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**News Release**

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**Gale issues statement on death of Virginia Smith**

LINCOLN – Nebraska Secretary of State John Gale issued the following statement in the wake of the Jan. 23 death of former Congresswoman Virginia Smith:

I have a sad heart and a profound sense of loss after learning of the death of former Congresswoman Virginia Smith. We were great friends and allies during her active political years.

I served as her Lincoln County chairman in her first congressional race in 1974. She convinced me to run for state chairman of the Republican Party in 1985. She was my honorary chairwoman in my congressional primary race in 2000. We worked on many projects.

She was always delightful. Her charm, grace and energy would always radiate like a warm, bright light. Her intellect and mastery of subjects were legendary.

Virginia visited every county in the Third District during every term of office over 16 years of service, no easy task. Haven would drive, and she would work in the backseat at an improvised desk as they went from town to town. She knew many of her constituents by heart, and their children as well.

She won her first race by a small margin but thereafter won every race hands down. She loved people and loved to serve her district. She was as true a public servant as has ever served this state. She became known simply as Virginia.

Virginia fought valiantly for Nebraska agriculture, and for the small towns and small businesses of rural Nebraska. There wasn't an airport in need or a proposed post office closing that she didn't focus her considerable energies upon to save.

Her radiant smile and goodwill for the people she served will never be forgotten. God bless her and Haven, whom she called the “wind beneath her wings.”

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