Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Michael S. Pinto, Superintendent of Schools in Middletown, Rhode Island. After 36 years, Superintendent Pinto is leaving the school system where he began his career, bound for a well-deserved retirement.

During his tenure in Middletown, Superintendent Pinto has held almost every possible position one can hold in the field of education. He has been a teacher, a principal, a business manager for the school district, an assistant superintendent, and, most recently, the superintendent.

Over the years—even when I represented Rhode Island’s neighboring Congressional district in the House of Representatives, I was privileged to have the advice of Superintendent Pinto on a variety of issues related to education, from school choice to educational standards. Indeed, I could always count on hearing from Superintendent Pinto about Impact Aid. He is the program’s number one advocate.

His commitment to Impact Aid underscores his overall dedication to Middletown’s schools and students and the cause of education. A measure of that commitment was shown in a recent news article which reported that in the school year ending June 1997, Providence, mr.pinto got him aboard his boat. Seaman Belodeau’s courageou...
him. As many of you know, he was not a man of many words. So he'd just give you a look. And the look would tell it all. The fierce determination; the rolling good fun; the profound sadness. I would see his expression for any mood he had. My favorite look of all was his bemused, "What the hell does the skipper think he's doing now?"

Tom would join a great group of veterans who had been involved in my 84 campaign called the Doghunters. We would gather irregularly for a black tie dinner and each time everyone would eagerly await Tom's non-speech. He was clearly the most beloved member of our group despite his distaste for saying anything in public.

In his bemusement he drew attention to himself or spoke in public lies the true measure of this great friend. Because in 84, and again in 97, as his season of passion, personal commitment, his driving sense of loyalty, that against all his other instincts drew him again into the line of fire. I will never forget the brilliance and eloquence with which he stood up to fight for me and for the honor of our service.

Again and again, Tom proved the real value of friendship. For all of us here this extended family, it will never be the same. No campaign of the future will be the same without you, Tom. No Doghunters' dinner will be complete without your knowing smile and blushing non-speech.

None of this in any way suggests that it was all peaches and cream. For all of us here, his extended family, they could see the sadness in his eyes that some said changed with Vietnam.

There were times when all of us around Tommy knew he needed a lift: but try as one could, his sense of self reliance and pride gave him a sixth sense that something was up and that you might find an answer to slide away or just tell you things were going fine even when they weren't. Joey tells me that stubborn streak came from their father.

But always he was the most generous in any group, ready to help another. So Michael, today, we his friends want to reaffirm to you what you must know: your father was enormously proud of you—loved you dearly—and knew that sometimes his own sense of pride about what he wanted for you prevented him from always living up to his own objectives. But nothing that he did or thought ever diminished his joy in you who are and his trust in what you will grow to be.

And now, everyone who knew and loved him here today, there is a special sorrow; because we all sensed that in his recent return to Massachusetts, Tommy had found a peace and purpose which had liberated him from any demons. He enthusiastically joined in telephoning friends for Chris Greeley's election party. He looked happy and engaged. I saw him a month and a half ago and he appeared more energized and happy than in some time. There was a gleam in his eye and we promised to get together soon. Chuck Tamakis, who has been taking care of him, said meant so much to him told me yesterday.

"He was filling the refrigerator with no-fat food, coming home early, and even cooking the meals."

Last year when our crew came together as a whole at election time for the first time in 27 years, we departed with the excitement that we were hooked up and on the road to growing old together. But God had other plans. And of all people we should not be surprised. Tommy always said at our Doghunter dinner that one thing we learned in Vietnam was Grace of God, every day beyond Vietnam was extra. Tommy had a lot of extra years for us but we were grateful.

So today, as we say goodbye, joined with his family and those he grew up with, what we, his friends, celebrate above all in Tommy's life is his special, gentle decency—a loyal, loyal friend of enormous heart who was generous in spirit beyond expectation and boundless in kindness.

To Radamar Seaman, Thomas M. Beloquio, to our friend Tommy: until we meet again, may you have fair winds and following seas; and in those days of peace and calm, have a rollicking good time; and sometimes beyond understanding.

And the look would tell it all: fierce determination; rollicking good fun; profound sadness. It was all peaches and cream for Tommy. We know it wasn't. His family and his friends was all peaches and cream for Tommy. We know it wasn't. His family and his friends will never forget the brilliance and eloquence with which he stood up to fight for me and for the honor of our service. And of all people we should not be surprised. Tommy always said at our Doghunter dinner that one thing we learned in Vietnam was Grace of God, every day beyond Vietnam was extra. Tommy had a lot of extra years for us but we were grateful.

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