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Dedication to William Thomas Hart

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Dedication to William Thomas Hart

The articles and proceedings of the symposium published in this volume are dedicated to William Thomas Hart. Mr. Hart's contributions to American trade policy over the last half-century, his dedication, his professionalism, and his integrity merit far more; however, dedicating the words that comprise the printed record of the symposium is in a small way a fitting tribute to one of the giant's of postwar American trade policy.

The exceptional details of Mr. Hart's life and service to the United States are set forth below in a tribute offered by Congressman Sam Gibbons, a former Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and longstanding Chairman of the Trade Subcommittee of the Ways and Means Committee. Chairman Gibbons, like Mr. Hart, is a member of the Greatest Generation, both of whom served in World War II. The tribute was offered on the Floor of the House of Representatives on April 17, 1996, a few weeks after Mr. Hart retired from his position as Director of the Office of Executive and International Liaison at the U.S. International Trade Commission:

Tribute to the Career of William Thomas Hart

Hon. Sam Gibbons of Florida

In The House of Representatives

Wednesday, April 17, 1996

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, Dedication. Integrity. Professionalism. Wisdom. Humility.

These are attributes that we hold in high esteem and seek in those who lead us. It is reassuring to recognize some of these attributes in individuals; it is remarkable when we can recognize all of them in a single individual. I would like to take a few moments to tell you about William Thomas Hart, one such individual.

This month marks the second anniversary of the signing of this century's most comprehensive multilateral trade agreements, the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). It also marks the first April since 1949 that the U.S. Government will not be able to call upon the expertise of William Thomas Hart.

For over fifty-three years Mr. Hart has served this country, first as a young naval officer in World War II, then as an outstanding civil servant. In July 1948, Mr. Hart joined the staff of the U.S. Tariff Commission, now the U.S. International Trade Commission, beginning a distinguished career of public service in the trade field that would span almost fifty years before his retirement in February 1996.

Mr. Hart specialized in the somewhat arcane but critically important area of tariff negotiations. He most recently served as the U.S. International Trade Commission's (ITC) Director of the Office

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of Executive and International Liaison, responsible for planning and directing the ITC's activities in support of U.S. trade agreement negotiations and implementation. During his years of service he advised U.S. trade negotiations in all of the principal rounds of multilateral negotiations conducted under the GATT. He was also a key adviser in the negotiation of the United States-Israel Free Trade Area Agreement, the United States-Canada Free Trade Agreement, and the North American Free Trade Agreement. His wise counsel and encyclopedic knowledge of events, both large and small, in the field of international trade have been sought out by in-numerable government officials and business executives both here and abroad.

Not only did Mr. Hart provide invaluable advice during the course of negotiations, but when the trade negotiators' work concluded, Mr. Hart's most lasting contributions began. For example, after the hundreds of trade negotiators, gathered in Geneva for the signing of the Uruguay Round agreements, had congratulated themselves on their success and returned to their capitals, Mr. Hart and a small number of his colleagues turned to the critical task of translating the political results of the negotiations into tangible benefits for U.S. businesses, workers, and consumers. Mr. Hart was personally responsible for the production, under very stringent deadlines, of almost 2,500 pages of documentation necessary to record our international tariff commitments and update our tariff schedules. Mr. Hart meticulously checked and cross-checked every line of information in these documents to ensure the United States commitments were accurately represented and new tariff rates properly calculated. This is but one example of the dedication and professionalism that Mr. Hart exhibited throughout his long career.

Mr. Hart's contributions and the critical support he provided to the agencies responsible for U.S. trade policy have been recognized by the President's trade representatives, from Christian Herter, the first Special Trade Representative, to Mickey Kantor. The ITC also recognized the exceptional talents and dedicated public service of Mr. Hart by twice awarding him that agency's highest honor, The Commissioners' Award for Exceptional Service.

Mr. Hart's service to his country and to his fellow citizens deserves our recognition and our praise. Bill, congratulations on your retirement. You did your job well, and you did it with care and pride and warmth. Your sense of honor, as well as your vast historical knowledge of trade negotiations, will be greatly missed. Your career serves as a fine example for your colleagues and for the generations of Government employees who will follow in your path.

There are many anecdotes that illustrate Mr. Hart's exceptional experience and contributions to the postwar trading system. To offer just one example, in 1987, the Commission was being packed up and moved from its former location near the National Portrait Gallery in Northwest to its new building at 500 E Street Southwest. Mr. Hart's personal files were so voluminous that the Commission hired an archivist to assist in the process of cataloguing, boxing, and moving the materials. One afternoon, the archivist stumbled across an onion-skin copy of the Havana Charter — the forerunner agreement of the GATT — with Mr. Hart's handwritten interlineations.

Mr. Hart, on behalf of all the participants of the symposium, and all those who have worked in the field of international trade, all those who care about American trade policy, and all those in our country and around the world who benefit from a world of expanded trade governed by strong and fair rules of trade, we thank you and we salute you.

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