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Dedicated to Senator Robert C. Byrd

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WEST VIRGINIA LAW REVIEW

Dedicated to Senator Robert C. Byrd

This Issue of Volume 108 of the West Virginia Law Review is dedicated to United States Senator and West Virginian Robert Carlyle Byrd. Currently serving his eighth consecutive term in the United States Senate, Senator Byrd is arguably one of the institution's most influential members. In his nearly forty-eight years as a United States Senator, he has demonstrated his leadership skills while serving as President pro tempore, Majority Leader, Majority Whip, and Minority Whip of the United States Senate as well as Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee and Secretary of the Democratic Conference.

While meeting the demands of being a United States Senator, he became the first sitting member of either House of Congress to start and finish the requirements for a law degree while serving in Congress. In 1963, after ten years of study, Senator Byrd earned his law degree from American University where he graduated *cum laude*. In 1994, Senator Byrd was awarded his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science from Marshall University.

In addition, Senator Byrd has published a number of books including *Robert C. Byrd: Child of the Appalachian Coalfields*, *Losing America: Confronting a Reckless and Arrogant Presidency*, *We Stand Passively Mute*, and *Senate of the Roman Republic: Addresses on the History of Roman Constitutionalism*. Also, Senator Byrd has written a multi-volume work entitled *The Senate*, which is a narrative of the history of the United States Senate. This work was inspired by Senator Byrd's interest in the rules, precedents, and history of the United States Senate, and was written to help instill in the members of the Senate as well as the public at large the importance of the Senate's role in the United States government and the institution's contribution to our nation's history.

Senator Byrd has been recognized for his leadership and dedication to public service. In 1983, he received the "Horatio Alger Award," which honors an outstanding American that is a "dedicated community leader who demonstrates individual initiative and a commitment to excellence." In 2001, Senator Byrd received what he characterized as his greatest honor when West Virginia Governor Bob Wise and both Houses of the West Virginia Legislature named him "West Virginian of the 20th Century." Also, in 2003, he received the "Eleanor Roosevelt Freedom From Fear Award," which is presented annually to those who have demonstrated an achievement of the principles set forth in the four freedoms speech given to the United States Congress on January 6, 1941, by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Senator Byrd was born on November 20, 1917 in Wilkesboro, North Carolina. There, he was born to Cornelius and Ada Sale who named him

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Cornelius Calvin Sale, Jr. Less than one year after his birth, his mother, Ada Sale, died of influenza. Young Cornelius was given to his mother's sister and her brother-in-law, Vlurma and Titus Byrd. The Byrds adopted the young child and changed his name to Robert Carlyle Byrd.

In 1920, the Byrd family moved to West Virginia. There, a young Robert Byrd learned the value of education, and in 1934, he graduated valedictorian of his high school class from Mark Twain High School in Stotesbury, West Virginia. Upon graduation, the Byrd family lacked the money to send him to college. Thus, he took a job first as a gas station attendant, then as a produce boy. Taking full advantage of these jobs, Byrd acquired a great number of skills, including meat cutting and welding, which he used to improve his standard of living.

Byrd began his political career in the West Virginia House of Delegates, where he served two terms before running for the West Virginia Senate. Half way through his first term in the state Senate, one of West Virginia's representatives in the United States House of Representatives decided not to run for reelection. Senator Byrd recognized this as an opportunity to serve his state at the national level and decided to seek the vacant seat. Byrd served three terms in the House of Representatives before running for the United States Senate.

Senator Byrd was married to his high school sweetheart, Erma Ora James, for nearly sixty-nine years. She passed away on March 25, 2006, after battling a long illness. In speaking of their relationship on the occasion of their 65th wedding anniversary, Senator Byrd stated: "Erma and I are complete and whole, a total that is more than the sum of its parts. In my life, Erma Ora Byrd is the diamond. She is a priceless treasure, a multifaceted woman of great insight and wisdom, of quiet humor and common sense." They are the parents of two daughters, Mrs. Mohammad (Mona Byrd) Fatemi and Mrs. Jon (Marjorie Byrd) Moore. Senator and Mrs. Byrd have six grandchildren: Erik, Darius, and Fredrik Fatemi; Michael (deceased), Mona, and Mary Anne Moore. Additionally, they have five great-granddaughters: Caroline Byrd Fatemi, Kathryn James Fatemi, Anna Cristina Honora Fatemi, Emma James Clarkson, and Hannah Byrd Clarkson, and one great-grandson, Michael Yoo Fatemi.