

Tribute to Senator Dan Hays

June 13, 2007

Honourable senators, I rise in my place in the chamber to express words of tribute to a fine friend, careful counsel, patient parliamentarian and superb Speaker of the Senate of Canada. Senator Dan Hays has served this honourable house in numerous roles. His service in these different capacities has been consistently marked by equanimity, composure, steadiness and dignity.

It was during the year of the patriation of the Constitution, when I had the privilege of appearing as a witness before the Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on the Constitution, co-chaired by Senator Serge Joyal and Senator Harry Hays. I am confident that Dan's father looks down on us today with approval as we salute with tributes the journey that his son has travelled whilst continuing the Hays family tradition of public service, including honourable service rendered in this place.

I can attest with appreciation gained through the years of working with Senator Dan Hays in a number of contexts, whether as the respective deputy leaders in the house, on committees or as my predecessor as the Speaker, that, in all instances, the hallmark of this distinguished son of Alberta was honour, respect and courtesy.

Honourable senators, Senator Dan Hays served as our Speaker, as has been mentioned, from 2001 to 2006, and that service was rendered with great distinction. He has always been affable, obliging and dignified. However, I must now confess to my friend that, based on knowledge gained in my current role and experience, I would not have raised all those points of order in the past had I known about the extra work and research it causes the Speaker.

Given that one of the mysteries of the Senate, a mystery that only reveals its secrets if and when one becomes Speaker, is the peculiar nature of how our clerks at the table serve the Speaker when he or she is called upon to rule on a contentious point of order or question of privilege, I would like to give voice to the table officers who have many recollections of their work with Senator Hays as he prepared his rulings while Speaker.

For any hand that I had in placing those procedural queries before Speaker Hays, I can only now appeal to his good nature and ask for absolution. To you, Dan, we wish you all Godspeed.