

**2008 John E. Burton Lecture**  
University at Albany  
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by Congressman Michael R. McNulty

“I’m Coming Home”

Thank you for joining me today. It is a very happy day for me and my family.

I am pleased to announce that when my 10th term in the United States House of Representatives expires in January of 2009, I am coming home to the people and the community I love so much.

Words could not adequately express the gratitude I feel today. Surely, I am one of the luckiest people on the face of the Earth.

Paralyzed by Polio in 1949 at the age of two, God granted me a near-complete recovery.

I have been blessed with a loving family, wonderful friends, and a career that I have thoroughly enjoyed.

I have been elected to public office in five different decades, beginning in 1969. I have been honored to serve as Town Supervisor and Mayor of my beloved home town of Green Island, as a member of the New York State Assembly, and for 10 terms as a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives -- longer than anyone has ever served in this seat.

It has been a wonderful life so far, and I look forward to beginning the next chapter.

The main reason for making this decision now, is that I want to come home. I do not intend to stop working, but I do want to have a job where, when Monday morning rolls around, I am not headed to the airport. In short, I want to be with my family.

And while not the main reason for this decision, my physical condition is a factor. First, let me state that my overall health condition is excellent. I undergo a comprehensive physical examination every year, and my doctors predict that you are going to have to put up with me for many years to come.

I do, however, have Post Polio Syndrome (PPS). It does affect my stamina, and, to some extent, my mobility. I am back to wearing my brace on my right leg -- just as I did as a young boy. And I am using an electric scooter to travel the lengthy halls of the Capitol.

My condition has not yet affected my ability to do this job, but I know that some day it could. I have too much respect and reverence for this job -- and the people who gave it to me -- to wait for that to happen.

So I will leave at the end of this term, knowing that I gave my wonderful constituents my best efforts for twenty years.

I asked that you come here today, so that I could publicly express my gratitude:

--to God for the many blessings which have been bestowed upon me;

--to my constituents for their constant and overwhelming support;

--to all the committee people who walked the streets, year after year, with my nominating petitions;

--to the working men and women who volunteered on our campaigns over the past four decades and;

--to all who contributed to our campaigns, so that an average citizen, who does not possess personal wealth, could serve in the halls of Congress.

Consider my good fortune. I have been elected to public office for almost 40 years. Next year I will complete 20 years in the U.S. House of Representatives. I rank 68th in seniority out of 435 Members of the House, I am a senior member of the Ways and Means Committee, and Chairman of the Subcommittee on Social Security.

And in my last election to Congress in a seven county district, five of which are controlled by the other party, my constituents gave me:

-- victory in every county, city, town, and village;

-- 78 percent of the vote, my biggest victory ever and;

-- the highest number of votes cast for any congressional candidate -- of either party -- in the entire State of New York.

I can't thank you enough!

I want to give special thanks to my staff: Charlie Diamond and all our District Staff, and David Torian and all our Washington staff. Through the years I have always referred to "our" accomplishments, not "my" accomplishments, because they have always been the result of a "team" effort. And no one could ask for a better team than the one I work with.

That team has brought literally hundreds of millions of dollars to our district for health care, education, transportation, economic development, and other projects. And they accomplished this under-budget, returning to the taxpayers from our office budgets -- so far -- over \$2.7 million (exact figure, through 2006, is \$2,779,430.69).

And, finally, I want to thank my family, especially:

-- Nancy, with whom I just celebrated 36 years of marriage earlier this month;

-- our children, Michele, Angela, Nancy, and Maria for the sacrifices they made so that I could pursue this wonderful career and;

-- all the other members of my family, and Nancy's -- past and present -- who supported me every step of the way.

That support is best exemplified by my Dad -- commonly referred to as Big Jack. One of my colleagues once told me I was extremely lucky to have a Dad who represented me at countless events in the district, while I was working in Washington. I said, "You're right. When my father represents me at an event, it's just as good as me being there myself." I'll never forget my friend's reply, "Oh, it's MUCH better!"

My friends, please recognize the Dean of public officials in the Capital Region, having been elected to public office in seven different decades, beginning in 1949, my Dad, Jack McNulty.

So, my friends, I look forward to serving my 20th year in Congress, and then to the opportunities which may lie ahead when I come home.

Many of you know that I am fond of quoting Governor Al Smith, who was famous for saying "let's look at the record." My record clearly demonstrates that I have been truly blessed.

To all who have helped me -- and who continue to do so -- I extend my deepest gratitude.

Thank you.