

Stan Clark left big shoes for the next senator to fill

The untimely death Saturday night of Oakley's Stan Clark closed a remarkable political career.

In a decade in the Kansas Senate, Mr. Clark surprised us again and again.

He won the 40th District seat in a coup against the "moderate" wing of the Republican party, regular Republicans who thought the post pretty much belonged to them. He won re-election twice, and likely would have won again this fall.

His quiet demeanor and serious nature belied a keen political sense. Opponents usually underestimated him.

He won the seat in a special Republican convention called after Sen. Sheila Frahm of Colby resigned to become lieutenant governor under Bill Graves. Mrs. Frahm, who left the state house to replace Bob Dole in the U.S. Senate when he ran for president, was a key figure in the moderate wing in these parts. And that group thought it had a lock on her seat.

When the delegates convened, though, Stan Clark had the votes.

When he ran for re-election, the moderates usually thought they could beat him. They were wrong.

His position as a conservative left Mr. Clark at odds with the more liberal Senate leadership much of the time, but he became an effective and knowledgeable senator. No one had a better grasp on the state budget or what it meant

to people in this area. Colleges remarked that he actually read all the bills and caught many errors.

Stan Clark grew to know the budget and the legislative process as well as anyone. Even those who disagreed with him knew him as a man of good will and personal integrity.

As a legislator, Mr. Clark was available to those he represented. He spent long hours on the road, traveling to Topeka and back, and toured his vast 15-county district — covering the entire northwest corner of the state — each year.

In Topeka, he gained seniority and became a committee chairman. The moderates may have thought him a bumpkin, with his thick glasses and his personal commitment to his religion — he was a member of the Dunkard Brethren Church — but those who knew him called him a kind and decent man. His boyish grin and sandy hair won many friends.

Stan Clark was a rare politician, honest, hard-working, knowledgeable. His passing leaves his seat up for grabs.

The voters will pick a suitable candidate to take his place, but it will be some time before his successor can fill his shoes.

There was even talk that he might have run for president of the Senate next year.

His opponents, undoubtedly, would have underestimated him.

— Steve Haynes.

Citizen testimony backed bills

Editor's Note: This is part of a column was written by the late Stan Clark just days before his death in a dust-induced traffic accident on I-70, rounding up accomplishments of the Kansas Legislature.

What did the Kansas Legislature accomplish in 2004? Really, a number of bills that addressed substantive policy issues are now law and I thank you for your involvement and assistance.

Many of you were personally involved in legislation this session and you are to be commended. I know I was asked to review and edit more testimony this session than probably any since I have had the pleasure of serving in the Senate. I personally believe that citizen testimony is the best, because you not only know the facts, but speak from the heart relating stories of personal experience.

I testified personally in six committees this session. In some of those, I testified multiple times, and in all but one instance, I was testifying in support of the proposed bill. I can tell you that an offense is more enjoyable than testifying against various proposals and trying to minimize the adverse and generally unintended effects on rural Kansas.

Economic Development

Two years ago, I wrote in one of my newsletters about a new concept in "economic development." The word "develop" comes from a French word that means to unravel or to unfold. The French word comes from a Latin word that has its origin from a word that refers to the coat on the back of a sheep which translates as "a tangled mass of wool." Therefore the word "develop" has to do with an act of finding what is already there by unraveling and opening up.



Letter from Topeka

By State Sen. Stan Clark
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For many years, legislators could justify any position by using rhetoric that it is "for the children" or "for economic development." Many government programs have been created to advance economic development, and most involve infrastructure that enhances transportation, communications, housing, utilities and planning, and providing grants and loans to help new businesses.

It is difficult for a community to survive without any of these, but they are worthless without people to use them. For the past two years, there have been three pilot projects to build the capacity of people to utilize the infrastructure.

This truly involves a change in attitude. No longer do we expect people to rely on an outside expert, a "sage on the stage," or an artificial preconceived vision that is sold to a community with a top-down approach. The focus for development is bottom up, from within the human heart, head and hands of individuals.

Communities have worked with the Sirolli Institute, which pioneered an economic development approach that is called "enterprise facilitation." Enterprise facilitators start with no plan and a firm directive to initiate nothing. They make it known in an economically struggling town or neighborhood that they are available to help — in confidence — anyone with a dream of starting a business.

The belief is that in every community, no matter how small or economically depressed, there will exist some people for whom a unique work in which they may or may not yet be skilled is a passionate driving force. Also, within that same community, are others who possess the skills necessary to assist in developing, testing and transforming the idea into a successful business.

Does it work? The first experiment was a town on the seacoast of Australia in 1985. Five hundred of the 8,500 citizens were out of work, the tuna industry was a shambles, the people demoralized. The fishermen, businessmen and government officials didn't trust each other.

In relatively short order, a sushi processing plant was developed to provide jobs and purchase tuna at 30 times the price the fisherman had been getting from the cannery. By 1989, the town had 45 new enterprises, and since then 335 more businesses have been created. Hundreds of communities in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States have modeled this approach.

We can see some success stories in this area where an idea is now a business.



America must finish the job

Memorial Day.

Time to honor the fallen, the heroes and victims of a dozen wars from the Revolution to the roads and mountains of Iraq and Afghanistan.

The flags at the cemetery, the salutes, the honors, they're fine. But there should be more.

It's great to honor the Greatest Generation, who saved the world from a dark age. But we need to honor the troops fighting in hostile lands today.

And we need to give them more than lip service. They deserve our prayers and out wholehearted support.

There is something more important yet.

We need to honor America.

It's time to shed the image of America the imperial power or America the loser.

It's time for us, as Americans, to realize that we have to lead the free world because there's no one else out there willing to take up the burden.

And we need to recognize that freedom still has many enemies. We do not live in a nice, neat little world where justice comes to the world



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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even as American justice comes to us.

Despite the fall of communism and the waning of dictatorships and evil around the world, there is plenty to fear. Plenty to fight. Plenty to defend.

That's what our troops are doing in Afghanistan, in Iraq and a dozen other places around the world. They have launched into a war against terror and evil, whether it's al-Qaida or Saddam Hussein.

Above all, it's time for America to finish what it starts.

We fought to a tie in Korea, and felt lucky to escape with that.

We lost in Vietnam. There's not time enough here to debate the why or the wherefore.

We quit the Gulf War with Saddam still in power, still killing

and torturing and dropping poison gas.

Now we are engaged in a battle against forces which want to drive us back into isolation and do God knows what mischief in their part of the world.

We can debate tactics and even leadership, but we need to win this fight. If we don't defend the world against terrorist and evil, just who will?

The best way to honor our troops is to give them the support they need. This is war. Losses have been light, but they will continue.

The men and women who are fighting this war for us believe in their cause. We should, too.

We should not be sending soldiers out to die in any cause we do not have the will to win.

Storms stir a mother's instinct

Just give me one more really long night, plus a couple of naps, and I think I'll be caught up on my sleep and over my jet lag.

Travel experts tell you to keep your body on the same "clock" as where you live. That's fine if you're staying in a hotel where no one else is disturbed if you are up and rambling about. It's entirely different if you are a guest in someone's home and your internal clock wants to get up at 6 a.m. (which is not an unusual hour), but it's only 4 a.m. where you're staying.

I did a lot of early-morning and late-night reading while I was at Patty's last week. In fact, I finished a book I picked up at Halley's house called "The Red Tent." It was a fictional book based on Biblical fact, written from a woman's point of view. The time frame began with Jacob's appearance at the well of Laban. Then it covers his marriages to Leah and Rachel and to secondary wives, all the children begat through those marriages, and finally the family's ultimate downfall.

Strange, I could never keep all the children and wives of Jacob straight, but after reading their history written this way, relationships are a lot more understandable.

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When I was a kid, my family would sit on the front porch and watch the thunder and lightning dur-



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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ing rain storms. So, I've never understood people's fear of weather, but Saturday night almost changed my mind.

Jim and I had been in town, 20 miles west of our place, when we saw the dust cloud boiling up in the south. Heading for home, we kept watching the storm, which was keeping up with us at 65 miles per hour. I dashed into the house just as the wind hit, but Jim was determined to cover some lumber and secure the garbage cans. All I could do was watch as he leaned into the wind, trying fruitlessly to lash things down. I had visions of tree limbs knocking him senseless. (It didn't help that the night before we had been to the movie, "Day After Tomorrow," with its doomsday storm scenes of destruction.)

Jennifer and Alex were camping with friends at the lake and I called to warn them of what was heading their way. Jennifer said later that they barely had time to stow their

gear and get inside their vehicle before it hit.

I know she got tired of me calling to check on them, but when your kids are "in harm's way," you can't help it. The only fatality was their dome tent. She said the fiberglass poles snapped like toothpicks.

—ob—

A little kid was asked, "Why did God make mothers?"

His reply, "She's the only one who knows where the Scotch tape is."

From the Bible

But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king; at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation. Jeremiah 10:10

Graduate enjoyed alumni reunion

To the Editor:

Did you all have a great time Memorial weekend? Well, if you didn't, I did! Yours truly traveled up to Oberlin, for our 50th high school reunion on Saturday.

Oberlin has an all-school reunion every Memorial weekend at The Gateway, a large building on a hill south of U.S. 36. Our class had the most attending. Now, that is amazing! I thought we'd be the oldies, but there were quite a few there for the 60th and 70th!

In our class, Wanda Welliver Porter came the farthest, from Kaiula Oahu, Hawaii. The class of 1979 had the longest trip, an alumnus from Cyprus. I was surprised to find out our principal was still living — 101 years old. He also was our driver's ed teacher. He would have us drive downtown to get the mail and newspaper — then read it while we cut corners too short, ran up over curbs, etc. Must have had nerves of steel!

Each anniversary class is supposed to provide some entertainment. Of course, ours was the best, with Phil Law's trumpet solo of the melodies of the '50s. It's hard to believe that it has been that long since we were wearing black-and-white saddle shoes, bobby socks, rolled-up jeans and Dad's white dress shirts. The high school singers and dancers could have competed right with some of Broadway's shows, except they looked like they were having more fun!

Meanwhile, as this was all going on, we were in the midst of a Kansas storm, dirt, high winds, banging objects, dimming lights. Oberlin is known as being in "Tornado Alley." There were at least 400 or 500 people there, so really there was nowhere to go for safety. But it blew over, I think down to Tribune.

Since some of us had to park so far away from the building, volunteers brought their golf carts to run the alumni to their vehicles. Leaving the

building in that situation, my driver was the town doctor, so I decided if we blew over, he would fix me up! One sad note. Our senator, Stan Clark, was killed in a wreck in that same storm.

On my way back Sunday afternoon, I detoured over to Colby (since it looked like another dirt storm was brewing) to shop a while, hoping by the time I was finished it had blown over.

Shopping at times can be so stressful, especially when there's a lady blocking the aisle, sniffing perfumes. Then I go to check out and there's that lady and her husband ahead of me with a broken sack of charcoal, making a mess on the floor!

Well, Dave and Cindy Olson, did you get back to Tribune OK?

Colleen Paddock Lemman
Tribune, Class of 1954

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