

Baltimore, MD - Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) served as master of ceremonies at the Maryland Democratic Party's tribute dinner to Senator Paul Sarbanes in Baltimore last night. Below are his remarks.

"Tonight is an opportunity to come together and say thank you to an extraordinary man.

"Now, Paul and Christine, tonight is not a time for fond farewells. For that's far too premature.

"This is an evening, however, of exuberant thank you's from your closest friends, who see you as the quintessential Maryland – and American – success story.

"Paul, your leadership, your wisdom, your integrity, and your common sense over the last four decades – first in the House of Delegates, then in the House of Representatives, and then, for 30 years, in the United States Senate – has continually enriched and inspired our state and our nation. How badly is common sense needed in Washington today?

"Your record and commitment to public service is a shining example to anyone who wishes to serve.

"On the drive here tonight, I was reviewing your profile in Congressional Quarterly's 'Politics in America.'

"And here is what the authors of that political almanac had to say about you:

"One of the Senate's most penetrating intellects, Sarbanes has the skills to leave opponents sputtering, but he is not a provocateur. He generally shows little appetite for legislative gamesmanship, relying instead on an expansive mind . . . and a methodical approach to policymaking.

“Paul, your career in public service has been book-ended by two of the most extraordinary events in the history of our lifetime – from being enlisted by your colleagues on the House Watergate Committee in 1974 to draft and introduce the first Article of Impeachment, for obstruction of justice, against the President of the United States, to being the driving force behind the ‘Sarbanes-Oxley Act,’ which has been hailed as ‘the most far-reaching reforms of American business practices since the time of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’—six decades of American history.

“You wrote an act to require transparency, honesty, and integrity in the highest levels of corporate America.

“And you have left a very strong legacy on so many issues in between:

“Fighting to protect the Chesapeake Bay and our environment.

“Fighting to keep federal jobs in Maryland, and for the rights of workers.

“And Paul, in large part because of your leadership, Maryland has consistently been the number one winner during the Base Realignment and Closure process.

“Fighting for fair and affordable housing.

“And fighting to improve our state’s infrastructure.

“It’s a tribute to your character that public life has never really changed you. The same values that you learned growing up in Salisbury – hard work, honesty, responsibility and educational achievement – continue to guide you today. You are a tower of integrity and commitment.

“Paul, when you do leave the Senate, that body and all of us will be so much the poorer.

“However, we will be comforted by the fact that your service and your patriotism have enriched everyone of us and countless others.”

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