



South Dakota Legislature

*Legislative
Memorial Service*

January 21, 2016

JOINT MEMORIAL SERVICE

Thursday, January 21, 2016 3:00 p.m. (CT)

House Chamber

Opening Remarks Senator Vehle

Opening Prayer Representative Bartling

Joint Memorial Resolution Senator Heineman

“Earth Song” *Pierre Riggs High School
Frank Ticheli Chamber Choir

Reading of the Names for Placing of the Roses Representative Feickert

<i>Walter C. Conahan</i>	<i>Brookings</i>	<i>Senate, 1983-1988</i>
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<i>Wilbur Foss</i>	<i>Scotland</i>	<i>Senate, 1961-1963</i>
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<i>Harold D. Koch</i>	<i>Gann Valley</i>	<i>House, 1981-1982</i>
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<i>Walter Dale Miller</i>	<i>New Underwood</i>	<i>House, 1967-1986</i>
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<i>James Ramey</i>	<i>Wamblee</i>	<i>Senate, 1955-1964</i>
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<i>Thomas E. Roby</i>	<i>Watertown</i>	<i>Senate, 1983-1986</i>
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<i>Louise Van Gerpen</i>	<i>Avon</i>	<i>House, 1983-1984</i>
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Prayer of Reflection Representative Soli

“The Pilgrim’s Hymn” *Pierre Riggs High School
Stephen Paulus Chamber Choir

Benediction Representative Craig

Closing Remarks Representative Hunt

*Pierre Riggs High School Students directed by Mr. Rodd Bauck, Vocal Director.

Joint Select Committee

Senator Vehle , Senator Heineman, Senator Bradford,
Representative Craig, Representative Hunt, Representative Bartling, and
Representative Feickert

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Family members are cordially invited to a
reception hosted by the Capitol Club following
the Legislative Memorial Service.

The reception will be held in the
Speaker's Lobby
(behind the House Chamber).

NOTE: The following biographical information has been extrapolated from the South Dakota Legislative Manual ("Blue Book") (various editions), various legislative documents, and obituary information.

WHEREAS, the Great Ruler of the Universe has ordered a final adjournment in the lives of seven former members of the South Dakota Legislature, namely: the Honorable Walter C. Conahan; the Honorable Wilbur Foss; the Honorable Harold D. Koch; the Honorable Walter Dale Miller; the Honorable James G. Ramey; the Honorable Thomas Roby; and the Honorable Louise Van Gerpen; and

WHEREAS, in the lives of all these eminent public servants there was noted a profound urgency in an unselfish manner, with trials and vicissitudes often far outweighing honors, but with a consciousness that here in a land of freedom the dignity of the individual is supreme, that justice must be dispensed, and that only by eternal vigilance and unrelenting effort can self-government of a people be preserved; and

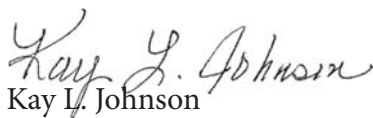
WHEREAS, it is fitting that we humbly honor the memory of those who have thus contributed to the orderly process of government under the Constitution:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Ninety-first Session of the Legislature of the State of South Dakota duly convened in recess session in recognition of the useful lives and unfailing devotion to the interests of the State of South Dakota, as well as the rectitude of thought and action and fidelity to the highest principles of American citizenship by these honorable people, that the Senate and the House of Representatives do now pause in their labors out of respect for the memory of their late fellow associates in the functions of government, and note that in their passing, the state they have served so well has suffered a distinct loss, and though their labors have ceased and they have been laid to rest, the people of this great state have benefited greatly from the services rendered by them and they have left upon the sands of time an inspiring record of devotion to their fellow citizens under the guiding hand of Almighty God; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Resolution be printed in the Journals of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Ninety-first Session of the Legislature of the State of South Dakota, now assembled this 21st day of January, 2016, at Pierre, South Dakota.



Matt Michels
President of the Senate



Kay L. Johnson
Secretary of the Senate



Dean Wink
Speaker of the House



Arlene Kvislen
Chief Clerk of the House



Walter C. Conahan

4/20/1927 - 4/18/2015

Married to Marjorie Dean
Father to Christy

Walter E. Conahan was born in Leola, South Dakota. He graduated from Leola High School in 1945. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1945 and after an honorable discharge, served eight years in the U.S. Army Reserve. Mr. Conahan graduated from SDSU where he majored in printing and rural journalism and then became the associate editor of the *Clear Lake Courier*. After three years with the *Courier*, he returned to Leola to help his mother in the family café. In 1955, Mr. Conahan moved to Washington, D.C. to work for Congressman Lovre. He spent 25 years in Washington, D.C. as a senior staff member for the U.S. Senate, House of Representatives, Commerce Department, and National Transportation Safety Board. While working in D.C., Mr. Conahan met Marjorie Dean, and they were married in 1957; their daughter Christy was born in 1958. Following his years in D.C., he returned to South Dakota and spent 13 years working for SDSU as the executive director of the SDSU Foundation, director of development, and director of University Relations. Mr. Conahan served on the board of the Karl Mundt Foundation, the Museum of Visual Materials, and the SDSU Prairie Repertory Theatre. He was a member of the American Legion, Elks Club, and the Brookings Country Club.

Mr. Conahan was elected to the State Senate in 1982 and served three terms.

Senate (R)
1983-1988
Brookings County



Wilbur Foss

6/15/1921 - 11/18/2015

Married to Elizabeth Busch
Father to Nancy

Wilbur Foss was born in Freeman, South Dakota. He graduated from Menno High School and then attended Southern Normal College in Springfield. He taught and coached at Rose Cottage, Pleasant View, North Star Schools, Wagner, Lennox, Davis, and Beresford. He married Elizabeth Busch on June 15, 1946. He owned and operated the Coast to Coast hardware store, was a bank officer at the Valley State Bank, and wrote for the *Yankton County Observer*. Mr. Foss was involved in volunteering, education, church, basketball refereeing, and baseball. He learned to play the fiddle at the age of 55 and with his wife founded the South Dakota Fiddlers in 1976 and performed for audiences throughout a five-state area.

Mr. Foss was appointed to the State Senate in 1961, was elected to the Senate in 1962, and resigned from the Senate in 1963.

Senate (R)
1961-1963
Bon Homme County



Harold D. Koch

3/09/1930 - 10/24/2014

Married to Norma Smith (dec.)
Father to Douglas (dec.), Dedrich, Jay

Harold D. Koch was born in Miller, South Dakota. He graduated from Miller High School in 1948. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1950, serving during the Korean Conflict. He married Norma Ruth Smith in June 1956. Mr. Koch attended SDSU where he obtained a degree in Mechanical Engineering and worked on the Oahe Dam as a surveyor and then for DOT in ROW (Right-of-Way) acquisition. He worked as a mechanical engineer in Fort Wayne, Indiana; German Town, Illinois; and Schofield, Wisconsin, before returning to South Dakota where he farmed and ranched on his family's homestead located between Miller and Gann Valley. Mr. Koch founded Koch Manufacturing which had 26 employees and produced a calf creep feeder product that was a popular product throughout the Midwest. The calf creep feeder business was sold in 1995, and Koch Manufacturing closed in 2003. Mr. Koch was a member of the Farm Bureau, VFW, Masons, and Scottish Rite.

Mr. Koch served as State Representative from 1981-1982.

House of Representatives (R)
1981-1982
Buffalo County



South Dakota

Walter Dale Miller

10/05/1925 - 09/28/2015

Married to Mary Randall (dec.); Patricia Caldwell
Father to Nancy, Karey, Walter R. “Randy”, Renee
Stepchildren: Cade, Rebecca.

Walter Dale Miller was born in Meade County, South Dakota. He graduated from New Underwood High School in 1943. He attended South Dakota School of Mines and Technology before returning to the family ranch. In addition to ranching, Governor Miller held a leadership position with The Gideons International, was a founding member of Sunshine Bible Academy, and was founder and president of Dakota National Life Insurance Company. Mr. Miller served as the first full-time Lieutenant Governor starting in 1987 and became Governor in 1993 after the tragic death of Governor George S. Mickelson.

Governor Miller served as a State Representative from 1967 – 1986 and was the first person in South Dakota history to serve as Majority Leader, Assistant Majority Leader, Majority Whip, Speaker of the House, Speaker Pro Tempore, and President of the Senate.

House of Representatives (R)
1967-1986
Meade County



James Ramey

2/12/1917 - 7/19/2015

Married to Myrtle Alden (dec.)
Father to Joy, Ann, John, Ellen, Jane

James Ramey was born in Dowling, South Dakota. He graduated from Wall High School. He received a speech and debate scholarship and attended Dakota Wesleyan University. Mr. Ramey married Myrtle Olive Alden on August 18, 1939, in Philip, South Dakota. While in school in Wall, he became one of the first employees of Wall Drug, driving Ted Hustead to Rapid City every Saturday to purchase goods for the store. During WWII, he raised horses for the Cavalry and would trail horses to Nebraska for government pickup. After his marriage, he and Myrtle lived on Corn Creek, moved to Bear Creek, purchased a ranch northwest of Belle Fourche in 1965, and then retired to the couple's dream home located just south of Deadwood in 1989. Mr. Ramey was director of an insurance group in Denver, Colorado, and he served as the director of the hospital and retirement home in Kadoka. He was a member of the Masons, Buckaroos, Custer Trail Ride, and the St. Onge Livestock Yard. He served as president of the State Fair Board, served on the South Dakota State Banking Commission, and was a delegate to several national Republican Conventions.

Mr. Ramey served as State Senator from 1955-1964. During his last term, he served as the President Pro Tempore.

Senate (R)
1955-1964
Jackson County



Thomas E. Roby

10/25/1924 - 3/19/2015

Married to Ernestine (dec.)

Father to Kathleen, Dennis, David, Colleen, Richard (dec.)

Thomas E. Roby was born in Aberdeen, South Dakota. He graduated from Watertown High School in 1942. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1943, was a Purple Heart recipient, and was honorably discharged in 1946. Returning to Watertown, he married Ernestine Gayle Evans on August 16, 1947. He worked for 14 years with Swift & Company in the Watertown Commercial Department, and then in 1962 became owner/operator of Roby Insurance and Real Estate. Mr. Roby received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Watertown Realtors Association in 2012. He was a member of the Watertown Rotary Club and the Elks Club, the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Watertown Chamber of Commerce, and the Associations of Independent Insurance Agents of South Dakota and America.

Mr. Roby served as Mayor of Watertown from 1964-1970 and as State Senator from 1982-1986.

Senate (R)

1983-1986

Codington County



Louise Van Gerpen

2/09/1926 - 11/13/2015

Married to Roland Van Gerpen (dec.)

Mother to Bill, Danny, Lorney

Louise Irene Dykstra Van Gerpen was born in Tyndall, South Dakota. She graduated from Avon High School in 1944. She worked in Avon at the K & K Store and BJ's. She married Roland Van Gerpen on March 26, 1947, and together they farmed northeast of Avon. She was well-known for her cooking, especially pies, popcorn balls, cinnamon rolls, and pfeffernüsse. She sang in the church choir and served as a Sunday School teacher and church youth leader. Mrs. Van Gerpen was a supporter of the Women's Missionary Fellowship and a member of the American Legion Auxiliary.

After her husband's death in 1983, Mrs. Van Gerpen was appointed to fill his vacancy as State Representative and served in that capacity from 1983-1984.

House of Representatives (R)

1983-1984

Bon Homme County

South Dakota Public Broadcasting provides an audio
webcast of the 2016 Legislative Memorial Service

To listen live, follow the provided links at
<http://legis.sd.gov>

To listen at a later date, the service can be found at
<http://www.sdpb.org>

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