

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

April 13, 2006

100 years and there were three people who have been at both of them and that's Ernie and Chris and myself. And at the end of that day, I went down to the YWCA and took my granddaughter out of day care a little early so we could spend some time together. And we went up to the gym and we improvised a game where she ran out of her shoe and I would chase her and find her and then I'd offer her the slipper and it would magically fit her perfectly and we'd do it again and again and again. And then my daughter Melissa showed up about half an hour later and swept off my granddaughter. And I went home to take a nap. (Laughter) And it struck me that my daughter Melissa, now a mother of 33, was exactly Naomi's age when I was elected to the Nebraska Legislature, that exactly an entire generation had passed in my family from my daughter to my granddaughter since I've been here. My son went from an eight-year-old soccer-playing boy to a 36-year-old soccer-playing man who makes a good deal more money than I do and gets all the best parts in the plays around town. (Laughter) When I first came, my conservative Republican father would call me up and critique the arguments that I was making on the floor of the Legislature. And then when he died a number of years later, I was allowed to read his poetry on the floor in a resolution honoring him. And then when my mother died, I shared the condolences of my colleagues because I've been here for half of my life, a generation. The one fixed point in that passing of time, however, is my beloved wife Melodee, without whom I could not have spent a day in this Chamber. When I was elected, she was a young, beautiful, vibrant, smart, funny woman. And today, she's a young, beautiful, vibrant, smart, funny woman with a Ph.D. and a better job. (Laughter) Why would you spend a generation of your life sitting in those seats? Part of it's the colleagues, part of it is the people that we do this with. Chris and I were elected with Don Wesely and Tom Vickers, Peter Hoagland, Vard Johnson, Rex Haberman, Carol Pirsch, several appointees, Don Wagner, Harry Chronister, Bill Barrett, Ray Powers--and then more than 300 people later, all colleagues over the space of 28 years. Interesting, charming, delightful, aggravating, maddening people to share time with. It made the time go quickly. And the second reason you come here is, over time you realize how important the staff is to you and what they've meant to you being there and helping you. And you look back, in my case,