

**STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS
UPON THE DEPARTURE OF COMMISSIONER DEBORAH T. TATE
DECEMBER 30, 2008**

Today we celebrate our good fortune in having had Debi Tate as our colleague for the past three years. I use the term “celebrate” because even though this is the final formal assemblage of this particular Gang of Five, Debi is always an upbeat person looking ahead to how she can make a difference in the lives of the public she has chosen to serve for so many years. This chapter in her career of public service has been in many ways extraordinary, but it is just that—a chapter in a book still being written with other chapters yet to come.

Commissioner Tate is justly known for the work she does on behalf of children and families, fighting for a media environment that appeals to the better angels of our nature. She has also led a charge for broadcasters and advertisers to cut back on peddling unhealthy foods that contribute so measurably to our country’s crisis of childhood obesity. Something tells me she will continue to pursue these family-friendly causes in the years ahead. I certainly hope so because she brings passion, experience and commitment to these issues. And when Commissioner Tate is enlisted for a cause—and that is often—she signs up for the long haul. That’s the kind of dedication she brings, and we need, in public service.

Commissioner Tate’s term here was also marked by intense involvement in the myriad of issues surrounding Universal Service. As Chairwoman of the Joint Board, she worked hard to craft recommendations to broaden the objectives and enhance the operations of the Universal Service Fund. The Joint Board had been considering these issues for years, but it was under her leadership that recommendations were actually produced and presented to the FCC. Her ability to work effectively with the Joint Board was enabled by her own experience as a state commissioner in her beloved Tennessee. She understood that it would take real partnering between state and federal members to forge the recommendations and she worked to create that kind of environment. More even than that, she knew first-hand that we needed to do a better job in bringing Twenty-first century communications not just to rural America, but throughout the country.

So often the Commission’s work comes down to taking a broadly agreed upon objective and making sure a particular item does what it is supposed to do. Commissioner Tate made a practice of coming up with ideas that added a human dimension that others of us may have missed. On those issues where there was sometimes fundamental disagreement—and we had some of those—she was never disagreeable. Neither of us would try to paper over our differences on some of the important media and telecom issues confronting us, but she was always willing to meet and discuss and entertain alternative suggestions, and she is, as we all know, invariably collegial and pleasant to work with.

For all this—and much more—we thank Debi. We thank her wonderful spouse, Bill, and her children, Will, Taylor and Carlton, for sharing her with us and supporting her all

along the way. Most of all, we thank Debi for her dedication to serving the American people, for her efforts to make the FCC a better place to work, for all the good things we know she will accomplish as the road rises up to meet her in the years ahead, and for just being . . . you. I hope we will have many opportunities to work together and to enjoy the friendship we and our families have forged these past three years. We're going to miss you.