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Senate

TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH R. EGAN

Mr. REID: Mr. President – I join Senator Ensign today to recognize the remarkable life of Joe Egan, who passed away on May 7, 2008.

Joe is known in Nevada, and throughout the country as a skilled attorney who worked hard to make our nation safer and to stop the proposed Yucca Mountain nuclear waste dump from being built in Nevada. I think Joe hated the nuclear waste dump project as much as I do. In his obituary, he arranged to have his ashes spread over Yucca Mountain. “Radwaste buried here only over my dead body” he said.

After learning in 1996 that Yucca Mountain was scientifically unsuitable for storing radioactive waste, he was deputized as the lead lawyer for the state of Nevada’s efforts to fight the dump. Nevadans should be proud to have had such a magnificent person fighting for them.

Joe was a key force in dealing multiple blows to the project and bringing it to a standstill. Over the years, Joe has made it abundantly clear that the project is unsafe and that the science behind it is unsound. It speaks to his character that although he was not from Nevada, he fought against this project with both passion and strength because he knew that it was the right thing to do. When we finally end the battle against the Yucca Mountain project, we will have done it together with Joe and his team.

Joe was by no means anti-nuclear. He just wanted to see nuclear power produced safely and the dangerous wastes it produces to be managed properly. He also worked hard on non-proliferation efforts, helping the United States secure thousands of tons of weaponsgrade uranium from all over the world.

Joe’s legacy will live on through his family, friends, and through his tremendous efforts to keep Nevadans and all Americans safe.

Mr. ENSIGN: We have both had the pleasure to know and work with Joe. He was a brilliant man – a Minnesota native who received three degrees, in physics, nuclear engineering, and technology and policy from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He received his law degree from Columbia University.

During his lifetime, Joe did everything from working in the control room of a nuclear power plant to serving as president of the International Nuclear Law

Association. Joe was a strong supporter of nuclear energy. Throughout his life, he fought for the development of sensible, sound and safe nuclear policies.

Joe served as Nevada's lead attorney in the fight against dumping nuclear waste in Nevada. Applying his deep knowledge of the law and nuclear engineering, Joe helped the State of Nevada in our fight against Yucca Mountain.

Mr. REID: Joe Egan was a talented person who led a rich life which was tragically cut short by an aggressive cancer. I am saddened by his death, and will not forget all that he has done for the people of Nevada. To his wife, children and family, I wish to extend my deepest sympathies.

Mr. ENSIGN: The work that Joe has accomplished during his lifetime will forever stand as a fitting testament to his character. He was an amazing lawyer, a great father, and he will be sorely missed by all. My sincere condolences go out to his family.