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Fresno Bee (California)

October 6, 1999 Wednesday, HOME EDITION

SECTION: METRO, Pg. B6, EDITORIALS

LENGTH: 397 words

HEADLINE: Carrying on Maddy's work;
Fresno State institute is dedicated to improving public policy.

BODY:

The need for the Kenneth L. Maddy Institute of Public Policy is critical, especially considering the state of politics today. It seems opponents must not only disagree on issues, but also must hate one another for daring to have different opinions. This scorched-earth style has not only driven down voter turnout, but has discouraged young people from becoming public servants.

We must turn back from this governmental cynicism. How can we expect our leaders to govern when we are constantly telling them that we don't trust them?

The Maddy Institute should help change some minds. The institute on the California State University, Fresno, campus will be a training ground for public servants dedicated to improving their communities and this state.

It could not have been named for a better public servant. During Ken Maddy's 28 years in the Legislature, he showed that a politician could vigorously disagree on policy matters, but also respect an opponent's position. He also knew how to compromise, and brokered many legislative stalemates, especially when it came to the state budget.

Maddy, a Republican, preached that politics is an honorable profession and those who believe in representative government must encourage good people to go into public service. It never serves us well to consider all politicians scoundrels.

"The need for outstanding public servants has never been greater," CSUF President John Welty said. The institute, which will open in the spring, was created by a bill by state Sen. Chuck Poochigian, R-Fresno, who succeeded Maddy. Because of Maddy's popularity, the legislation sailed through the Legislature. The institute will be a part of CSUF's School of Social Sciences.

This is not an honor created because Maddy is suffering from cancer. He earned it through his strong representation of the Valley and the state over almost three decades. Maddy wants the institute to focus on how legislation gets passed and not on the partisan battles that currently dominate politics. "In the Valley, we worked together regardless of party," he said. "We put Valley interests first."

We have disagreed with Ken Maddy on policy from time to time. But we have always admired and respected him. He's a first-class gentleman who dedicated his career to improving the Valley. We hope the institute bearing his name will continue his work.