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REMEMBERING JUSTICE ANTONIN SCALIA

Mr. LANKFORD:

Mr. President, on February 13, 2016, the Supreme Court not only lost one of its Justices, our nation lost a true legal giant.

Justice Antonin Scalia was described by his colleagues as “extraordinary,” “treasured” and “a stylistic genius.” Beyond his unwavering dedication to upholding the originalist viewpoint of the Constitution, Justice Scalia was also whole-heartedly committed to his family. He was a husband, father of nine and grandfather to 36 grandchildren. His son Paul said of him during his homily that “God blessed Dad with a love for his family...He was the father that God gave us for the great adventure of family life...He loved us, and sought to show that love. And sought to share the blessing of the faith he treasured. And he gave us one another, to have each other for support. That’s the greatest wealth parents can bestow, and right now we are particularly grateful for it.”

Justice Scalia was nominated to the United States Supreme Court in 1986 by President Reagan and was confirmed by the Senate in a unanimous vote. While his time on the Court often led to criticism of his legal opinions and colorful dissents, he remained respected by his colleagues, even those at the opposite end of the judicial spectrum. This is a sign of true character – to have the ability to have an open, honest debate about a particular issue, while respecting the individual person holding an opinion different from your own.

Justice Scalia said, “I attack ideas. I don’t attack people. And some very good people have some very bad ideas. And if you can’t separate the two, you gotta get another day job.”

This sentiment was best portrayed through his friendship with Justice Ginsberg. Of her friend, she said, “We are different, we are one. Different in our interpretation of written texts, one in our reverence for the Constitution and the institution we serve. From our years together at the D.C. Circuit, we were best buddies. We disagreed now and then, but when I wrote for the Court and received a Scalia dissent, the opinion ultimately released was notably better than my initial circulation.”

Justice Scalia was known for his wit and sarcasm in his writings, famously referring to the legal interpretations of his colleagues as “jiggery-pokery,” “pure applesauce,” and “a ghoul in a late horror movie.” Yet it was these same criticisms that Justice Ginsberg said nailed the weak spots in her opinions and gave her what she needed to strengthen her writings.

Justice Scalia represented a consistent, constitutional voice on the Court. Just as the Constitution is a pillar of our legal system, so too was his affirmation to this foundational document of our nation.

He said, “It is an enduring Constitution that I want to defend...It’s what did the words mean to the people who ratified the Bill of Rights or who ratified the Constitution, as opposed to what people today would like.”

As Justice Kennedy said, “In years to come any history of the Supreme Court will, and must, recount the wisdom, scholarship, and technical brilliance that Justice Scalia brought to the Court. His insistence on demanding standards

shaped the work of the Court in its private discussions, its oral arguments, and its written opinions. Yet these historic achievements are all the more impressive and compelling because the foundations of Justice Scalia's jurisprudence, the driving force in all his work, and his powerful personality were shaped by an unyielding commitment to the Constitution of the United States and to the highest ethical and moral standards.”

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United States Senator James Lankford