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# Husch Blackwell Mourns the Passing of Ike Skelton

## **Loss of Military Defense Expert and Advocate for Service Men and Women, Public Servant, Gentleman**

With much sorrow, Husch Blackwell announces the death of Partner Ike Skelton. Skelton served with distinction as United States Representative and House Armed Services Committee Chairman and joined Husch Blackwell in March 2011.

Husch Blackwell Chairman Maurice Watson reflected on Skelton's storied career: "Ike Skelton was our law partner, and we, joined by many, including generations of service men and women for whom there has never been a more fierce advocate in Congress, are saddened today at his passing. He led an exemplary life of public service and was a national hero. His commitment to our country, the State of Missouri and the men and women who serve our nation in the military was unsurpassed. Ike honored us by concluding his professional life as our partner. Our prayers and condolences extend to Ike's devoted wife, Patty, and his family."

Skelton officed in Husch Blackwell's Kansas City, Mo., and Washington, D.C., locations. Washington, D.C. Office Managing Partner Steve Kupka shared these sentiments: "Chairman Skelton was a great American. He was loved and respected by Republicans and Democrats alike, and his long career in public service was rooted in a deep commitment to and affection for our country. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him. His true spirit of bipartisanship during his tenure in Congress should serve as an inspiration for members of Congress today. We send our prayers to the Skelton family during this difficult time."

Skelton grew up in northwest Missouri, graduating from Wentworth Military Academy and Junior College in Lexington, Mo., in 1951. Although a childhood

bout with polio prevented Skelton from serving in the military, he found other ways to support our nation's troops.

He earned his law degree from the University of Missouri in 1956. Early in his career, he served as prosecuting attorney and a special assistant attorney general (1957-1960). He won his first election in 1971, when voters chose Skelton to represent them in the Missouri Senate. In 1977, he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from Missouri's Fourth District and served until January 3, 2011. Skelton was Ranking Member of the House Armed Services Committee from 1998 until 2007, when he took the gavel as its Chairman.

While in Congress, Skelton was instrumental in enacting the groundbreaking Goldwater-Nichols Act, legislation that simplified the chain of command, reduced inter-service rivalries and implemented shared procurement processes between the military branches. More recently, Skelton drafted and helped shepherd through Congress the Weapons Acquisition Systems Reform Act, reform-minded legislation to overhaul the defense procurement process and limit cost overruns and schedule changes.

Skelton continued his advocacy and involvement in military matters at Husch Blackwell and received several awards, appointments and recognitions for his military and community service.

In 2011, President Barack Obama appointed Skelton to the American Battle Monuments Commission, and he received the title of Honorary Admiral from the U.S. Navy Supply Corps. He received the Harry S. Truman Good Neighbor Award for service to his community and his nation, and the West Point Military Academy Thayer Award for exemplifying the U.S. Military Academy motto "Duty, Honor, Country" in 2012. Earlier this year, Skelton was recognized by the Missouri Bar Foundation with its Spurgeon Smithson Award for his lifetime contribution to the administration of justice, and he was named chairman of the national commission formed to mark the centennial of World War I. Skelton's memoir, "Achieve the Honorable," had been published within the past month.

He is survived by his wife, Patty, and his three sons. His first wife, Susie, passed away in August 2005.