

## As Others See Him

Heading back to Waterloo after a football game played in the rain in the early twenties, Arch W. McFarlane and hundreds of other motorists became mired in the mud on the road between Iowa City and Cedar Rapids. McFarlane was forced to accept the hospitality of a farm couple living near the highway.

Some thirty years later, considerable statewide publicity was given to a dinner staged by the Pioneer Lawmakers Association and a group of friends in honor of McFarlane. Among the congratulatory messages he received was one from this farm couple who had remembered all those years the friendly man who had stayed with them that rainy night.

The incident illustrates McFarlane's remarkable capacity for friendship. That has helped to make him, of course, the legislator who has served longest in Iowa history; but it has also brought him a host of friends far outside his own constituency.

He has kept in touch with many legislators who served with him in the past; and the respect of such men is illustrated by the tribute written by E. R. Hicklin, now a federal judge:

Arch McFarlane is one of the great living men of the state, and is entitled to every honor that can be bestowed. I feel that it was one of the great privileges and advantages that I had as a young man to serve in the Iowa Senate while he was the lieutenant governor of the state, and to have the great benefit of his counsel and leadership. It would be almost impossible to estimate the measure of his contribution to the public good of the state of Iowa.

Another man who appreciated McFarlane's friendship as a legislator was United States Representative Karl M. LeCompte. He wrote to McFarlane:

When I came to the 37th General Assembly in 1917, you were . . . one of the leaders and respected members of the General Assembly. You have continued with increasing influence down through the years, and your guiding hand has shaped much constructive legislation.

Lloyd Thurston, a former United States Representative, paid tribute to McFarlane's organizing abilities:

The man who can consolidate and harness the talents of others makes a valuable contribution to his time. Arch McFarlane could weave a fabric of legislative rules, called laws, into practical guides for conducting the business and interests of his state. We love the man for his modesty and for his legislative talents. May he long enjoy the fruits of his labor.

But expressions of appreciation for McFarlane's long service have not come from men in public life alone. Myron N. Blank, president of the

Central States Theater Corporation, wrote in 1956:

I do want to take this opportunity of telling you how I appreciate the many wonderful services that you have rendered the people of Iowa. I know this has been a personal sacrifice to serve so many years in our state legislature, but men such as you that are devoted to public service help make our state a wonderful place to live.

But, however gratifying such tributes from men of political or business stature must be, any good legislator's greatest satisfaction comes from expressions of appreciation by constituents whom he has served. Of the many thousands of such letters which McFarlane has received during his career, one is chosen here as an example. It is from the widow of a Waterloo police officer killed in the line of duty:

I read recently of your ardent appeal to the Iowa Senate for passage of the "death benefits bill." I understand that your speech was an outstanding one, and I would like to send you my "thanks" for your efforts.

As the widow of the late police officer, William Mehlhorn, I naturally feel the importance of this bill, not especially for my sake, but for the wife of any police officer or fireman who might in the future be confronted with a similar unfortunate experience.

Please accept my sincere thanks for your tremendous efforts.

Respectfully yours,  
Mrs. Wm. Mehlhorn.

Such responses indicate that, while a man may

not get rich serving in the General Assembly of the State of Iowa, he can accumulate a vast wealth of satisfaction in the good he can do. Those who know Arch McFarlane best find that letters such as the one from Mrs. Mehlhorn are adequate evidence for him that a long life of public service provides unique rewards.

DAVID DENTAN