

**Senator Hollings Retirement Dinner
To Benefit the Hollings Cancer Center at USC
September 13, 2004
Washington, DC
By Senator Ted Stevens**

It's a great honor to wish our good friends Peatsy and Fritz well tonight. Catherine is hosting an event I scheduled before we learned of this dinner; she sends her best.

Fritz and I have served together in the Senate for 36 years. I thank you Fritz for the work we've done together on medical research, defense issues, telecommunications, oceans policy and many other issues. We've worked hard. We've also had our share of fun with travels together all over the world.

On the first Senate trip to China in the 70's, I returned to where I served in World War II, and not only did we have to contend with a major earthquake, but we found that in each city we visited our group attracted literally hundreds of thousands of Chinese following behind us to get a glimpse of that "tall guy with the shining silver hair and the funny language."

Fritz and Peatsy have also visited Alaska with me. We were fishing on the Kenai River one year and I leaned over and said to Fritz, "You know, I was fishing in this exact spot once and I caught a 190-pound salmon."

Fritz looked at me and said, "You don't say. That reminds me of a time I was out fishing and my line snagged on an old pirate ship. I brought up an old ship's lantern with the candle still lit."

I told Fritz, "I'll take 100 pounds off the salmon if you blow out the candle."

I'm not going to lay it on too thick, Fritz, for I recall you telling me: "Stevens, if B.S. was music you'd be a brass band!"

Fritz, you not only served your state with distinction as governor and senator, you made the run for the presidency. You know, one evening during the presidential primary season Fritz and Peatsy came into the Senate Dining Room having just come back from Iowa. Catherine and I asked Peatsy how the campaign was going and she said, "I think everything will be OK as long as we can teach Fritz not to say DEZ Moines."

One thing you may not know about Fritz – he's been a leader among our Senate colleagues in maintaining a healthy lifestyle while balancing a busy life in the Senate. It's no accident that his office is the closest to the Senate gym.

Maintaining his lean physique, Fritz often casts a critical eye on some of us who try to keep up with him. After a sailing trip through the islands, I returned to the gym feeling quite rested, tanned and fit until Fritz took one look at me and barked out, "Good God, Avalanche (his nickname for me), what did you do? Eat your way through the Caribbean?"

By the way, I call him "Tidewater".

Earlier this year, my press secretary got a call from Senator Hollings staff asking me to appear in the video you will see in a few minutes. When she came into my office to tell me about the request, I told her, "I'm sorry but I can't imagine a Senate without Fritz Hollings."

Thank you Fritz for serving your state and our nation so well, and I thank Peatsy and their children and grandchildren for sharing Fritz with us for so long.

Catherine and I wish you all the best and envy you the time on your wonderful beach at home. You and Peatsy are always welcome to come fish for our Alaska salmon if Peatsy promises to bring her wonderful jalapeno jelly.