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Fresno Bee (California)

February 26, 2002, Tuesday FINAL EDITION

SECTION: LOCAL NEWS; Pg. B2

LENGTH: 438 words

HEADLINE: Late senator continues to attract praise Admirers honor Ken Maddy with monument at state Capitol.

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DATELINE: SACRAMENTO

BODY:

Two years after he succumbed to lung cancer, longtime Central Valley politician and thoroughbred racing enthusiast Ken Maddy still is drawing crowds and raking in accolades from legislators and lobbyists.

Lawmakers from both political parties, along with Maddy's family and friends, gathered Monday to unveil a small monument on the grounds of the state Capitol honoring the late senator from Fresno.

Maddy, who died Feb. 19, 2000, represented the Valley in the Legislature for 28 years before term limits forced him from office in 1998.

Senate President John Burton, a liberal San Francisco Democrat who was a close friend of Maddy, said it was a loss to the state that the popular Republican -- who placed third in the GOP gubernatorial primary in 1978 -- never captured California's top job.

"One of the great tragedies of the state of California is that we never had Ken Maddy as a governor because I think he would have been a great, great governor," Burton said.

Maddy was serving his final months in the Legislature when Burton was elected Senate president pro tem in 1998.

"One of the greatest tributes paid to me," Burton said, "was when people were asking Ken about how he felt about leaving ... and he said one of the things he regretted is that he and I wouldn't be able to work together for a long time."

Maddy's son Don, a Sacramento lobbyist, said he never thought his dad would become such a well-known part of state history.

"If you think back to the early years of dad's career, there's no way we could imagine this ever happening to him," Don Maddy said.

"He was elected in 1970, right when the Democrats took over the Legislature, he was in the minority his entire career ... his greatest accomplishment in the Assembly was making the California dog-faced butterfly the state insect, which is what he got all his claim to fame for back in the early years."

Monday's memorial was the latest in a long line of tributes for Maddy after his departure from the Senate. He was diagnosed with lung cancer shortly afterward in 1999.

The Kenneth L. Maddy Institute of Public Policy at California State University, Fresno -- Maddy's alma mater -- opened in 2000 and is a public service think tank, Valley political history repository and a public-servant training ground.

Among other Maddy namesakes are a stretch of Highway 99, the Senate lounge where the ruling Democrats conduct their political caucuses, a veterinary laboratory at the University of California at Davis and an annual high-stakes horse race in Arcadia.

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GRAPHIC: JOSE M. OSORIO -- SACRAMENTO BEE Retired Sen. Robert Beverly tells stories of his friend, Ken Maddy, at a dedication of the Kenneth L. Maddy Memorial in Sacramento Monday. Sen. Maddy, who died in 2000, was honored for his work in politics by colleagues and friends. The memorial is located on the east side of the state Capitol.