army Signal Corps from 1942–1945 and in the United States Army Reserve from 1945–1949;

Whereas J. JAMES EXON served as Governor of the State of Nebraska from 1971–1979;

Whereas J. JAMES EXON served the people of Nebraska with distinction for 18 years in the United States Senate where he was a proponent of a strong national defense and knowledgeable source on geopolitical matters;

*Resolved*, That the Senate has heard with profound sorrow and deep regret the announcement of the death of the Honorable J. JAMES EXON, formerly a Senator from the State of Nebraska.

*Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate communicate these resolutions to the House of Representatives and transmit an enrolled copy thereof to the family of the deceased.

*Resolved*, That when the Senate adjourns today, it stand adjourned as a further mark of respect to the memory of the Honorable J. JAMES EXON.

RELATIVE TO THE DEATH OF FORMER SENATOR J. JAMES EXON

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 170, which was submitted early today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 170) relative to the death of J. JAMES EXON, former United States Senator for the State of Nebraska.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, on Friday, Nebraska lost one of the most dominant political figures in our State's history. Former two-term Governor and three-term U.S. Senator JIM EXON passed away in Lincoln at the age of 83.

Many in this Chamber today served with him and knew him well. Those who served with JIM EXON remember a serious and dedicated public servant who enjoyed life and loved his State.

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JIM's voice was strong, and he spoke clearly and directly. No one ever had to guess where JIM EXON stood. As a Governor and a Senator, he fought for balanced budgets and restrained government spending.

In the Senate, from his seat on the Armed Services Committee, he was a passionate advocate for a strong national defense. As a member of the Commerce Committee, he was a protector of our natural resources, and he had the foresight to author the Communications Decency Act.

Mr. President, today, when politics is too often a race to the lowest political common denominator, JIM EXON was a very effective leader, a partisan leader who always played it straight. He never lost an election. He won five statewide elections in Nebraska, more than any other Nebraskan. Under JIM EXON's leadership, the Democratic Party became the dominant party in Nebraska for 25 years.

Anyone who knows Nebraska understands what a remarkable accomplishment that was. He did it by listening to the people. He did it by being a leader.

I was JIM EXON's replacement in the Senate in 1996. Over the last 9 years, I came to know him well and respect his judgment. We did not always agree, but I always appreciated the opportunities I had to visit with Senator EXON on a wide range of issues. A child of the plains and a veteran of World War II, he is part of a generation of Americans who understood leadership, sacrifice, and war. In his later years, JIM EXON had much to say. And I had an opportunity to listen.

The voice and wisdom of JIM EXON and his generation is slipping away from us at a time of unparalleled change in our world. Just as with JIM EXON, while this great generation is still with us, we need to listen closely to them. I did listen to JIM EXON.

As a small business man, two-term Governor and three-term Senator, JAMES EXON, along with his wife Pat, served his State, his Nation, and this institution with distinction. He will be missed by the Nebraskans he served so well and loved so much.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 170) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

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The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 170

Whereas J. JAMES EXON served in the United States Army Signal Corps from 1942–1945 and in the United States Army Reserve from 1945–1949;

Whereas J. JAMES EXON served as Governor of the State of Nebraska from 1971–1979;

Whereas J. JAMES EXON served the people of Nebraska with distinction for 18 years in the United States Senate where he was a proponent of a strong national defense and knowledgeable source on geopolitical matters;

*Resolved*, That the Senate has heard with profound sorrow and deep regret the announcement of the death of the Honorable J. JAMES EXON, formerly a Senator from the State of Nebraska.

*Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate communicate these resolutions to the House of Representatives and transmit an enrolled copy thereof to the family of the deceased.

*Resolved*, That when the Senate adjourns today, it stand adjourned as a further mark of respect to the memory of the Honorable J. JAMES EXON.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:45 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order, as a mark of further respect for former Senator JAMES EXON.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 8:19 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, June 14, 2005, at 9:45 a.m.

TUESDAY, *June 14, 2005*

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, I am here today to pay tribute to a great American and a great Nebraskan. J. JAMES EXON served with distinction in the U.S. Senate from 1979 to 1997 and as Governor of Nebraska from 1971 to 1979. Senator EXON passed away in his hometown of Lincoln, NE, last Friday at the age of 83. His funeral services are tomorrow in Lincoln.

JIM EXON understood Nebraskans like no one else, which explains his popularity with the people of his State. He loved them and they loved him back.

He was a Democrat in a highly Republican State, yet he never lost an election in two campaigns for Governor and three for U.S. Senate. He understood that Nebraska is a populist State more than it is a partisan State. Most Nebraskans judged him on what he said and what he did, not on his political registration. JIM EXON was a common man. Nebraskans will remember JIM EXON as one of the greatest



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leaders Nebraska ever had. Anyone who travels around Nebraska today can see the continuing legacy from his quarter century of public service.

JIM EXON built on the Nebraska tradition of working together. In that way he carried on the legacy of another giant in Nebraska history, Senator George Norris. Norris founded the unicameral legislature in an effort to improve the workings of government and to achieve results. JIM EXON had the same philosophy.

I had the honor of serving in then-Governor JIM EXON's cabinet as Nebraska Director of Insurance. He has been a friend and mentor ever since even as I have followed him as Governor and U.S. Senator. I would frequently call him to seek advice, and he would often call to offer it. Now those calls will cease but I don't think I'll ever stop learning from JIM EXON.

The people of Nebraska always appreciated JIM EXON in life as they do now in death. We will miss him but we can all take comfort in the fact that his fingerprints are on more than a quarter century of our history, and Nebraska and the United States of America are far better places because of his generous service.

As a former poker partner of JIM EXON, I can say that the man was driven to win. He was surprised by those who didn't try to beat him. That attitude carried over into his public life and is "part and parcel" of the reason so many Nebraskans are fond of him. He made you feel like he was on your side. He made you feel your issues were important. And most of all, he made you feel proud to be a Nebraskan.

Those in public life must face the last great scrutiny when they leave this world for the next. Their careers are examined again. Their friends and foes get one last unanswered say. In the case of Big JIM EXON, who liked to have the last word, I know this must be driving him crazy.

In the case of JIM EXON the last word goes to Nebraska, the State and the people he loved so dearly. The State of Nebraska will miss JIM EXON, his wisdom, his humor and his common sense. He is one Nebraskan who from start to finish, and through every day, truly did lead "the good life."

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the *Record* two editorials from Nebraska newspapers that captured the essence of JIM EXON so eloquently, one from my hometown paper, the *McCook Gazette* and another from the *Omaha World Herald*.

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There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the *Record*, as follows:

[FROM THE MCCOOK GAZETTE, JUN. 13, 2005]

“COMMON MAN” EXON IN TOUCH WITH STATE

The former editor and publisher of the McCook Daily Gazette, Allen Strunk, played a key role in the political career of J.J. EXON, the former Nebraska governor and senator who passed away Friday at age 83.

Strunk, a conservative Republican, broke with tradition in 1970 when he became the only daily newspaper publisher in the state to endorse EXON in the race for governor against Norbert Tiemann.

Contacted at his Las Vegas home this morning, Strunk said he was moved to support EXON because he was a “common Joe” who was in touch with the people. “EXON had been a businessman in Lincoln and the 1970 campaign was his first run for office,” Strunk said. “He impressed me as being much more in tune with the wishes of the people than did Tiemann, who came across as pompous.”

The endorsement of Strunk was helpful in the hard-fought race. Another factor was the negative feedback which Tiemann received following passage of state sales and income tax legislation.

EXON’s victory in 1970 launched a political career that continued through two terms as governor and three terms as a United States Senator. Whenever he was in Southwest Nebraska, EXON made it a point to stop by the Gazette office for visits with Strunk.

EXON also was an important figure in the lives of two other former McCook residents: the late Frank Morrison, a former governor of Nebraska; and Ben Nelson, a former governor and current U.S. Senator from Nebraska.

Nelson struck the same theme as Strunk, saying, “JIM EXON was a common man who dearly loved the state of Nebraska and that’s why the people loved him. He was one of them and they knew it and were proud of it. His fingerprints are all over the history of Nebraska and he’ll go down as one of the greatest leaders this state has ever known.”

During his lifetime, Morrison spoke highly of EXON, as did EXON of Morrison. EXON was among the many mourners when Morrison passed away in 2003 at age 98.

Other than George W. Norris of McCook, EXON was the only Nebraskan to win five consecutive elections. The state will miss him, as will the McCook area, which had a significant role in EXON’s long political career.

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[FROM THE OMAHA WORLD HERALD, JUN. 12, 2005]

J. JAMES EXON

Perhaps someone else would have made Nebraska a two-party state in the second half of the last century if JOHN JAMES EXON hadn’t appeared on the scene.

But it’s hard to imagine anyone else doing the job nearly as effectively, and with as much pure joy, as did the former governor and U.S. senator, who died Friday at age 83.

Starting in the 1950s J. JAMES EXON breathed life into the moribund Democratic Party with the force of his personality, the clarity of his vision and the relentlessness of his energy.

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He was a force in the candidacy of Govs. Ralph Brooks (1959–60) and Frank Morrison (1961–67). He was guide and mentor to Govs. Bob Kerrey (1983–87) and Ben Nelson (1991–99). In his own right, EXON was the first Nebraska governor to serve two four-year terms (1971–79) and followed that with an 18-year career in the U.S. Senate.

EXON has earned lasting honor in the councils of his party. He helped show Democrats how they could succeed in Nebraska: be true to the better nature of their party while respecting the political traditions and impulses of all Nebraskans. Above all, be a straight shooter. Don't pussyfoot.

But he belongs to all Nebraskans. EXON's presence on the political scene demonstrated the wisdom of evaluating a candidate's knowledge, character and ideas ahead of narrow partisanship. Competition between the parties makes for a better examination of ideas and philosophies, but only if the voters are willing to listen before deciding.

EXON simply would not be put down because the Republicans had a big lead in voter registrations. He said what was on his mind, and the electorate could not help but pay attention.

And thus when the time came to ask Nebraskans for their votes, Republicans stepped forward by the thousands to cast a vote for JIM.

As governor, EXON embraced the mantra of holding the line on spending. He was known for his strongly worded veto messages. He fought his political battles with a gusto that approached celebration.

However, though he was a conservative on spending, he was no skinflint. His dislike of careless spending was balanced by an abiding sense of stewardship over the institutions of state government. He was a man of moderation.

In the Senate, EXON positioned himself as a proponent of a strong national defense and as a knowledgeable source on geopolitical matters. A veteran of World War II, he could thus claim a legitimate share in the victory in the Cold War.

He followed his stars, loved the outdoors, maintained the loyalty of strong men and never wavered in his commitment to fairness and his concern for ordinary people.

Carved in the south facade of the Nebraska State Capitol, facing the Governor's Mansion where the EXONs resided for eight years, are the words of Aristotle: "Political society exists for the sake of noble living."

Surely Big JIM EXON used that thought, or something very similar, as part of the code by which he lived his life.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I heard the remarks of the distinguished Senator from Nebraska. I don't have time tonight to make my comments about the distinguished Senator, Governor EXON, but tomorrow I will.

Suffice it to say, it was my privilege to serve with him. He was everything the Senator from Nebraska said and more.

Tomorrow I will elaborate on his years of service on various committees. He truly was a wonderful man, a hard worker, a man of great common sense, and he contributed immensely to the years I knew him in the Senate.

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The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, let me take a minute, also, and underscore the comments our colleague from Nebraska and Senator Domenici have made about JIM EXON. He was a great U.S. Senator and one with whom I was fortunate to serve on the Armed Services Committee for many years. He contributed a tremendous amount to his home State and to this country. He will be missed by all who served with him in the Senate.

There is a service for him tomorrow in Nebraska, which I hope to attend. I will also have extensive comments to offer at a future time. It is a great loss to the country and a great loss, of course, to all those who knew him. He will be fondly remembered in this Senate.

I yield the floor.

WEDNESDAY, *June 15, 2005*

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, with the passing of former Senator JIM EXON on Friday, a giant oak in the forest of public service has fallen. Political historians will remember him as a dominant force in Nebraska politics across nearly three decades, serving two terms as Governor and three as Senator. Those of us who were privileged to be his friend remember him, first and foremost, as a man of enormous decency, integrity, and common sense. We remember his quick mind; his slow, gravelly voice; his Midwestern directness and unpretentiousness.

Here on the Senate floor, I am privileged to sit at the same desk that Senator EXON used during the last of his 18 years in the Senate. I inherited it upon his retirement in 1996, and I have always considered it a special honor to carry on where he left off.

Of course, for people in Iowa, JIM EXON was a next-door neighbor. Over the years, Iowans got to know him well as a stalwart friend of family farmers; as a tireless promoter of rural economic development; and, at a time when the bioeconomy was in its infancy, as a true believer in the future of ethanol and other home-grown, renewable sources of energy.

JIM EXON was not just present at the creation of the ethanol industry, he was an important midwife of that industry.

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He took office as Governor and in 1971 he created the Nebraska Ethanol Board. In the ensuing years of ethanol's infancy, it was Nebraska and Iowa that led the way in establishing this industry. At every step, JIM EXON was there as an advocate and champion.

I will always remember my partnership with Senator EXON and Senator John Melcher of Montana on the 1985 farm bill. We fought long and hard to fend off attacks on safety-net programs for family farmers. Night after night, we kept the Senate in session into the early hours of the morning. And, thanks to JIM's leadership and sheer relentlessness, we carried the day.

Throughout his political career, JIM EXON prided himself on reaching across party lines and forging bipartisan consensus. This is very much a Nebraska tradition, going back to the legendary George Norris, who founded the State's unicameral legislature. JIM succeeded as a Democrat in an overwhelmingly Republican State because he knew how to reach out, how to unite people around shared interests. Senator Ben Nelson, a long-time friend and protege of JIM EXON, prides himself on continuing this tradition of bipartisanship and bridge building.

They didn't call him Big JIM for nothing. He was big physically, tall and imposing. He was big politically—the only Nebraskan since George Norris to win five consecutive statewide elections. And JIM was big hearted, a tough, relentless man, but also a compassionate person who cared deeply about other people and their well-being.

As a public official, he was an old-fashioned fiscal conservative. He railed against what he called "wild-eyed spenders." As Governor, he repeatedly vetoed the legislature's spending bills, 141 vetoes in all. And, here in the Senate, he took on Republicans and Democrats alike who, in his eyes, were being reckless with the taxpayer's dollar.

Senator JIM EXON has been lying in state in the Rotunda of the Nebraska Capitol. Funeral services will be held this afternoon at the same location. So, today, the Senate says farewell to a truly distinguished former Member. JIM was a good friend to me, and he was much beloved in this body. Today our thoughts are with him, his family, and the people of Nebraska. May JIM rest in peace.

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THURSDAY, *June 16, 2005*

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the time I have is leader time, and I wanted to say a few things. I was not here yesterday afternoon because of the funeral of Senator EXON. I say to my colleagues, those of us who went to that funeral were so impressed with what this man did for the State of Nebraska. For the first time in the history of Nebraska, a funeral was held in the State capitol. Why? Because JIM EXON made a difference in the State of Nebraska. I am sure all 100 Senators, as I have, ask are we making a difference in what happens in our States, in our country. The lesson we can look to is JIM EXON, a man with not a great education by modern-day standards but a person who by modern-day standards, or any standard, had a great heart and a great mind and was able to do wonderful work for the State and for the country.

His family expressed so many warm feelings about their father and grandfather. Bob Kerrey gave one of the most moving eulogies that has ever been given. I am sorry I was not here yesterday, but for those of us who went to that funeral—Senator Ben Nelson, Senator Hagel, Senator Bingaman, Senator Levin, Senator Akaka—it was so worth our time.

ORDER TO PRINT AS A SENATE DOCUMENT

Mr. FRIST. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that tribute statements regarding former Senator EXON be printed as a Senate document, provided that Senators have until the close of business on June 30 to submit such statements.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TUESDAY, *June 21, 2005*

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, it's an honor to pay tribute to a great man, a distinguished Senator, and a dear friend who passed away on June 10, Senator JIM EXON of Nebraska.

Last week I joined several of my colleagues in attending his funeral in Lincoln, NE. It was inspiring to be with the people who knew him best and loved him most. JIM was a giant in Nebraska politics not because of the power he wielded but because of the respect and affection he had earned.

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JIM EXON was a decent man, without pretension or prejudice. He spoke plainly. He called it like he saw it. He did what he thought was right, regardless of the pressure that might have been put on him. JIM laughed the same wonderful, booming laugh with Presidents as he did with the people back home. He was a large man, and he had a heart to match.

That is why he was beloved in Nebraska and never lost an election, serving two terms as Governor and then three terms as Senator. That is why he was popular even as the father of the Democratic Party in an overwhelmingly Republican State. And that is why his friendship and kindness meant the world to me.

JIM and I were both members of the class of 1978, and we—and our wives—quickly became close friends. We served together on the Armed Services Committee; in fact, we sat next to each other for 18 years. We had honest, substantive debates about our defense policy, and I will always cherish the memories of that time. His only interest was the security and prosperity of our country and his beloved Nebraska.

JIM worked for a strong national defense. He supported responsible budget policies. And he was ahead of his time in warning against terrorism and arguing for a Department of Homeland Security. For so many of us, he was a source of wise counsel and trusted advice. With JIM, you could always be certain he was telling you what he thought was right, and he usually was right.

We will miss him terribly, but we are fortunate to have had him for so long. My thoughts and prayers, and those of my wife Barbara, are with his loving wife Pat and his entire family.

THURSDAY, *June 30, 2005*

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the eulogy given by former Senator Bob Kerrey at the funeral of our late colleague, JIM EXON, be printed in the *Record*.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the *Record*.

[For the text of the eulogy, see page 28.]

Mr. REID. Governor, Senator, Big JIM, J.J. EXON died on Friday at 8:30 p.m. on June 10, 2005, after the Cardinals

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had secured a 7 to 1 victory over the New York Yankees. For him, a perfect ending to his life on this Earth.

THURSDAY, *July 21, 2005*

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I wish to take a moment to pay tribute to former Senator JIM EXON, a friend and colleague, who passed away on June 10, 2005.

JIM EXON is a legend in his own State. For almost three decades, he served the people of Nebraska as both Governor and Senator. And through dedication and the force of his personality, he almost singlehandedly founded the Democratic Party in his State. In his entire career, he never lost an election because his constituents recognized his basic decency and common sense.

However, JIM EXON didn't only serve his Nebraska constituents. He also served his country and our Government in ways that we could sorely use today. He was, of course, a patriot and World War II veteran who brought his wartime experience to his important role on defense matters. But beyond his obvious love of country, JIM EXON especially loved his country's democracy, which he saw as the crucial spark animating the American community.

JIM EXON relished forthright debate and always had tremendous faith in the fairness of our system of government. But while he advanced his beliefs with conviction and passion, he also listened to those with whom he disagreed. Indeed, he was renowned as a fair and considerate lawmaker who routinely sought common ground with adversaries out of genuine sympathy for their concerns.

JIM EXON's facility for finding common ground with others stemmed from his roots in America's heartland. In rural areas and small towns, neighbors must depend on one another. People in the country rely on pragmatism to solve problems, having little patience with argument for its own sake. JIM EXON brought these Midwestern values to his work, fighting openly for his beliefs, while still playing a cooperative and constructive role in resolving differences.

Given his ability to see the point of view of others, it's hardly surprising that JIM EXON made abundant legislative contributions. I was privileged to serve on the Senate Budget Committee with him, where he fought to keep our Nation's fiscal house in order. Here, too, his approach was balanced, offering a fierce opposition to wasting taxpayer money on un-



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justified spending, while maintaining an abiding faith in effective government. Most importantly in this area, he recognized that lawmakers must resist the temptation to use public debt to shift current burdens onto future taxpayers. To JIM EXON, skyrocketing Federal debt was a shameful legacy to leave our children.

Senator EXON also understood the wisdom of investing in the family farmer, the backbone of rural communities. A tireless advocate of rural economic development, he was one of the first to recognize the importance of ethanol as fuel, a renewable energy source that we produce here at home. And he fought for better transportation, better medical care, and better schools for rural areas facing special challenges.

JIM EXON also worked to keep America's military strong. A veteran of the South Pacific in World War II, he never wavered in his commitment to our Armed Forces. He played a crucial role on the Armed Services Committee in the aftermath of communism's collapse. Thanks in large measure to his efforts, our military remained the mightiest in the world, even though its mission was reoriented to face the challenges of the post-cold war world. He worked tirelessly to contain nuclear proliferation.

JIM EXON accomplished much during his three terms here in the Senate. That's not surprising given the kind of man he was. He lacked pretense. He would tell you straight out what he believed, and he listened carefully to others. And he was fair. He brought Senators together by focusing on shared interests, rather than differences.

JIM EXON was a big hearty man who loved to laugh. His deep, rolling baritone had an infectious good humor and compassion behind it that won over others. He was effective, in part, because people liked to work with him.

I will miss my good friend and colleague. His accomplishments live after him. The Nation and the people of Nebraska will long remember the standards of integrity and decency that were the hallmarks of JIM EXON's service to his country.



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## Proceedings in the House of Representatives

THURSDAY, *June 16, 2005*

### MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has agreed to the following resolution:

In the Senate of the United States, June 13, 2005.

Whereas J. JAMES EXON served in the United States Army Signal Corps from 1942–1945 and in the United States Army Reserve from 1945–1949;

Whereas J. JAMES EXON served as Governor of the State of Nebraska from 1971–1979;

Whereas J. JAMES EXON served the people of Nebraska with distinction for 18 years in the United States Senate where he was a proponent of a strong national defense and knowledgeable source on geopolitical matters;

*Resolved*, That the Senate has heard with profound sorrow and deep regret the announcement of the death of the Honorable J. JAMES EXON, formerly a Senator from the State of Nebraska.

*Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate communicate these resolutions to the House of Representatives and transmit an enrolled copy thereof to the family of the deceased.

*Resolved*, That when the Senate adjourns today, it stand adjourned as a further mark of respect to the memory of the Honorable J. JAMES EXON.



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In Memory of  
Senator James Exon  
1921–2005

Wednesday, June 15, 2005  
4:00 p.m.  
Capitol Rotunda  
Lincoln, Nebraska

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JIM EXON's favorite prayer:

## Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the  
Serenity  
to accept the things I cannot change ...  
Courage  
to change the things I can  
and Wisdom  
to know the difference.

## The Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven  
and Earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born  
of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and  
was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into Heaven, and is seated at the right hand of  
the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the  
Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrec-  
tion of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

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## Order of Service

### Processional

Battle Hymn of the Republic	Plymouth Brass
Opening Prayer	Father Sam Boman
Eulogies	Bro. Leo Willett, S.M. Chuck Pallesen Senator Bob Kerrey Exon Family

### Scriptures

Isaiah 25:69	Mark Bowen
Romans 8:14–19, 34–35, 37–39	Bro. Leo Willett, S.M.

### Musical Selection

“On Eagles Wings”	Michael Joncas Sung by Brent Smith Accompanied by Marcia Wiebers
Scriptures John 14:1–6	Father Boman
Sermon	Father Boman
Creed	Father Boman
Lord’s Prayer	Albert Hay Malotte Sung by Brent Smith Accompanied by Marcia Wiebers

### Closing Prayers

### Recessional

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### Honorary Pallbearers

Norm Otto	W. Don Nelson
Dorothy Obbink	Greg Pallas
Evan Wolf	

### Casket Bearers

Senator Bob Kerrey	Bill Hoppner
Charles Pallesen	Senator Ben Nelson
Mark Bowen	Jim Otto
Honorable Norm Krivosha	Congressman John Cavanaugh

Wadlow Rozanek Funeral Home, Lincoln, Nebraska

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#### Obituary information for JOHN JAMES EXON

Senator J. JAMES EXON (JIM), 83, of Lincoln died Friday (6-10-05). Born in Geddes, SD, on August 9, 1921, to John and Luella Exon. JIM was raised in Lake Andes, SD. He moved to Nebraska to attend UNO from 1939 to 1942. Volunteered for U.S. Army Signal Corps and served 2 years in the South Pacific during WWII. Prior to leaving for the war, he married Patricia (Pros) Exon on September 18, 1943.

Following his return from the war, he came to Nebraska and started his business career with Universal Finance Corporation. In 1954 he founded Exon's Inc., which was an office equipment company located at 23d & O. Member of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church and active in a wide range of professional and civic activities.

EXON was introduced to politics at an early age by his parents who were active leaders in the SD Democratic Party. JIM became a prominent leader of the Nebraska Democratic Party serving as State Vice Chairman and National Committeeman. In his first bid for public office, JIM EXON was elected Governor of Nebraska in 1970 and was re-elected in 1974 to a second term as Governor. In 1978, Governor EXON marked a milestone by being the only Governor Nebraskans have elected directly to the U.S. Senate. He was re-elected to a second term in 1984 and a third term in 1990.

Most important to JIM EXON was his commitment to his wife of 61 years, Pat, his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He is survived by: wife, Patricia (Pros) Exon, son and spouse, Stephen Sr. and Kathleen Exon of Bellevue, daughters and spouses: Pamela and Alan Bricker, Greeley, CO and Candace and Dan Wolf, Lincoln. Grandchildren: Stephen Exon, Jr. and wife Kathy, Amy McGrath and husband Michael, Colin Bricker and wife Diedre, Heather Eureka and husband John, Lindsay Smith and husband Brent, Evan Wolf, Jessica Exon, and Anna Wolf; seven great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

JIM was preceded in death by his parents, John James, Sr., and Luella (Johns) Exon, and a sister, Virginia (Exon) Johns.

Private Burial

Memorials to Alzheimer's Association, American Cancer Society, St. Elizabeth Hospice



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*Procession Prayer*

Father SAM BOMAN. Please rise.

I am Resurrection and I am Light, says the Lord. Whoever has faith in me shall have light even though he dies, and everyone who has light and has committed himself to me in faith shall not die forever. As for me I know that my redeemer lives and at last he shall stand upon the Earth. After my awaking he will raise me up and in my body I shall see God. I myself shall see and my eyes behold him who is my friend and not a stranger.

*Procession Song: Battle Hymn of the Republic, performed by Plymouth Brass*

*Opening Prayer*

Father SAM BOMAN. The Lord be with you.

Let us pray.

God of grace and glory, we remember before you this day our brother JAMES. We thank you for giving him to us, his family and friends to know and to love as a companion on our earthly pilgrimage. In your boundless compassion console us and mourn. Give us faith to see in death the gate of eternal life so that in quiet confidence we may continue our force on Earth until by your call we are reunited with those who have gone before. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

You may be seated.

*Eulogies*

Brother LEO WILLETT. Dear Pat, who is with us in spirit, and I believe JIM can do more for Pat now; Pamela, Steve, Candace and their spouses; the grandchildren, great-grandchildren; other relatives, friends; Honorable U.S. Senators and Representatives; Nebraska Honorable Governor and officials. It is an honor for me to be here with you on the invitation of JIM's children.

I first came to Omaha in 1967 for the building of Daniel J. Gross High School, a new Catholic high school in Sarpy County. As a member of the South Omaha community, I definitely knew of JIM EXON, who was first elected Governor of Nebraska in 1970.

I first met JIM in 1974, 31 years ago, when I invited him to speak at our First Annual All-Activities Banquet. It was at that time, that he was the first to designate me as "the Father of Daniel Gross High School." Monday I read that JIM

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is called “the Father of Nebraska’s modern-day Democratic Party.” Again, thanks JIM.

Also that evening I discovered that JIM and I shared a passion and a joy for the baseball St. Louis Cardinals, since our youth, he from South Dakota, and I from East St. Louis, Illinois. That night in 1974 we shared our remembrances of “the Gas House Gang,” the name given to the World Champion Cardinals in 1934: Dizzy and Daffy Dean, Joe Medwick, Frankie Frisch, Pepper Martin, and on and on. That night in 1974 was the beginning of a special relationship that has lasted until today and will be beyond. For an example of something I have done often for JIM, this week I was saving JIM copies from sports in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, from the noteworthy series with the Red Sox and the Yankees. (By the way, is the person present with whom JIM had a standing \$1 bet as regards the Cardinals vs. Cubs?)

When the Cardinals were in the World Series in 1982—1985—1987, JIM would arrange for us to attend the games in St. Louis. (By the way, the Cardinals did not show up for last year’s World Series, and neither did JIM nor I.)

I remember especially in 1982, the night it rained so hard, the game had to be stopped several times. Each time the game was stopped, more of the dignitaries left the commissioner’s box. At some point, Steve, JIM’s son, and I were invited by Commissioner Bowie Kuhn to sit next to him and JIM. Many cousins and friends throughout the country saw me upfront on television that night. Wow! Also, after the Cardinals beat the Brewers in the spectacular come-from-behind seventh game, Tim, Steve and I were invited to the reception for the World Champion Cardinals. Great. It was at that reception that I had the opportunity to visit with “Happy” Chandler, a former baseball commissioner, Governor and U.S. Senator from Kentucky, my native State.

Further, I was with JIM, Dan, a son-in-law, and grandson, Evan, the night Mark McGwire tied the home run record, and the next night when Mark McGwire broke the record. What an unforgettable thrill! I can see JIM and those home runs again now.

In 1979 I was told I needed a hobby, something I would enjoy doing when I didn’t want to do anything I usually did. I recalled being told that my ancestors went back to colonial Maryland and Virginia—and I had taught American history several years. Thus it was that I started family research in 1979. I told JIM I would like to spend a summer in Washington, DC. JIM suggested I be an intern in his office. I was

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to give special attention to inquiries “about education and religion!” Thus in the 1980 summer, I worked in his office week days, did research in Library of Congress stacks week evenings, did research at the National Archives on Saturdays, and visited museums on Sundays. For sure, my 1980 summer was wonderful and unforgettable in many ways, thanks to JIM.

In recent years I have tried to make at least one visit a year to Daniel Gross High School in Omaha, and include a talk to each of the freshman religion classes, especially about the early history of the school. JIM asked me to let him know when I was coming to Omaha. When possible he would drive from Lincoln, and we would meet at the Bohemian Cafe for a 2 to 3 hour lunch. Usually our visit would start with Cardinals baseball, then Pat and family, followed by varied topics from the past and present. I looked forward to those sharings with a special friend. (The Bohemian Cafe was in the area of Omaha where Pat had lived, his dear spouse of 61 years, whom he had met and married while he was attending the University of Nebraska, Omaha.)

In closing, JIM was a wonderful person and friend, as known by we who are here today and many who could not be with us. Definitely, JIM will be missed by many, especially by Pat and their family, his church family, his political family and the Cardinal Nation. Thank God for his and my belief, and for most of you, in eternal life. We will be together again. Grateful always, JIM. Prayers.

CHUCK PALLESEN (family friend).

Statesman, yet friend to truth! Of soul sincere, in action faithful, and in honor clear: Who broke no promise, served no private end, who gained no title, and who lost no friend.

—Alexander Pope, 1720

The proper thing to do would probably be to first recognize the top dignitaries assembled here. You might be surprised, however, how Senator EXON would address them: “Native Americans and other minorities, the disadvantaged, farmers, ranchers, men and women of labor, small business owners, those in the armed services, and oh yes, corporate leadership, and finally, those who you have honored by voting them to office.”

That’s the way the man thought, from his humble beginnings in Lake Andes, SD, through service in World War II and the times he counseled with Presidents, and Prime Ministers, and admirals, and generals the world over. People

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ask, how could ardent Democrat JIM EXON continually be elected in Republican Nebraska and maintain 80 percent approval ratings? The answer is quite simple: he reflected the basic values of Nebraskans. He was a fiscal conservative long before it became nearly mandatory nationwide. He stood for a well-equipped, strong military and was known in Washington as "Mr. SAC." Yet he challenged the Pentagon to eliminate waste and cap development of unneeded arsenals of catastrophic weaponry.

He carried the burdens of agriculture to the extent that one of our major newspapers referred to him as the Nation's self-appointed Secretary of Agriculture. He was an environmentalist even though some of those battles, such as the Niobrara Scenic River designation, cost him particularly in several of our northern border counties.

Senator EXON was a dedicated family man, and in fact passed up what could have been a fourth U.S. Senate term to spend more time with his spouse Pat, with Steve, Candy, Pam, the grandchildren and great-grandchildren, especially enjoying times at the family cabin on the Platte River.

Senator EXON was a decent man, a man of integrity. He genuinely liked people. Even though the allegiance to his political party was strong, both at home and in Washington, he worked with all people of all leanings. In Washington he was, as Senator Ben Nelson has described and emulated, a centrist, one who could easily cross the aisle to reach a compromise. In fact, he openly said in 1996 that growing party strife in Washington contributed to his decision to retire.

He would be highly honored that the gathering here today includes both red and blue. The U.S. Senate delegation led by Senator Reid, with Senators Hagel, Nelson, Bingaman, Levin, Akaka, and Kerrey. Governor Heineman, Governor Thone, Attorney General Bruning, Congressmen Hoagland, McGinley and Cavanaugh, and Lieutenants Governor Robak and Moul, Montana Auditor of Public Accounts John Morrison, Chief Justice Krivosha, State Senators and other officeholders, Mayor Seng, Omaha Mayor Fahey, former Mayors Boosalis, Wesely, Harris, and Boyle, and many more.

Senator EXON was noted for his political instincts. Our first meeting was when he was managing Frank Morrison's gubernatorial campaign in 1960. Classmate Dick Shugrue was working for the campaign and set up lunch with Morrison and EXON. Toward the end of lunch, Morrison said he thought he needed a handout flyer. EXON grabbed a napkin, scribbled a few lines, roughed in a couple of pictures, did the

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standard trifold, handed it to Dick and said, "Take it to the printer." He was just as decisive in his own campaigns. Our issues committee had been meeting regularly in 1970, had drafted a platform for EXON to run on and invited him to the meeting to hear it. About halfway through the review, he stopped it and said, "This is all very nice, but aren't the issues really just taxes and spending, spending and taxes?" The issues committee never met again.

In his first gubernatorial campaign, we arranged to take him to the lawyers' State bar convention to introduce him to lawyers from across Nebraska. As we were walking down the hall toward the convention room, he stopped abruptly and said, "We're wasting our time here; I can do better campaigning in a Hinky Dinky parking lot." And that's where he went.

Senators EXON and Kerrey flew to Valentine for a hearing on the Niobrara Scenic River designation issue. I thought "This will be special—talking for 2 hours with two U.S. Senators." But as soon as we took off they both pulled out legal pads and started writing. It soon became apparent that they were preparing for the hearing, and that being a Senator was more than just campaigning, talking, and voting. It's hard work. The best line was about 10 minutes out of Valentine. Senator EXON turned to Senator Kerrey and said, "Bob, I've been on the firing line in Valentine on this issue. So why don't you chair the meeting?" Without a blink, Senator Kerrey looked at him and said, "If you say so, boss." That was the kind of relationship they had, not always agreeing on a certain vote, but always working together. And they shared many a laugh, even when Senator EXON would refer to "that movie actress friend of yours, what's her name, Debra Reynolds." And then that laugh!

Some of you may remember early in President Clinton's first term, Senator Kerrey's vote was crucial and on the line on the tax bill. The White House invited a group of Nebraskans to come to Washington to meet with the President so he could convince them of the merits of his tax bill. Then they could lobby Senator Kerrey to vote for the bill. After the meeting I was to go to Capitol Hill to meet with Senator EXON to urge him to lobby Kerrey. I called Senator EXON to explain and make the arrangements. His response? "What are those White House people thinking? You're not going to convince me to do anything of the kind. I talk with Kerrey every day. He knows my thinking and I know his. Don't waste your time or mine."

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In his last Senate campaign we had organized one of those high roller \$1,000 per person fundraisers in Omaha. Lots of Republican CEOs. Shh! That's the way we raise our money! The function was going well, then came a knock on the door. A certain TV station crew wanted to come in and film some footage for the evening news. I said, "No, this is a private party." Then I reported to the Senator. He looked at me with that famous scowl and said, "The idea here is to raise money to buy TV time, and you have free TV at the door. Let them in." Some of the guests were a little camera shy, but we made the evening news.

Traveling with the Senator could have its perks, as on one of the trips from Offutt to Kings Bay, GA, organized by Allen Beermann to visit the USS *Nebraska* submarine. At every stop a private military car and driver would pick up the Senator. As we checked in at the Kings Bay base housing, the driver said he'd pick the Senator up at 0600 hours for breakfast. The Senator asked, "What time does the main program of the day start?" Answer: "0900." "Why," the Senator asked, "would I then go to eat at 6? Pick me up at 8:30." And when his 8:30 car and driver came, the Senator said, "I've had too many military meals already in my life. Is there a McDonald's around here?" And guess what, we got to McDonald's and the submarine program on time!

No review of Senator EXON is complete without remembering that pipe that he smoked until a few years ago. The ritual of cleaning and lighting, banging it on tables, car roofs etc., brushing the burning ashes off his shirt and tie. "Well, at least I don't bang it on the inside of the car," he once said.

Senator John Calhoun, in 1835, stated, "The very essence of a free government consists in considering offices as public trusts, bestowed for the good of the country, and not for the benefit of an individual or a party."

JIM EXON, Nebraska thanks you for the service you gave, the people you touched, and the life you led. We will adjourn today, sine die.

BOB KERREY (former Governor and U.S. Senator). To Governor Dave Heineman—I thank you for the wisdom and the generosity to allow these services to be conducted in the rotunda of this capitol that JIM EXON loved so much. It is a precedent worthy of the risk.

To the family of Senator JIM EXON—I pray your pain will pass and become a loving memory. I hope you will always feel pride to have known this great man so well.

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To his friends, both in attendance and not—let us count our blessings that we were so fortunate that he cared for us.

To his colleagues who have left their work in the Senate to travel to Nebraska to pay tribute to one of their own: Senators Hagel and Nelson, Leader Reid, Senators Bingaman, Levin and Akaka—thank you for honoring JIM in this way.

To the lawyers present—I apologize for I must begin my eulogy to JIM EXON with a lawyer joke. It is, I assure you, the least offensive one he ever told me. A doctor, a teacher, and a lawyer are killed in an automobile accident and find themselves at the gates of Heaven at precisely the same time. Saint Peter is in an unusually good mood and asks them each a very easy question: how much is two plus two? In turn the doctor and the teacher give the correct answer and are granted entry through the Pearly Gates. The lawyer hesitates, pulls Saint Peter aside and whispers: “What do you want it to be?”

This was a question JIM EXON never asked. He always added up the numbers and gave them to you straight whether or not you liked the answer.

He was born on August 9, 1921. It was a bad day for his St. Louis Cardinals; they lost to the Brooklyn Dodgers 8 to 7.

Each of us is influenced—though by no means limited—by the circumstances of our births. JIM EXON was born the same year that Adolph Hitler became chairman of the Nazi Party. In that year the United States officially ended World War I and signed a peace treaty with Germany. Radicals Sacco and Vanzetti were found guilty of murder by a Massachusetts judge. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was dedicated by President Harding at Arlington Cemetery on November 11, Armistice Day. In South Dakota, where JIM was born, scientists held a conference that summer to discuss the unrealized potential of electricity.

He was 8 years old when the stock market crashed and the Depression officially began. He was witness to the dust storms and the terrible consequence of the loss of that topsoil. He came of age when the possibility of an economic revolution was real, when the New Deal became a salvation and a political way of life for many who believed that FDR had saved their lives.

He was a teenager when the lights came on in two-thirds of Nebraska thanks to rural electrification. He remembered the enactment of Social Security legislation and the hope

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which the WPA and the CCC gave to grown men and women who had given up.

He was 20 years old when Japan invaded Pearl Harbor. In a single day the naive innocence which had propelled our 20-year disarmament came to a sudden and terrible end. The United States had steadfastly stayed out of the war trying at all costs to avoid this conflict. Thus it was that he came of age at a time when losing our freedoms was not political rhetoric but a real possibility. He knew the terrible price of weakness and isolation.

Both of these big events—the Depression and the Second World War—defined JIM EXON. They explained a lot about who he was, why he took the political and economic positions that he did, and why he always seemed so grateful to be alive and an American. It explains why he didn't complain, why he seemed to take whatever came his way in stride, and why he talked little about the hardships he had so obviously endured. Most of all it explains his values: a lifetime commitment to Pat, his children and his community, and his unrelenting desire to make life a little better for everyone.

The events of JIM EXON's youth explain a lot about JIM EXON, the man. But one thing remains a mystery to me: Where did that laugh come from? I have never heard anything quite like it. It was more like a duck call than a laugh. But, like so many other things about JIM EXON (his pipe, his short sleeve shirts, his big ears) his laugh added to his authenticity. He was a man who never caused you to wonder: what's he thinking? What you saw was what you got with JIM EXON. Except that some people saw this large, big-wristed son of the high plains and concluded that he was a rube who could be easily fooled. The thing is JIM EXON could tell when someone was underestimating him and he'd turn it into his advantage—either for fun or the benefit of Nebraskans.

He came to New York City once to visit a number of people, including the New Deal economist Eliot Janeway. Arriving in Mr. Janeway's plush offices Governor EXON saw from the look on the receptionist's face that she was a little taken aback by his look. So, after asking directions to and using the bathroom, he returned to comment to a startled receptionist how wonderful it was to find a place with indoor plumbing.

“That's something we don't have back in Nebraska. And what are those white porcelain bowls hanging on the walls?”



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After she explained their function and he exclaimed that he was going to have one installed in the Governor's mansion when he returned to Lincoln, she realized she was being put on.

Basin Electric in Wyoming was not so lucky. As Governor, JIM had persuaded his friend Attorney General Paul Douglas to bring a lawsuit against the State of Wyoming over a water dispute involving Wyoming's decision to grant a permit to Basin Electric for a new power plant. Negotiating in private, Governor EXON emerged with an agreement which created the Sandhill Crane Trust on the Platte River near Grand Island. The net for Nebraska has been hundreds of millions of tourism dollars and sufficient stream flow to guarantee the preservation of an ancient wild bird flyway.

This conservation ethic produced a locally famous encounter at Valentine High School shortly after I arrived in the Senate. Senator EXON had introduced legislation to designate a portion of the Niobrara River as "scenic," which would limit development—something that Cherry County residents are not known for favoring. I suggested to JIM that we schedule a townhall meeting in the high school and invite opponents and supporters to give us their views.

Needless to say few of the latter showed up. In fact we were welcomed at the door of the school by two cowboys on horseback who turned their horses as we approached. In doing so we were able to see hand-painted signs they had hung from their saddles. One said Senator EXON; the other said Senator Kerrey. Both had arrows pointed down at the horses' rear ends.

A humbling moment.

As humbling as when he and I first met in 1982. As a relatively unknown candidate for Governor, I wanted to get a photograph of Senator EXON and myself to include in my campaign brochures. Upon meeting him I was surprised how tall he was and even more so when the film was developed. I looked like a small imitation of the real thing standing next to him. In order to use the image I chose to turn the negative slightly when it was printed making us appear a little closer in stature.

Truth is I had to do a lot of that during my 16 years in elected politics when standing next to him.

What impressed me most about JIM EXON was that he never let his size or his power inflate his personal opinion of himself. Remarkably and gratefully he never lost his humility. He never stopped typing notes to Lenny in the Cloak-

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room about some baseball detail that only he knew. He never stopped returning the calls of friends who had helped him get started or he knew along the way. He began and ended the same.

He made friends with rich and poor alike, with the powerful and the powerless. He could count half a dozen Presidents he had met, including President Bill Clinton with whom he was especially close. They were all the same to him—just another human being with a range of strengths and weaknesses.

He left behind a big and lasting legacy. Balanced budgets, stronger defense, land conserved, rural communities healthier, better schools and jobs, and a more just America. Beyond those accomplishments was something more important. To all of us who met him, knew him, respected and loved him, he was like Jimmy Stewart in “It’s A Wonderful Life.” Our lives and the places we call home would not have been the same without him.

AMY BRICKER-McGRATH (granddaughter). Governor, Senator, statesman, champion of the Heartland, friend of the people; all of these titles suit J.J. EXON, but the title that was most meaningful to me was Grandpa. I know I speak for Steve, Colin, Heather, Lindsay, Evan, Anna, and Jessica, when I say that we are among the luckiest of people in the world to have a grandfather like him.

Grandpa was a tall man with humor, heart, and an imagination to match. All the grandchildren can attest to the famed Lake Andes stories which predictably started with “When I was the first-chair flute player of the Lake Andes Philharmonic Orchestra” or “When I was the star of the Lake Andes pro-baseball team.” My Grandpa told the best tall tales about his boyhood in Lake Andes, SD, but now I realize he was not telling stories about himself. He was telling stories about each one of us. Each story was tailored to suit the particular dreams and interests of the specific grandchild. Every one of us knew for sure that we were the grandchild he loved the most, and each one of us was right.

Despite his countless public and political responsibilities, when we were together he was ours and we were his. No grandfather could have been more available and more attentive.

When I sat with my cousins to talk about what we should say about Grandpa EXON we all agreed on one particular, spectacular point. It was interesting to us, but not that im-

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portant that our grandfather was well known and had lots of powerful and famous friends. What was most important to us was clearly that Grandpa EXON had a direct line to the big man himself, Santa Claus. It is hard to imagine a Christmas more magical than the EXON family Christmas, and for my grandparents the magic was in the details. Every year was the same—dinner with ham, and shrimp, and oyster stew, which as children we never ate. I don't know who does eat oyster stew. My grandpa did. After dinner, Grandpa would load us up in the car and we would drive around listening to Christmas carols and looking for Santa Claus. Any blinking red light in the sky might have been a sign of him, and somehow magically every year Santa found the EXON house just when we had been away looking for him. We would pull into the driveway, pour out of the car, and race to the basement to try to catch a glimpse of him and his sleigh taking off from the backyard. Each of us remember a different memento left by Santa. One year, the dogs had bitten off pieces of his pants and were running around with red velvet squares. Another year, we had to wait a painful eternity while Grandpa vacuumed up the ashes that Santa had tracked from the fireplace down every stair to the Christmas tree in the basement. Grandpa EXON believed in the magic of Christmas and the best gift he ever gave us was a little piece of that magic which we are now handing down to the next generation of EXON great-grandchildren.

For a man who had such responsibilities to so many people my Grandpa EXON maintained an extraordinary connection to playfulness and fun. He loved silly movies and theme parks. In fact, he really loved theme parks, especially Disney World which has been a pilgrimage for our families for as long as I can remember. One of my favorite Grandpa EXON memories could have been straight out of a scene from Chevy Chase's *Vacation*. It was New Year's Eve and we were headed to Disney World. Two van loads of EXON kids and grandkids. Grandpa had tuned into Disney radio and was singing at the top of his lungs to his all time favorite "Yo Ho, Yo Ho, A Pirate's Life for Me." In the middle of his rendition, our mini-van cruised under a highway sign which stated simply "Disney World Closed." Just like the Griswolds in *Vacation*, Grandpa would not take closed for an answer and tried to pull some senatorial strings to get us into Disney World which was closed because it was at capacity and would probably have been a miserable place to spend the day. After a family conference we decided to spend the day

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at Disney MGM Studios and had a great New Year's Eve. But I knew that Grandpa was secretly sad that we never made it to the Pirates of the Caribbean. Grandpa EXON's commitment to his family was clearly the top priority in his life.

My cousin Lindsay remembers that as a child she knew he was a Senator but was not aware that he lived in Washington, DC, because he came home every weekend to be with his family. In recent years, it has been a joy to see how his commitment to family and children was shared to the newest EXON generation, the great-grandchildren, Sheridan, Molly, Delaney, Grant, Seamus, Belle, and Stephen. The littlest EXONS will remember their great grandfather's signature tickle sound and the monster Grandpastein.

There are two important family members who could not be here with us today to celebrate Grandpa's amazing life. The first is my cousin Evan, who is having an adventure of a lifetime across Europe. He was concerned about leaving when Grandpa was sick, but Grandpa insisted that he continue on with his adventure. His favorite Grandpa memories are of Cardinal baseball games which they attended together, most notably, the series in which Mark McGwire hit his 61st and 62d homeruns to break the all-time record. The second person is my wonderful Grandma Pat who shared nearly 62 years with the man of her dreams. Grandma is living with Alzheimer's disease and Grandpa spent the last years of his life lovingly caring for her. The blessing of her disease is that she has been spared the grief of his passing, but she is well. Her sense of humor is still very much intact and she enjoys spending time with her family.

The outpouring of love and support from the whole State of Nebraska has been overwhelming and gratifying for the entire EXON family. We have come together to celebrate and say goodbye to our father and grandfather, but we have been so amazed to realize how important and loved he was by so many people. The magic of the man was that he made everyone, the citizens of Nebraska, and each member of his family feel valued and important and we cherish the love, respect, and goodwill which is his legacy.

*First Reading—Isaiah 25:6–9*

MARK BOWEN (former aide). A reading from Isaiah.

On this mountain the Lord of Hosts will make for all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined. And

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he will destroy on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth; for the Lord has spoken. It will be said on that day. "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

The word of the Lord.

*Second Reading—Romans 8:14–19, 34–35, 37–39*

Brother LEO WILLETT. A reading from the Book of Romans.

Those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. But you received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, Abba, Father. The spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are children of God. And if children then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. If only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him. I consider that the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory that will be revealed for us. For creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God. Who will condemn? It is Christ Jesus who died, rather, was raised, who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or the peril, or sword? No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor heights, nor depths, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The word of God.

Thanks be to God.

*On Eagles Wings, Brent Smith, vocalist; Marcia Wiebers, pianist*

*Gospel Reading*

Father SAM BOMAN. Please stand.

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

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Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my father's house there are many dwelling places, if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will receive you unto myself, that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going. Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, except through me."

The Gospel of the Lord.

*Sermon*

Father SAM BOMAN. I have to start with something that I don't have down here. This morning I was chatting with a neighbor, friend of ours as he was chopping up trees, and the conversation came to my being here this afternoon and he said, "I think he was an OK guy." This was a retired truck-driver, and he said, "I did not always agree with him, but as they go I think he was one of the best." So I think that is a tribute. But I do not know how that rests with the rest of you who are in elected office.

As far as I know, the first time I met JIM it was in North Platte during his campaign for the governorship. When you are in small towns you get invited to pray for your meals a lot. And I was invited to offer the prayer for thanksgiving over the meal. I was impressed with him as a speaker and as a man. And over those years that we lived in North Platte, I was asked on more than one occasion to join the people gathered with him in a prayer of thanksgiving. Today, after decades I am honored that the family has invited me to celebrate in this way JIM's life. Some of those years, I was the interim director of the Church of the Holy Trinity in Lincoln, which is his parish home. Although he was still in Washington most of the time, when he was in town I usually was in the foyer when he arrived and greeted him. He shared with the congregation hearing the reading of God's word and the Holy Scriptures from which I preach the sermons. He participated in the prayers, and I gave him God's gift in the Holy Communion.

Today, in the presence of his earthly home we are recalling personal glimpses of his life and now we are sharing the readings and teachings of the Holy Scriptures and we will be joining in prayer and commending him and his life. I am struck with two things out of the Scriptures today. The first

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is the covering, the veil that is cast over all people in which Isaiah speaks. Isaiah's people knew well the ever-present edge to life that death brings not only to our body, but to our spirit and to our hope. The ever-present struggle of good and evil is portrayed to us so vividly in Tolkien's "Ring Trilogy," as well as in "Star Trek." And these resonate with us because in some way we know that curtain, that veil we have in our own lives, in our community, in our Nation, in our world. And even when it pushes away it returns. It may be like pushing a stick down into the mud. It keeps springing back at us, and the deeper we push the stick the more force it pushes back as it rises above the water. Today, the curtain of death in which Isaiah wrote, seems so far more real as one of us who has touched our lives is taken from our presence. And we then can recall and identify with the words of one of our clergy, John Donne, long-time dean of Saint Paul's Cathedral, London; "Ask not for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee." In each of us as another dies, a part of us dies too.

The second thing I want to think about is the feast. Isaiah writes, "a feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the lees, a feast of fat things full of marrow." A feast prepared, as Isaiah writes, "because God is going to destroy on this mountain ... the veil that is cast over all nations. He will swallow death forever." And this is the hope Isaiah brought to a nation defeated and discouraged in order to restore for them the hope that is the faithfulness of God. Jesus continued this promise as he spoke to his disciples as they faced his coming death. "In my house there are many rooms, I go to prepare a place for you. I will come for you, that where I am you will be also." And as we can see by the response by Thomas, their minds cannot comprehend what this will be. Nor, can we wrap our minds around this. He is our only reference point. He has and is leading the way somewhat like some of our historic generals who have gone on to lead with their troops.

It is this promise of victory which weaves its thread through the Holy Scripture. It is the promise of eventual victory over the forces of evil that eat at the lives of people. It is the promise that can lead a man or woman to offer to work in the institutions of government to attempt to walk the minefield of greed and fame all the while keeping in mind the promise of God to all persons and all nations. Keep in mind that God has promised us a victory that even the ultimate defeat of this world, death, cannot take away. Paul wrote of the strength of that promise and hope when he wrote these words we heard in his Letter to the Romans

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today. Not only does the promise of victory come, but none of the things and none of the forces can separate us from the love of God, nor can they stop the eventual coming of that victory. So, as Jesus told his disciples, "Let not your hearts be troubled," we are not to let our hearts be troubled because of JIM's death, nor the possibility of our own death, or of our own failures, or the fear of the failure of God to bring about his purpose for us. Recall, the first question raised by Paul in that passage, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress, or persecution or famine, or nakedness or peril or sword?" Recall then the answer he makes, "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us, for I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor heights nor depths, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Walk away from these halls today, moving toward the day that when that veil is taken away completely. Walk from these halls today in expectation of the feast of victory God promised to all nations. Walk from these halls today empowered by the promise spirit of God which works in us that which is well pleasing in his sight.

Amen.

#### *Apostle's Creed*

Father SAM BOMAN. I ask you to stand.

What we are about to do is an option. I do not want to embarrass anybody or ask anybody to do something they cannot do. But, if you wish to join me in the *Creed* on the first page of your program you may do so in the assurance that eternal life is given at baptism. Let us proclaim our faith and say together:

ALL. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:

Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried.

He descended into hell.

The third day He rose again from the dead.

He ascended into Heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.



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I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

Amen.

Father SAM BOMAN. You may be seated.

*The Lord's Prayer, Brent Smith, vocalist; Marcia Wiebers, pianist*

*Closing Prayers*

Father SAM BOMAN. In response to these closing prayers, at the pause would you respond please with "Hear us Lord."

For our brother JIM, let us pray to our Lord Jesus Christ who said; "I am resurrection and I am life." Lord, you consoled Martha and Mary in their distress, draw near to us who mourn for JIM and dry the tears of those who weep.

*Hear us Lord.*

You wept at the grave of Lazarus, your friend. Comfort us in our sorrow.

*Hear us Lord.*

You raised the dead to life, give to our brother eternal life.

*Hear us Lord.*

You promised paradise to the thief who repented, bring our brother to the joys of Heaven.

*Hear us Lord.*

Our brother was washed in baptism and was anointed with the Holy Spirit, give him fellowship with all your Saints.

*Hear us Lord.*

He was nourished with your body and blood, grant him a place at the table in your heavenly Kingdom.

*Hear us Lord.*

Comfort us in our sorrows at the death of our brother, let our faith be our consolation and our eternal life our hope.

*Hear us Lord.*

Would you stand, please.

Father of all, we pray to you for JAMES and for all those whom we loved and may see no longer. Grant to them eternal rest, let light perpetual shine upon them. May his soul and the souls of all the departed to the mercy of God rest in peace.

Amen.

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And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son,  
and the Holy Spirit be upon you today and forever.  
Amen.

*Recessional: Happy Days are Here Again, performed by Plym-  
outh Brass*

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