

John Glenn

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Dan Doherty, Kathy Bell, Harold Brazil, Kathy _____, Carol Bauer. *Mary Jane Veno*

After the maritime breakfast I walked over to the office with Dan Doherty and, after a group from Dayton came in, he asked me if I had any questions.

I asked him about the ^{phases of a} career. "People go through the phases you talked about at different rates of speed. With the turnaround in parties now, we have some people who have been here two years and find themselves committee chairmen. That's one of the unfortunate customs of the Senate, that we do not take the most experienced Senators, regardless of committee and make them the chairman. We take the most senior person on the committee, regardless of experience. For some of the new chairmen, their time of adjustment has been very compressed. The same thing is true of the whole Senate. I have been here one term and I'm number 41 in seniority. Of course, that and 25¢ will get you a coke out of that machine--but don't forget the 25¢. If the United States Senate has 59 people in it with less experience than I have, that's a bad situation for the country. And, here I'm skating on thin ice, but if those 59 are what the voters want, it means that we are not sending our best people to the Senate. We aren't sending the leaders of business or industry or any other group. Maybe we never did--not since the days of the founding. But to get back to your question. Everybody goes through a time when you are learning what the resources are, where the men's room is and how to get around. At that time you feel pretty unsure of yourself. Let me give you an example. The day I was sworn in my daughter went down to the gallery and brought this picture back to me (goes over

and shows me ^a picture of Daniel in the Lion's Den). That's exactly the way you feel. I don't care where you come from or what you did before you got here, there is something ^{aw} ~~gru~~esome about the Senate. It is the greatest legislative body in the world. Well, Congress is--but the Senate because of unlimited debate and its tradition is probably the most influential. Anyway, whether you are a governor, representative or lawyer, you feel a little bit like Daniel in the Lion's Den. It was so appropriate that I bought copies of this same picture and sent one to each of the incoming Senators. On my note I said, I know you feel a little bit like the picture right now, but this too shall pass.

"In my own case, when I came in everyone knew who I was. At least they all knew my name. I was concerned that I not get a reputation as a light-weight here--as someone who got in on his name and nothing else. So I dug into my committee work as hard as I could. And I think I got a reputation as a person who knew detail and who would do the drudgery of the Senate. A lot of committee work is drudgery. But 90% of the work of the Senate is done in committee. Only 10% is done on the floor. That's where you get some cross-pollination, when people not on the committee add ideas. But 90% of it is done in committee. Now, you don't neglect your home base during this period. I continued to go home to Ohio. In my first 6 years I averaged 62 days a year in Ohio. I suppose I stepped it up as reelection approached. There's a theory around here that your first and fifth years are the most important for your reelection. In your first year, people expect you to go away. So you come back to let them know you still care about the folks. Then you want to go back in the fifth year because if you don't come back till the sixth year people will be suspicious. I don't think there's much to it. But you surely do have to protect your home base."

"Have I told you about my theory of concentric circles of a Senator's responsibility? At the center is your home state and your responsibility to it. Then there is a larger circle--the country. You are not just a Senator from your state, you are a United States Senator. And you have a responsibility to the country. Some Senators put all their efforts into the smallest circle, making their interests here the same as the interests of their state. That probably helps them to get reelected--and it should. I suppose Senators from N.D., S.D. and Kansas can do that. I'm lucky that Ohio is really a microcosm of the country. (he describes it again--ethnic group, industry, farm land). I think that gives me more freedom to think about the country as a whole. And then the final circle is international. One in seven jobs in Ohio depends on international trade. That's the largest number of jobs--not percentage, but actual jobs--of any state in the country. I was shocked when I learned that. But that helps me to take an interest in foreign relations. So it's like dropping a rock in a pond that makes circles out from the center. The center is your home base; but that's not all there is."

I asked him what his greatest legislative success was. "There ^{are} ~~is~~ a whole lot of things we have ^{done.} Didn't we go through those things with you in Ohio? I suppose the thing I was most active in and best known for was the Nuclear Non proliferation Act of 1974. I worked with Percy on that. We wrote the act right here in the office. The bill was 3/4 mine and 1/4 his. And the Carter people had some ideas. I had been thinking about it for some time. My original bill had been too tough. But the Carter bill was a puff ball. So finally we all got together and worked out a bill we

could all support. It was a tough battle, but we got it through the Senate. I think I was most proud of that. But there were other things, too, energy, for example.

Does that sort of victory give you added confidence? "Yes, definitely. When you first come to Congress and you sit in committee, you have ideas that you keep to yourself. You believe that all the experts around know more than you do. So even if you disagree, you hesitate to speak up. That happened to me many, many, many times. But I began to notice that although the administration position was very different from mine at the beginning, little by little they would come around to exactly the position I had come to instinctively at the beginning. Annie--she's my biggest booster--would talk about that a lot. I'd come home fussing that 'I had an idea today, but I kept it to myself and at the end of the meeting, they came around to exactly what I had thought in the first place.' And she would say, 'See, I told you you kept still and someone else got all the credit' and so forth. And I would say, 'well, it's over and it will be good for the country.' But gradually after ^{the} ~~things~~ ^{a lot,} had happened, I began to get a higher ~~est~~ estimate of my own ability. My assessment of myself, changed, and I got more confidence in my ideas. I had given a lot of thought to foreign relations. It was not a committee assignment that was a passing fancy. I had some definite ideas. So I began to speak out, and I found that oftentimes lots of people agreed with me. That boosted my confidence level still further. By the end of the term, I had a good reputation in the committee. Now, this year, another metamorphosis has taken place. My reputation has begun to spread beyond the committee. In the past the senior members had been more or less the spokesmen for the Committee. Or, at least they were better

known. So that when we would come out of a meeting, the reporters would stick the microphones in their faces. They would talk and the rest of us down the line would either stand back and listen or go about our business. This year, Percy speaks for the majority side of course. But on the minority side, Pell is not the most loquacious person. I like him, but he's not as forceful as you would want to have speaking for you. Next in seniority is Biden. He has a reputation for being a gadfly. The reporters like him because he will make some wild statement that looks good in the papers. What I'm going to say may sound self serving, but I'm considered by reporters as more even keeled than the others. So I tend to get more attention from the press than anyone on our side. And I have no hesitation whatever in speaking up and saying what is on my mind. I'll give you another example. Last week I was asked to go on 'Good Morning, America' to talk about El Salvador. They wanted Lugar ^{and} ~~around~~ me. Five years ago I would have declined ~~despite~~ that great opportunity for national publicity. I would have thought 'I had better study up on El Salvador.' But this time, I accepted immediately, went over there and talked about El Salvador. And I got a good reception. Pat Leahy told me that he was in Florida and was just about to turn off his set when he heard I was going to be on. So he listened, and he said to me 'You put in words exactly what I have been thinking.' When you hear that from your colleagues, it boosts your confidence level. And it carries right on into the international realm. Two weeks ago I was in Munich for a conference on NATO matters. The German Defense Minister was there and top officials from all countries (he listed them). When I disagreed with what some of them were saying, I spoke up and made a speech. I talked as much as anyone there. And I found that about half the

participatns agreed with my point of view. That's pretty heady stuff. As your confidence level goes up, you do more. And when you do well, your confidence level goes up even more."

As he went through this last I thought of Jimmy Carter's notion that when he compared himself with others, he figured he could be as good a President as they and so he ran. I expected John to announce for President. It was as if he were steadily escalating the tests he was setting for himself and finally found he could hold his own in international company.

He did talk about 1984 in same terms he did earlier. "I'm doing more speaking in Ohio and nationally. On May 14th I'm speaking to the Cook County Democrats--14,000 of them. That ought to be as much fun as any political speech could be. But I'm not setting up organizations. If Reagan does well, and I hope he does, I'll support him. If, after a while, he has trouble, I'll speak out. As for 1984, I don't have any idea what will happen. We'll have to see what transpires between now and then. Meanwhile, I want to broaden my constituency. It will help me getting things done in the Senate, if nothing else. I wish I had started to do it two years ago."

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In ^{the} meeting with Dayton people, he unloaded (off the record) on Metzenbaum³. "I'll bet you can't guess who the greatest pro defense, pro budget cutting Senator is nowadays? He went down to Alabama a few weeks ago with his own camera crew to film himself with a hat riding around in a tank. He wouldn't let the army crew film it. He brought his own crew. We know where that film will turn up next! He's a person so has been as anti defense as he could be through his entire term."

When we ran against each other six years ago, he attacked me as not

being fit for the Senate because 'Glenn has never held a job.' He first said it before some labor group and they applauded him. So he started using it. I thought he was hurting himself by using it, because it was so unjust. It still makes the hair stand up on my back whenever I think of it. By the time we got to the Cleveland City Council debates, I had built up a real head of steam on the thing. So I got up and I said 'No I haven't held a job where you quit at 3:30 and take the gross receipts to the bank.' But let Mr. Metzenbaum go over to Arlington Cemetery and stand beside the graves of my buddies and then tell you that I've never held a job. Let him go to the VA hospitals and look at the wounded, the paraplegics who fought with me and come back here and tell you that I haven't held a job.' I listed five or six things like that, slammed the podium and sat down. I didn't care at that moment whether I got elected or not, I felt he had been so grossly unfair. The place erupted in applause. He got up and apologized and said he didn't mean it, and so forth. I got hundreds of letters supporting what I had said, and the story dominated the media for the rest of the campaign. Later he told someone it was the dumbest thing he had ever said in politics. He and I had run against each other before. But as far as I was concerned, this was the end of our relationship. This was the cutting point. (He knifes his hand downward.) Don't ask me what I hope happens in Ohio next fall. I'm a Democrat, ^{but} on that election, don't ask me. When Robert Taft was here, at least you had a man who kept his word and could be trusted."

Obviously he dislikes his colleague intensely. He took a personal attack very personally. I noticed at the maritime breakfast that representatives of the Glenn and Metzenbaum staffs sat on either side of me and did not speak to each other."

Re ideology - not "locked in to liberal or conservative and hope I never am." "Some Senators think of themselves as liberals or conservatives; I don't. I'm probably somewhere in the middle." I think you have to decide what's best for the nation given the times we are in. If there were money coming in and a surplus, I'd probably be as wild a liberal on spending as anyone around. But when conditions are what they are now, I'm going to be awfully tough to get along with on the same programs. It depends on the condition of the country. I'm not locked in to any ideological camp, liberal or conservative. I never have been and I hope I never will be."

Re social groups. "That's very important here. I don't do as much of it as I should. When I came here, I had been so used to attention that my idea of a big evening was to go home, put on my terry cloth robe and my fuzzy slippers and read or watch television. That was my idea of a real wild evening. So Annie and I don't do as much socializing as we should. We've been talking about it and have decided to have some get togethers every so often, invite a few people in. Just a few people, not cocktail parties, which I regard as an abomination on the American society. Sometimes we go out with a few other couples and talk about what's going on in the Senate and it's helpful when you get to the floor. These evenings may be announced as being devoted to some topic or we may just converse informally, in which case the conversation usually turns to something we are involved in. We should have done more of that than we have. I think we will."

"Since the Senate is called the most exclusive club in the world, people outside think we are all buddy buddy and see each other all the time. Nothing could be further from the truth. We see each other very seldom. I can come here all day and work here in the office and never see another Senator. People don't believe that, but it's true."

When the Dayton people--whomse excellent pilot project, on getting people off welfare, was being wiped out by budget cuts--left I asked him whether he had been getting a lot of that type of group, he said, "We've been deluged with groups like that. I only get to see about 10% of them; and the staff takes the others. I try to see a sprinkling of all the types of groups that come. Some senators might see only one type, the ones that will help them back home. I see some of each."

He then started to talk about the fact that "we have created a whole class of people who make their living off welfare." and that "the ^{core} ~~care~~ of people who can't make it on their own and need ~~help~~ ^{have} expanded out into a much larger group that could make it if they weren't dependent on that government check." "I have a sister, an adopted sister. It was an adoption that didn't work out well, because it was found that she was below normal intelligence and couldn't hold a job. She can get along by herself, but she never held a job for more than two weeks, waitressing or making beds in a motel. She was a constant worry to my mother. Before she died I promised my mother that even if I had to go in hock I would see to it that Jean was taken care of. So we take care of her. She lives in Tennessee, in a mobile home and she's fine. We send her a check every month. But what would happen to her if she wasn't taken care of by us. The government would have to help her. Those are the people that need help and must get help. Surely, the richest nation on earth has enough compassion to help people like that. But not the much larger group that lives off welfare."

An old boyhood chum came in to say hello and he talked about Annie, when they asked about Annie. Said she had had a "wonderful experience with her speech therapy." "She was what they call an 85% stutterer. That meant

she had trouble with 85% of the words. She had never given a speech in her life on any subject, at any length at any time. In school, you remember, she used to be excused from speaking. She was bound and determined she was going to make campaign speeches last year. So she got a little five minute speech on a card and we practiced it and practiced it. It was like climbing Mount Everest for her. She gave it on Memorial Day at some observance, a speech so short nobody would notice it. It was a wonderful thing. Later on, she gave 20 minute speeches. And the most thrilling thing of all was the letters she got from all over the country saying that she had given them hope."

At the Great Lakes Maritime Day Breakfast, I noticed a House-Senate difference. There were 8 Congressmen and one Senator present. Someone at each table introduced the congressman and Senator Percy (and the office aides of the congressmen or senators) and after all the introductions, there was a general applause. Whereupon the MC said "We are honored to have such a good representation of public officials, especially by the presence of U.S. Senator Charles Percy of Illinois." Then he got a big round of applause. Then after two speakers, he was asked to say a few words--and he was not on the program at all. He said he had been taught the meaning of clout by Mayor Daly and was going to use it on behalf of Great Lakes shipping. Said he had spoken to Haig about getting Canadians to agree to keep the lakes open 11 months a year (applause). Said he had to go "will the gavel" in the Senate and he left - more applause. The eight congressmen sat there and were blanketed by Percy. I talked about it with Dan Doherty on the walk back. He thought it was numbers, tradition, and sense of distance people feel toward Senator back home that accounted for it. Some multiple of size of body and size of constituency, taken together, might capture it.

A rareness in Washington plus lack of familiarity back home measure?

Glenn has a framed hand printed letter from a kid on the table next to his desk. At the top of the letter it says "Eloy Rodriquex" and it read "Dear Crongress, Thank you for all you gave us. But we want more money." I laughed and he said "Dear Crongress--that sums up so much of what Washington is about that I just had to frame it. It came from Toledo."

He and the Dayton woman, a County Commissioner, Paula — talked about getting him figures so he could make case that they save more money than they spend. She said, "There is this mania out here. Everyone wants to cut everything. Is there anything a Democratic Senator can do?" "I want to try. I was so impressed when you showed me what you were doing--by the success you had and the savings you made. It's just what I had always thought we ought to do. I couldn't understand why we hadn't been doing this all along. It's so ridiculously simple. I want to make a report. I want to make a speech on the floor. I want to try to get it in to the committee. We're much better off if we get it in the Committee. On the floor, it will come out of someone else's hide." "We can run our program on our savings. We don't need the grant. Can we work anything out that way?" "How many people would you need to take off the welfare rolls to make your programs self sustaining?" When we go back we'll get the staff cracking and get specific amounts and numbers to you. "I think we can build a strong case if you think there's anything we can do."

In midst of this he stands talking about inflation and gets off on his energy storage kick. "I'm a bug on enough storage. If I could have one wish, it would be to develop a capacity for energy storage." He blasts money for R & D being cut in the area because we won't get energy independence till we do basic research on storage. He meets with the Secretary of Energy. "I

clouded up and rained all over him. I said the budget cuts were penny wise for this budget and pound foolish for energy independence. They are ~~hacking~~ the devil out of it. That's what we're up against."

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When I first got there, he got his speech writers on the intercom, and they were talking about a potential op ed article he had given to Reston to take back to NY. They were trying to figure out how long to wait before trying to publish it elsewhere. Decided to wait that day and no more, since article was perishable. But it reflects a kind of "one-step behind pace" that I sometimes detect in Glenn. He got off the intercom and said to me "Ever since Reagan announced his plan, I had been jumpy about what it was supposed to do for business and what it wasn't doing for business. So I started writing something and we fussed over it here for about a week, sending it back and forth among the staff and to me. I'm afraid we fussed for too long. I saw Scotty Reston and he said he'd take it up to the Times and suggest it is an op ed piece. But by now everybody else may be saying the same thing. We may have lost our chance."