

Lindsey Graham—a senior senator with ‘the right stuff’

Within the past two years, South Carolina has lost two towering figures in the United States Senate: Strom Thurmond and Fritz Hollings.

It's no secret to anyone that strong representation in the upper house of Congress is vital to every state, including ours. Thankfully, Lindsey Graham is already making his mark as our senior senator despite the brevity of his time in office. Given his track record as a member of the House of Representatives, this should come as no surprise.



Bill
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Recently, Sen. Graham once again set the tone for his time in office with his role in the confirmation hearings of attorney general nominee Alberto Gonzales.

I don't share a lot in common with Sen. Graham, but one thing we do share is pride in our service as JAG officers in the armed services. I served for four years in the Army JAG Corps during the Vietnam War.

As the war grew less popular with those in and out of uniform, it was a time of great turmoil within the armed forces. Even so, I remember with pride our commitment as military lawyers to the rule of law and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. We took our duties and responsibilities very seriously, both as military officers and as officers of the court.

When the Abu Ghraib prison scandal broke last year, I am certain that thousands of current and past military lawyers must have felt the same pain and shame as I did that such conduct could occur on anyone's watch. The stark contrast between the conduct of military personnel at Abu Ghraib and the overall professionalism of today's all-volunteer Army

only makes it worse. How could this have happened? This debacle has provided recruiting fodder for Islamic terrorists beyond the wildest dreams of even Bin Laden himself.

I believed from the outset, and still do, that serious failures well up the chain of command contributed to the mindset that allowed this disaster to occur. And beyond Abu Ghraib, there is disturbing evidence our government has engaged elsewhere in conduct “tantamount to torture” in the diplomatic words of the International Red Cross. This conduct undermines the very human rights we claim to be defending and promoting as President Bush seeks to spread democracy in the Middle East and elsewhere.

A few weeks ago, I happened to catch a portion of Alberto Gonzales' Senate confirmation hearings on C-Span, just as Sen. Graham had begun questioning him. With utmost courtesy paired with steely firmness, the senator grilled Gonzales about his involvement in the administration's policies regarding the interrogation of prisoners. Gonzales, knowing his confirmation was assured by the Republican majority, bobbed and weaved, refusing to answer Sen. Graham's very direct and pointed questions.

The sad reality is that torture had been committed in the name of the American people. I know it; Sen. Graham knows it. But I'm not in Congress and he is. He did the right thing, pressing Gonzales to account for his dubious representation of the president as White House Counsel. Undoubtedly, some of the Republican colleagues who gave Gonzales the white glove treatment at the hearings probably wished that Sen. Graham had gone easy on the nominee, but he didn't.

These days, Washington, D.C., is heavy with politicians and lobbyists, awash in campaign contributions and way too light on statesmen. In Lindsay Graham, the people of South Carolina have sent a statesman to the Senate. In a federal government dominated by one party and likely to remain that way for years to come, his courage and independence of mind will be sorely needed and often tested.

***Business Journal* welcomes new executive editor**

It is my great pleasure to introduce our new executive editor, Bob Bouyea.

Bob comes to us from West Palm Beach, Fla., where he worked for LRP Publications, a business-to-business publishing company.

Bob worked at LRP for over six years as editorial director for the general and special education group, overseeing the content of 18 newsletters and related products, including books, Web sites and videos.

Before joining LRP, Bob was editor of the *Daily Times* in Pekin, Ill. Under his leadership, the paper received numerous awards for editorial excellence. His newspaper experience also includes work as a reporter for the Peoria, Ill., *Journal Star* and for other newspapers in Illinois and California.

All of us at the *Business Journal* are excited about having Bob on board as our executive editor. We look forward to working with him and expect him to make a significant contribution to our continuing efforts to improve the paper to better serve our readers and the region's business community.

Bob, his wife Annette and their two daughters moved from Florida to Dorchester County in late December. We hope you will join us in giving Bob a warm Lowcountry welcome.