

SENATOR LYNCH: Madam President, ladies and gentlemen of the Legislature, this is something I very seldom do, mostly because I don't have any high schools in my district or any banks. There is very little to honor except for the wonderful people that I have the privilege of representing. This is a wonderful person that we'd like to honor today. Many of us, including Jessie and Tim and all the rest of us from the Omaha caucus, knew Frank Menolascino very well. I've got to tell you back in October of 1968, at the Bohemian Cafe, Bob Perske who was then head of GOARK, Frank Menolascino met with me and mentioned that the state will no longer be charging back to the counties for the amount of money for caring for people in Beatrice that they have in the past and it would mean a 370 some thousand dollar break to Douglas County and to all the counties in proportion that we ought to think about using that money to change the system we had from just warehousing people in state institutions to developing local alternatives and there began, to be completely frank, he talked to the rest of the members of the board and we all agreed in Douglas County that we should start this local alternative. We cranked in Washington County, Dodge County, Cass County and we...and Sarpy County later on, agreeing that we should cooperate with each other across county lines. Later on all this regional concept was turned into the six regions as we now know them. But Frank Menolascino was a psychiatrist who worked for the state who deplored the conditions that people lived in. He took on the system. He took on those who he worked for to try to encourage change. He was a courageous man, he was a wonderful man. An awful lot of people knew him. If he were not in the circumstance he was, most of us feel that the alternatives we have for those who are disabled would not be what they are today. He forced us to consider the alternatives that we should have considered, but he did it in such a way and explained it so well that it almost embarrassed us into doing and accomplishing what we all know today as the six regional programs, but also, because of his encouragement, Nebraska, in effect, Douglas County were the first local communities in the whole country to start this kind of a program. He went on to become internationally renowned in the field of MR in particular, was president of the National Association for MR and internationally in Japan as well as in Europe, was asked for and, in fact, he gave advice to those countries as to how they could change their system for the better for the sake of those who needed this kind of an alternative to state institutionalization. So it's with regret that I stand today, because, for this honor, obviously it's