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Thursday, January 11, 2018

Met at twelve minutes past one o'clock P.M. in the Chamber of the House of Representatives for the purpose of receiving remarks from former Senator Thomas M. McGee.

The President, members, guests and staff then recited the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Pledge of allegiance.

The President recognized the Senator from Essex and Middlesex, Mr. Tarr, for the purpose of remarks on the retirement of former Senator Thomas M. McGee.

Remarks of Minority Leader Bruce E. Tarr.

Well thank you, Madam President and through you to the members. It is wonderful to be gathered here in the House Chamber for a reunion of sorts among members of the House and members of the Senate and folks who have also throughout the years played an important role in the life and the service of our good friend Senator Tom McGee.

Remarks of Minority
Leader Bruce E. Tarr.

I'm honored to be here today with all of you to be able to recognize that distinguished career of public service and to join as we all pay him a fond farewell and look forward to his valedictory remarks this afternoon in this historic chamber.

Madam President, it was in this historic chamber that the gentleman from Lynn came a number of years ago; I believe it was in 1995 to make his endeavor in public service in this way and in this legislative chamber following the great legacy of his father who led this chamber with distinction for so many years.

When you come into a chamber to follow that kind of a legacy, it can be a daunting task, Madam President. Certainly something you would meet with high expectations and a lot of requirements in terms of carrying on that legacy and upholding the public service that has been the tradition in the McGee family. And I think it's fair to say and it's beyond dispute that Senator Tom McGee has upheld that tradition, has led in his own time and in his own way and the people of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and certainly the people of his district are the better for it. Madam President, we've seen so many times the passion of the gentleman from Lynn. Always holding people that he represents close to his heart and also having a deep commitment and dedication to public service and what it means in this commonwealth and in this country. And Madam President, he certainly hit the ground running here in the House of Representatives and made it known to all that he was going to be the kind of person that would roll up his sleeves and work on the task at hand and find a result that is acceptable and beneficial to everyone. And having established that reputation here, Madam President, in the House of Representatives, he came to join us in the Senate not that that many years ago it seems like now, to be able to continue on with that legacy. And it's very interesting, Madam President, I think fair to say that Senator Tom McGee is a gentleman who never forgot where he came from. He never forgot the hard working people of his district. He never forgot the importance of getting the best value in state government for the people he represents and he never forgot the

value of trying to work as hard as possible with other people in the legislature from different places and with different perspectives. And Madam President, I was honored to work with him in so many different ways, because he was a champion of the North Shore and still is. But Madam President, Senator McGee and I worked together to establish the Northeast Legislative Conference so that we could as legislators from the North Shore and the Merrimack Valley work together to be able to advance the interest of a region in way that those interests could not be advanced by legislators working in individual efforts. And that Northeast Legislative Caucus, Madam President, has been influential in so many areas involving the North Shore. And I know that one that is particularly important to my friend Tom, has been the issue of North Shore Community College and watching it develop and thrive and particularly its Lynn campus which is now expanding, thanks to his advocacy and his good work. Because Madam President, Senator McGee has never forgotten the importance and the empowering effect of education and public education. He's worked to reform it in a number of different ways, not only in the K-12 level but certainly in terms of higher education. Every time, Madam President, many of us visit that Lynn campus, we think about the work not only of Senator Tom McGee but also of former Speaker Tom McGee. And that is the thread of continuity that we should cherish. Madam President, it's important to think about the fact that Senator Tom McGee always understood the great potential in the city of Lynn, brought to our attention the issue of the water front that had been perhaps too often overlooked. But that held great potential for that city and worked hard, and I was pleased to work with him on this matter, to establish water transportation to take advantage of that water front and to open up entirely new venues of commerce and transportation for the city of Lynn.

Madam President, it's true to say as well that Senator Tom McGee was not only focused on Lynn and his other communities in his district, but he was concerned about larger issues that often times dominate the political discussion here, as they should. One of those is transportation. He has been diligent and focused and someone who has communicated to us so often and so well a transportation structure that is accessible and reliable and effective and cost effective. The best example I can think that happened a couple years ago Madam President when we had suffered a tremendous season of difficulty with regard to the MBTA. We had a very difficult winter. We had a lot of failures of transit and we had to give the people of this Commonwealth something better than what they had been given in that winter season of 2015 by the MBTA. I reached out and Senator McGee stepped up to the plate and said that this is a bipartisan issue and we must work together to solve it. And it was in the context of a very chaotic state budget environment. You all know what the budget is like when we're dealing with literally thousands of amendments and trying to reach agreement on a thousand different issues. Senator Tom McGee sat with me through long days and long nights and never walked away from the table until we found a satisfactory agreement with regard to the fiscal management and control board that has undertaken so much reform and achieved so many cost savings with regard to mass transit in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. And that's because, Madam President, he has never forgotten the importance of getting a result and of reaching across the aisle and finding a way to do the right and the best thing for the people that we all represent. And that is even true, Madam President, that is even true that change happened right before my very eyes that I didn't see it. How interesting this House Chamber can be, Mr. Speaker. Even during his tenure as the chair of the Massachusetts Democratic Party, the gentleman from Lynn showed that he was in

fact a gentleman. That he understood that we could have principled differences of opinion but those should not become obstacles to working together and finding a path forward. And his leadership will long be noted, I am confident, at the helm of the Democratic Party as well. And so Madam President, Mr. President, and Mr. Speaker, I am honored to be here today with all of you and with Tom's family, to express our deep appreciation for the passion, for the insight, for the diligence and for the focus that you have brought to our efforts on transportation, on education, on trying to find a path forward that defies what sometimes we see currently in the world around us where achieving an objective can be made difficult because of partisan considerations that may displace every other consideration. Tom McGee has been the kind of person that has reminded us we can work together, we can find a way forward and we can do the right thing for the people that we represent. Now as we bid him farewell from our collective legislative chambers, we know that he takes the helm as Mayor of the city of Lynn with an unquestionable and unyielding passion for his home city. We know that he is eager to hit the ground running to move the wheels of government to respond to so many opportunities in that city of economic development, of housing, of continuing to explore water transportation and other ways to instill new viability and strength to places like the Lynnway which he has only yet begun to scratch the surface of ways to improve. Mr. President, I think it's fair to say we all very much collectively look forward to his work in the city of Lynn. I know we are all committed to working with him in that new way.

Because it is true, Mr. President, that he has always been a champion of the North Shore, has always understood Lynn's place as a leader on the North Shore and he will continue to do that. We know the friendships and partnerships we have built with him will far from be extinguished, they will be invigorated on behalf of his home city and we all look forward to that. So Madam President, I know that, and Mr. President, we all wish him the very very best.

I am honored that he allowed me a few minutes to speak today about him. He is a good friend. He is a good example of public service, and he is someone that I am very very glad that is not leaving public service even as he makes the transition from being a member of the Senate to being a mayor of an important city in this Commonwealth.

Tom, I know I and all of us wish you the best and continue to look forward to working with the gentleman from Lynn, based on leadership from practical reality can accomplish. I wish you the very best on your journey and thank you.

Mr. Brownsberger in the Chair, who then recognized the Senator from Worcester, Ms. Chandler, for the purpose of remarks on the retirement of former Senator Thomas M. McGee.

Remarks of Senate President Harriette L. Chandler.

I rise to give thanks and praise, and to say goodbye to a dear friend and colleague I wish was not leaving us.

Senator McGee, a true son of Lynn, and a true son of this Chamber, has been one of the fiercest advocates for his district, for the commonwealth, and for the overall good that this building has seen.

I have had the privilege of seeing Senator McGee up close in the trenches ... it is my honor to give just a few words today to recognize his distinguished career as we send him home to Lynn.

Remarks of Senate
President Harriette L.
Chandler.

In 1995, Senator McGee and I entered this Chamber together as freshmen Representatives.

Like many, I knew him only by reputation – as a son of an iconic legislator, and a young, rising star in the building.

It would be easy to rest on those laurels. But over his career, from the beginning through today, Senator McGee has steadfastly refused to be categorized by anyone. Rather than follow in footsteps, he has carved his own path, and forged his own unique identity.

As different as our backgrounds are, we brought to the table similar hopes and goals for our urban-centric districts, and a parallel set of values.

There aren't many of us left in either chamber from those days. But I will long cherish the battles we have been through together, and remember the lessons I learned from working alongside him in both the House and the Senate.

Over the 20 plus years we have worked and served together, I've come to recognize him as one of the last of a certain type of person we don't see enough of in our business.

He's been a voice for progressives; a stalwart of pragmatism; and a paradigm of public service.

There is an old Irish Blessing that ends, "And as you walk the roads, May you always have a kind word for those you meet." Senator McGee has consistently had that kind – if at times firm – word, for all those he has encountered.

It is far too easy in our world to get caught up in the day-to-day politics of the building. Yet, I have always been impressed by his ability to filter out the noise, to consistently keep his eye on the bigger picture, and to keep his ears open to those who may not be shouting the loudest.

Indeed, Senator McGee has continually fought for those without a traditional voice at the table. As a champion of working families, children, and children, he has led the way on issues of equity and fairness, improving the lives of countless citizens across the state.

He has recognized that in our world, families come in all forms – and they all deserve a champion. For many, he has served as that champion of otherwise quiet causes.

And in his fights for regional equity, and for statewide transportation improvements, his leadership was marked with a dogged enthusiasm and much-needed collaborative perspective.

It is transportation that has always been his greatest passion.

As he reminds us, transportation touches *all* of us, and if Massachusetts is going to continue to be the hub of innovation, we must pursue creative solutions to expand options locally, regionally, and across the Commonwealth.

Transportation is often an issue of incremental advances. On issues of tolls, trains, busses...and yes, ferries, he has forced us to think differently, to think of greater solutions, and to pursue the best options.

In pursuit of those efforts, the Senator's fingerprints are on critical pieces of legislation across the past two decades. To me though, it's been the lengths he's gone to bring new ideas to the table that have consistently impressed me.

This is a man that travelled literally to the other end of the globe to learn about ferries and public transit in Japan, and bring those concepts back to Massachusetts.

Those are journeys few would take on, but there are no limits to Senator McGee's vision, or to what he will do to achieve it.

And, I know in his new role as Mayor of Lynn, we can expect to hear a lot more from him on those same concepts, very soon.

UNCORRECTED PROOF.

In closing, I just want to say that Senator McGee, Tom, you have been a true friend to me, and a true friend to this building. Lynn is lucky to be having you steering it into the future. You have been the ultimate public servant. And you will be missed.

On behalf of those who have served with you in both chambers, and on behalf of the people of Massachusetts, we cannot thank you enough, and we wish you best of luck on the road ahead.

The President in the Chair, who then recognized former Senator Thomas M. McGee for the purpose of giving his final remarks.

Remarks of former Senator Thomas M. McGee.

Thank you, Madam President and Mr. Minority Leader for the kind words of introduction and for saying some really amazing things. It's been wonderful to work with both of you. Bruce, as you stated sometimes with different perspectives, we've become really great friends and accomplished a lot together in a bipartisan way to really move the issues of importance in the Commonwealth forward. I guess I do have a passion for transportation and my family can attest to that. But it's been great working with you and your colleagues in the Minority Crescent. When we've had some intense differences in terms of politics, there has never been an intense difference in our personal relationship and friendship. So I want to thank you for all of your work and all of the members of the Republican caucus over the years, who have been great friends and have worked to make a difference for the people of the Commonwealth. And Harley, we have been great friends from the beginning, we came in with 30 members, 10 Republicans and 20 Democrats, and as we sat up in the bull pen on the fourth floor across the hall with members and staff sitting on top of each other we built a friendship and a relationship, and as all my colleagues understand we come from very different places, with many different perspectives with many political differences, but when you come together like that you understand there is a common bond that we all share about why we are here and I've served with hundreds and hundreds of members in both the House and Senate and I think the Commonwealth should be proud of the people who serve in these bodies because they come here under intense scrutiny to try and make a difference for their districts and when you put your name on the ballot you really put yourself out there and I can tell you that the people that I serve with I'm proud to have said I've served as a member of both bodies. And the people that we have all represented and all of the members that I've served with, I think reflect that same feeling of making a commitment to making this Commonwealth better. And I can tell you that every person that I've served with, that's why they've been here. And that's why all of you continue to be here. I've been honored to be part of that wonderful group of people who put their lives and their families lives on the line, run for office and get involved with some really intense issues and stand up and be heard and do what they believe is the right thing to make the Commonwealth a better place. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for allowing us to do this in the Chamber. I've spent 8 years here and actually a lot longer. But I want to thank you for allowing me to come in here and give my farewell speech. The Senate Chamber is under construction and before I get into some of my written remarks, I can tell you coming into this building every day and I'm sure all of you feel the history. When I walk in the House Chamber or

Senate Chamber I feel the history that's there. I feel the honor being able to say I represent the district that I represent and live in. It's really a special place the House Chamber and the Senate Chamber. I've been honored to be a part of that. So again, this is a great honor and a pleasure to be part of such history and part of this Commonwealth's history. This is a great honor and I'm very happy to have all of you here.

Today is a bittersweet day for me as I say goodbye to all of you and to serving in the Massachusetts Legislature.

While I am excited for the challenges ahead, this building has been a second home for me since I first walked down the halls as a 7 year old with my father in 1963, with my brothers and sister, remember us coming up here on weekends with my dad, and sliding through these halls yelling and screaming as young kids. Never thinking I would be up here speaking today in this role. But those are memories I will continue to carry with me. Over these last twenty plus years my colleagues have been a second family.

Yet, in this moment, in this place that has meant so much to me, I want to begin by thanking my family – my wife, Maria, and Harley was right, we were married six months when I came home and said “I think I'm running for State Representative”, and here we are Maria; my children, Thomas and Katherine, who I'm so proud of and happy to have them here today; my brothers and sister are here with me today; and my parents who are no longer with us, but whose love and example always guide me, and would also like to thank all of my extended family.

You have always supported me, inspired me and encouraged me and I cannot express how much that has meant to me and sustained me throughout these last 23 years.

To my constituents in Lynn, Lynnfield, Marblehead, Melrose, Nahant, Saugus and Swampscott-- since I first began serving in the Legislature in 1995, I have been honored to represent the communities that made up my districts and to give voice to the issues that mattered most to you, to listen to your ideas to make our community stronger, and to advance policies to promote our shared prosperity.

Throughout my years in the Legislature, I have always tried to make a positive difference in people's lives. In my new role as the Mayor of Lynn, I hope to continue to make an impact towards positive changes for our entire North Shore.

Thank you again for the opportunity and the honor to serve as your voice in the Legislature and for all that I have learned from you through the years.

To my former colleagues, in the House and the Senate, both those who are here today and those who are not, your commitment to public service and your passion for working toward solutions to complex issues for the residents of this Commonwealth has been remarkable and I have learned so much from you all. We have shared some great times, we have weathered some difficult ones. We have been met with challenges and we have led the way to make certain that the values of this Commonwealth are protected.

As I look to the 4th Division and my colleague Steve Walsh is sitting in my seat, and as members of the House know the 4th Division is the best division. But I know that members of the delegation Steve Walsh, Bobby Fennel, Dan Cahill, Brendan Crighton, Lori Ehrlich, Donald Wong, Chip Clancy, Steve Angelo, and Doug Peterson who are all friends and I've really enjoyed serving with them as members of the Lynn delegation and I want to thank them directly, those that are here and that are not here. They have helped make my career easy by being real allies and friends.

For more than two decades, I have served in the State Legislature, and I truly

could not have accomplished all I have without the incredible staff that have been with me along the way.

Matt Hall, Joy Lonergan Foraste, Gabrielle Viator, Frank Valeri, Elana Amaral, Sheri Warrington, Jeremiah Bresnehan, Kerri Kidney, Aimee Weeden, Corinne Petraglia Walsh, Brendan Crighton, Jess Torres, Amanda Richard, Steve Smalley, Robin Ennis, Katie Kass, Meaghen Hamill, Peter Rondeau and the many countless interns who worked in our office over the years. These men and women have worked tirelessly with me for the people I have represented. Thank you to all my staff, many who are here, for your hard work, dedication and commitment.

To the people who make the Senate, the House and the State House such an amazing place to work every day--the staffs of the House and the Senate Counsel Offices, the staffs of the House and Senate Clerks Offices, the Court Officers, the LIS staff, the Park Rangers, the State Troopers, the Business Offices, the Personnel Office, the Senate Education Office, and all those whose efforts keep us safe and on track while ensuring that our undertakings are accessible to the public, I thank you all and when we are working late, when people are working on weekends, when the sessions go until 3 in the morning, the staff is here with us every step of the way, helping us do what we do and making our jobs easier.

While I was not here for John F. Kennedy's original "City Upon A Hill", address, while I do recognize my close friend Ray Amaral was here to see that speech in this chamber on January 9, 1961, it was a very poignant moment for many of us 50 years later when we came together as a body to hear that speech in this chamber and listen to it and understand the historic relevance of that speech 50 years later. In his remarks, then President-elect Kennedy spoke of the leadership of our great Commonwealth and the standard we have always held and still hold ourselves to as legislators – leaders not just in this state, but in the nation.

Kennedy said, "Courage, judgment, integrity, dedication. These are the historic qualities of the Bay Colony and the Bay State – the qualities which this state has consistently sent to this chamber on Beacon Hill here in Boston and to Capitol Hill back in Washington."

This isn't in my remarks, but it was as equally powerful I think, for all of us 50 years after Martin Luther King, Jr. stood at this podium and spoke to the Joint Session of the House and Senate in 1965, we had a chance to hear many of our colleagues read his speech and bring his historic message to this Chamber once again 50 years later. Now that reflects on what we do and what this great Chamber is all about.

I have had the privilege to serve with hundreds of legislators who have stayed true to these standards in order to make a difference for their constituents and for the Commonwealth, who were here because they believe in public service in a crazy crazy time and who have carried forward the ideals that have historically made the government of our Commonwealth an example for our nation.

I have had the privilege to be part of some historic moments here on Beacon Hill. From debating and voting on the death penalty, which as a freshman member I stood in the well here and spoke against the death penalty being part of Massachusetts law, which was the topic of my maiden speech, to leading the nation to provide healthcare for all citizens. To establishing the Children's Caucus, which is now the committee on Children and Families, to ensure that our most vulnerable citizens are protected and can grow up to their full potential. To reorganizing the Department of Transportation in the wake of the Big Dig, and a really serious storm situation in 2015 and enacting Transportation Finance Reform.

We have always debated the issues collegially and worked toward bipartisan

resolutions that best serve the citizens of the Commonwealth and uphold our state Constitution.

I will never forget the feeling of the electricity in the air of Constitutional Convention as the vote was called on marriage equality, waiting with anticipation just like the thousands of people filling the gallery, the halls of the State House, and the streets outside the building and those watching on television across the country.

After casting my vote for marriage equality and hearing the outcome, we did not realize that Massachusetts had not only upheld the values of equality but had also sparked a movement across the country and around the world. I was, and still am, enormously proud to have played a role in ensuring equality for all our citizens.

These high-profile moments highlight the complex matters that come before the General Court and often require us to take a decisive stand for what we believe is right.

But, as I think back and reflect on the past twenty years, I take great pride too in the day-to-day efforts of legislators and staff, working every budget cycle to secure critical funding for afterschool programs, for employment training, for community policing and so many other priorities for our districts and the Commonwealth;

Holding hearings and forums to create open dialogue, whether about education reform or about the need to invest in our roads, bridges and transit system all around the state.

Bringing people together to share a vision for a network of water transportation connecting communities all along our coastline to spur economic development and improve the quality of life for residents of the Commonwealth.

All the stakeholder meetings, public forums, late night sessions, and the floor debates that give us the opportunity to advocate on behalf of our constituents and to advance the issues that matter to them. These day-to-day efforts comprise the work of our legislature just as much as, if not more than, the votes we take.

These are the things that have made this job an honor and that I will carry with me for the rest of my life.

Before I finish, I would just like to take a moment to recognize the leaders that I've served under in the Legislature. I had a chance to serve with Speaker Flaherty as my first Speaker, Speaker Finneran, and Speaker DiMasi. And in the Senate, I've had the chance to serve under Senate President Thomas Birmingham, Robert Travaglini, Therese Murray, Stan Rosenberg and I'm honored to be here with my presiding officer Harley Chandler. It's been an honor to serve with them as they've showed leadership to us as we've showed our support to them as leaders of their respective bodies that we've served in.

I am excited about the opportunity I have to continue to serve my home of Lynn as Mayor, and I look forward to the challenge. But, I will take with me the spirit of this building, the dedication of this body, and the core belief my father instilled in me that if we are able to make life better for one person, then we have achieved the true meaning of public service.

Thank you all very much.

On motion of Mr. DiDomenico, the above remarks were ordered printed in the Journal of the Senate.

Ordered printed.

UNCORRECTED PROOF.

Order Adopted.

On motion of Mr. Chang-Díaz,--

Ordered, That when the Senate adjourns today, it adjourn to meet again on Tuesday next at eleven o'clock A.M., and that the Clerk be directed to dispense with the printing of a calendar.

Time of meeting.

On motion of Mr. Tarr, at six minutes before two o'clock P.M., the Senate adjourned to meet again on Tuesday next at eleven o'clock A.M.