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### **The last words of the term-limited**

My problem with legislative term limits has nothing to do with the loss of veteran lawmakers' experience or their knowledge of how to get things done at the state Capitol. Staff, lobbyists and journalists will take care of that. The greater loss will be the comments -- funny, outrageous, perplexing -- uttered by the more colorful and quotable representatives and senators, whose public service is drawing to a close.

Their places will be taken by newcomers more circumspect about saying anything unscripted that might draw a laugh or trigger a thought. Until that blander day comes, here's to the wit and wisdom of the term-limited, the likes of which we may never hear again.

Opening the legislative session, House Speaker Joe Salter referred to last year's controversy over members voting their colleagues' machines, saying, "Vote your own machine. You've got to vote your own machine at least for a week."

"I feel like I've been here since Huey. I feel like he's still here." -- Rep. Charlie Lancaster

"Thank you for funding the Primate Center. For these term-limited legislators that will be our future home when we leave here." -- Rep. Warren Triche on the appropriations bill

"I don't know of anyone down here I wouldn't trust with anything I got, except my wife." -- Rep. Lelon Kenney on an ethics bill

"I have a picture of it in my mind but I don't have it with me." -- Rep. Gil Pinac

"I see your point and it is reasonable for a change." -- Rep. Willie Hunter to Rep. Shirley Bowler

"They are learned and they are good looking. But today they are about as ugly as they can get." -- Rep. Hunter on the authors of income disclosure bill

"Mr. Daniel, you're bright, but you're not accurate." -- Rep. Francis Thompson to Rep. William Daniel

"The longer I stay here, the dumber I get, because I don't understand a word you're saying." -- Rep. Jack Smith on an explanation of Medicaid eligibility rules

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Rep. Troy Hebert: "Mr. Richmond and I stayed up all night a couple of times working on this bill."

Speaker Salter: "You and Mr. Richmond may have stayed up all night, but you weren't working on the bill."

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"I should leave town more often." -- Gov. Kathleen Blanco, after the House voted to raise the spending cap while she was in Washington

"Mr. Adley, you were at the wrong depot when the train left the station." -- Senate President Don Hines to Sen. Robert Adley on the budget bill

"The only way this bill gets to the governor's desk is if she leaves the window open and the wind blows it in." -- Rep. Hebert on a bill to weaken the building code

Rep. Jim "Fannin went down and made a deal. . . . They got the ham and we got the squeal." -- Rep. Hebert

"They'd steal the smell out of your underwear down in New Orleans." -- Rep. Triche on crime in the city

"It is easier to get Dorothy and Toto to meet the Wizard of Oz than it was to get you guys to answer any phone calls." -- Rep. Triche to the manager of Office of Risk Management

"If you can't explain it in 30 seconds, you better not do it. . . . It's gonna take an infomercial to explain that." -- Rep. Hebert to those opposing his amendment granting tax credits

"We have in opposition several people who usually don't speak to each other, so this ought to be interesting." -- Rep. Lancaster on lobbyists opposing the disclosure law

"I am no longer looking for justice; I am looking for mercy." -- Sen. James David Cain on effects of Stelly plan on his personal finances

"As they say in the military, I'm so short I could walk under that door." -- Sen. Robert Barham on the approaching end of his Senate service

The final words go to the House's longest-serving member, Rep. John Alario, which should guide those who come later: "In this business, you're only satisfied until tomorrow . . . and then it's another day."

(John Maginnis)