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RENSSELAER

REMEMBERING JOHN TOBIN JR.



John Tobin Jr. sits with his four daughters.

PHOTOS PROVIDED

The founder of Yankee Trails passed away Saturday

By Nicholas Buonanno nbuonanno@digitalfirstmedia.com City Editor

RENSSELAER, N.Y. » The family of John Tobin Jr. said they will carry on his legacy by following his principles of hard work, dedication and never letting anyone outwork you.

John M. Tobin Jr., 84, died Saturday, Feb. 2 at Rosewood Gardens in East Greenbush.

Born in Albany; he was the son of the late John M. Tobin and Anna M. To-

bin. John and his family started Yankee Trails in 1957 with two buses. Sixty years later, he grew the motorcoach business into one of the largest operations in the Northeast. A lifelong resident of the city of Rensselaer, Tobin met and married Mary Franklin of Troy. The couple had seven children who have now taken over Tobin's first love, Yankee Trails.

Tobin got into the bus business after working with his uncle, who owned a bus company in the city

TOBIN » PAGE 2



John Tobin Jr.

"He had a lot to be thankful for and he always felt that he should give back to the local community."

— Steve Tobin, CEO of Yankee Trails and a son of John Tobin Jr.

STATE OF THE UNION

Trump, Dems squabble prior to speech on unity

By Julie Pace AP Washington Bureau Chief

WASHINGTON » The bitter partisanship of the past two years was on full display Tuesday as President Donald Trump was to call for optimism and unity in his State of the Union address.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York seems to have triggered the latest Trump twitter outburst when he said on the Senate floor that the president talks about unity in his annual addresses to the nation but "spends the other 364 days of the year dividing us." He accused Trump of "blatant hypocrisy."

Minutes later, Trump tweeted that Schumer hadn't even seen the speech and was "just upset that he didn't win the Senate, after spending a fortune."

Skepticism was already expected from both sides of the aisle for Trump's televised address to lawmakers and the nation. Democrats, emboldened after the midterm elections and the recent shutdown fight, see little evidence that the president is willing to compromise. Even Trump's staunchest allies know that bipartisan rhetoric read off of a teleprompter is usually undermined by scorching tweets and unpredictable policy maneuvers.

The deeply personal attacks show the challenge for Trump as he attempts a reset with Congress. Still, the fact that his advisers feel a need to try a different approach is a tacit acknowledgment that the president's standing is weakened as he begins his third year in office.

UNITY » PAGE 2

NATION

Turmoil over governor tests Dems' zero-tolerance policy

By Nicholas Riccardi Associated Press

The denunciations began within hours of the disclosure that Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam's medical school yearbook page featured a person in blackface standing next to a person in a Ku Klux Klan outfit.

Democratic activists and presidential contenders quickly called for his resignation. By the time the Democratic governor held a press conference to defend himself, both the national and state party had also demanded he leave.

Northam has refused to step down so far — he says he's not in the photo. But the pressure he faces highlights his party's insis-

tence on policing its own when it comes to wrongdoing related to race and, in some cases, sexual misconduct. As the Republican Party has frequently shied away from disciplining or expelling its own members, Democrats have largely embraced a hard line.

That stance allows Democrats to draw a stark contrast with President Donald Trump and other Republicans who have made racist or sexist remarks. It's also a response to the demands of an increasingly diverse Democratic Party whose staunchest supporters are African-Americans and women, whose last president was a black man and who has two black people, one Latino and several women running for president.

"We can't call out Donald Trump, we can't call out Steve King, if we're not walking the talk," said Karine Jean-Pierre of MoveOn, a group founded in the late '90s to fight impeachment proceedings against President Bill Clinton over his affair with a White House intern.

The contrast with King, an Iowa Republican congressman, is one Democrats are eager to make. King had a long history of controversial rhetoric about immigrants, but it wasn't until he defended white supremacy in an interview with The New York Times last month that Republicans in Congress moved to strip him of committee assignments and called for his resignation.

NORTHAM » PAGE 2



STEVE HELBER—ASSOCIATED PRESS

In this Feb. 2, 2019, photo, Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam, left, accompanied by his wife, Pam, speaks during a news conference in the governor's mansion in Richmond, Va. Democrats are hoping there's a silver lining to the Northam mess — that it shows they won't tolerate racism. Every level of the party has condemned the Democratic Virginia governor and demanded he step down.

COMMUNITY

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THE RECORD

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Numbers evening: 6-4-3
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Win 4 evening: 7-3-6-5
Monday
Pick 10: 1-2-5-8-9-10-12-13-19-21-23-27-

28-40-42-44-48-53-68-78
Take 5: 1-6-15-17-20
Saturday
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Tobin

FROM PAGE 1

of Rensselaer. After his uncle got out of the bus business, Tobin then purchased Wager's Bus Line and then started Yankee Trails.

Shuttle service between Albany and Vermont put the company on the map and continues to run today. Motor coach charter services made up a large part of the company's business and still does today. Over the years, the company has seen considerable growth and is now one of the largest tour and charter motor carriers in the Northeast.

"[I learned] the hard work that goes into [the business]," said Steve Tobin, CEO of Yankee Trails and a son of John Tobin Jr. "He always used to say and it's totally true, 'You know, you don't have to be smarter than your competition, but you do have to outwork them', so he lived by that. Saturdays and Sundays were really just two extra days to get a jump on the competition, he was always working, always thinking about the business and always talking about the busi-

ness. Family and business were the only two subjects that he ever really wanted to talk about."

Steve Tobin said his father was in and out of Albany Medical Center over the last year. He also mentioned how his father recently had some blood on his brain.

"I don't think he wanted to die, but he felt comfortable with what he had done [in his life]," he said.

John Tobin Jr. is survived by his loving wife Mary F. (Franklin) Tobin; his children, Elizabeth (Kenneth) Harmer, Theresa (Joel) Keens, Michael (Laura) Tobin, Kathleen (Jeffrey) Adams, John (Jamie) Tobin, III, Stephen (Angela) Tobin and Erin (Steven) Duckett; his grandchildren, Matthew and Mary Harmer, Andrew and Benjamin Keens, Emma and Brian Tobin, Kayla, Christopher and Alex Adams and Lucas, Zachary, Mark and Eric Tobin; his siblings Anne Tobin Ashe, Edwin J. Tobin (Beverly) and James D. Tobin (Darlene). He is also survived by several nieces and nephews and his sister-in-law, Catherine Sheridan.

After many years of hard work, he transferred his passion to gardening his

property, overlooking Lake George. His cocker spaniel, Daisy, was always by his side.

"He did a lot for the community," said Steve Tobin. "He had a lot to be thankful for and he always felt that he should give back to the local community."

Tobin's family said that he was also an avid Siena College basketball fan and could frequently be seen in Section 121 of the Times Union Center. He also enjoyed Notre Dame football and watching his thirteen grandchildren play various sporting events and other activities.

"He loved Siena basketball, and my whole family loves Siena basketball," said Steve Tobin, who took over the business roughly 15 years ago. "We actually all went to the game [Monday] night, and they did a moment of silence at the game for my father, so that was really nice."

Steve Tobin said that as he grew older and moved up in the ranks of the business that he had realized all that his father had to go through over the years to run a successful business.

"We talked about business, and we talked about my kids," he said. "Growing



PHOTO PROVIDED

John Tobin Jr. passed away Saturday.

up, he was a tough guy to live with; it was his way or the highway; he was pretty stringent, but then when we became business partners working together, I started to see all of the headaches he was going through and you could understand a lot of his pain and suffering... it made me respect him even more and I'm genuinely going to miss his friendship."

In 2017, the 60th anniversary of Yankee Trails, the company launched their re-branding campaign, dropping "World Travel" from their name and introducing their new logo and "Let's Go" slogan.

"[We want] to continue on what he started, make



PHOTO PROVIDED

A look at an old The Record newspaper article featuring John Tobin Jr.

the business better, and listen to what the customers want," said Steve Tobin.

The funeral mass for John Tobin Jr. will be held on Thursday, February 7, 2019, at 10 a.m. in St. John the Evangelist and St. Joseph Church, 50 Herrick St., Rensselaer. Relatives and friends are invited and may call at the church on Wednesday,

from 4 to 8 p.m. Interment will follow the mass in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, East Greenbush.

Those who wish may make memorial contributions to Bus Stop Club Inc., to 10 Siena Lane, Rensselaer, NY 12144 www.busstopclub.com, or St. John the Evangelist and St. Joseph Church.

Unity

FROM PAGE 1

The shutdown left some Republicans frustrated over his insistence on a border wall, something they warned him the new Democratic House majority would not bend on. Trump's approval rating during the shutdown dipped to 34 percent, down from 42 percent a month earlier, according to a recent survey conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

White House press secretary Sarah Sanders indicated the president would highlight what he sees as achievements and downplay discord.

"You're going to continue see the president push for policies that help continue the economic boom," Sanders said Monday night while appearing on "Hannity" on Fox News. "You're also going to see the president call on Congress and say, 'Look, we can either work together and get great things done or we can fight each other and get nothing done.' And frankly, the American people deserve better than that."

But Washington's most recent debate offered few signs of cooperation between Trump and Democrats. Un-

der pressure from conservative backers, Trump refused to sign a government funding bill that did not include money for his long-sought border wall. With hundreds of thousands of Americans missing paychecks, Trump ultimately agreed to reopen the government for three weeks to allow negotiations on border security to continue.

With the new Feb. 15 funding deadline looming, Trump is expected to use his address to outline his demands, which still include funding for a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. He's teased the possibility of declaring a national emergency to secure wall funding if Congress doesn't act, though it appeared unlikely he would take that step Tuesday night. Advisers have also been reviewing options to secure some funding without making such a declaration.

"You'll hear the State of the Union, and then you'll see what happens right after the State of the Union," Trump told reporters.

Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, said he remains hopeful Congress can resolve the dispute.

"Democrats can call it a fence, the president can call it a wall and then we can call it a day, which I think is



EVAN VUCCI—ASSOCIATED PRESS

In this Feb. 1, 2019, photo, President Donald Trump speaks in the Cabinet Room of the White House in Washington. The White House says Trump will call for optimism and unity in his State of the Union address, using the moment to attempt a reset after two years of bitter partisanship and deeply personal attacks.

one way of skinning the cat," said Cornyn, who is a close adviser to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

The president's address marks the first time he is speaking before a Congress that is not fully under Republican control. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who won plaudits from Democrats for her hardline negotiating tactics during the shutdown, will be seated behind the president — a visual reminder of Trump's political position.

In a letter Monday night to House Democrats, Pelosi wrote that she hopes "we will hear a commitment from the President on issues that have bipartisan support in the Congress and the Country, such as lower-

ing the price of prescription drugs and rebuilding America's infrastructure."

In the audience will be several Democrats running to challenge Trump in 2020, including Sens. Kamala Harris of California, Cory Booker of New Jersey, Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Kirsten Gillibrand of New York.

Another Democratic star, Stacey Abrams, will deliver the party's response to Trump. Abrams narrowly lost her bid in November to become Georgia's first black governor, and party leaders are aggressively recruiting her to run for Senate.

Schumer earlier previewed Democrats' message for countering Trump, de-

claring Monday, "The number one reason the state of the union has such woes is the president."

While Trump was still putting the final touches on the speech Tuesday, he was expected to use some of his televised address to showcase a growing economy. Despite the shutdown, the U.S. economy added a robust 304,000 jobs in January, marking 100 straight months of job growth. That's the longest such period on record.

Trump and his top aides have also hinted that he is likely to use the address to announce a major milestone in the fight against the Islamic State group in Syria. Despite the objections of some advisers, Trump announced in December that he was withdrawing U.S. forces in Syria.

In a weekend interview with CBS, Trump said efforts to defeat the IS group were "at 99 percent right now. We'll be at 100."

U.S. officials say the Islamic State group now controls less than 10 square kilometers (less than 4 square miles) of territory in Syria. That's down from an estimated 400 to 600 square kilometers (155 to 230 square miles) that the group held at the end of November before Trump announced the with-

drawal, according to two officials who were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

However, a Defense Department report released Monday said the Islamic State group "remains a potent force of battle-hardened and well-disciplined fighters that could likely resurge in Syria" absent continued counterterrorism pressure. According to the Pentagon, the group is still able to coordinate offensives and counteroffensives.

Administration officials say the White House has also been weighing several "moonshot" goals. An announcement is expected on a new initiative aimed at ending transmissions of HIV by 2030. "He will be asking for bipartisan support to make that happen," said White House counselor Kellyanne Conway.

Trump's guests for the speech include Anna Marie Johnson, a 63-year-old woman whose life sentence for drug offenses was commuted by the president, and Joshua Trump, a sixth-grade student from Wilmington, Delaware, who was allegedly bullied because of his last name. They will sit with first lady Melania Trump during the address.

Northam

FROM PAGE 1

Looming even larger is Trump, who fanned the racist conspiracy that Barack Obama wasn't born in the United States, said a federal judge couldn't rule on a lawsuit against him because he was "Mexican," has been accused of sexual wrongdoing by 19 women and reportedly used a profanity to describe countries that send black immigrants to the U.S.

When it comes to Trump, a 72-year-old white New York billionaire, contrast is everything for Democrats. On Tuesday, they'll answer his State of the Union address with a response from Georgia's Stacey Abrams, a 45-year-old who narrowly lost her bid last year to become America's first black female governor. They'll invite guests who represent key Democratic agenda items — climate and the environment, immigration, LGBTQ rights, the plight of federal workers — to watch from the gallery.

The distinction from Trump is especially crucial for Democratic presidential contenders. All the declared candidates — and

most of those eyeing a campaign — called on Northam to resign. There have been precious few Northam defenders, but a handful argue he is being prejudged. Former Virginia Rep. Jim Moran decried "a rush to judgment" on CNN on Monday, while former Connecticut Sen. Joe Lieberman told the cable network that Northam "has a chance to prove what is his essence, not to rush him out of office for what is, unfortunately, political reasons."

Some Democrats bristle at the notion that politics played any role in the revulsion at Northam. "Booting electeds from office who have worn blackface is not about purity," said Rebecca Katz, a Democratic strategist. "It's about what's right."

The last prominent elected Democrat pushed out of office by his own party was Al Franken, the Minnesota senator who resigned after weeks of internal pressure over sexual harassment allegations in 2017. The Franken departure came as Democrats were still smarting over Trump's election in the face of numerous sexual harassment and assault allegations. He was replaced in the Senate by another Democrat, Tina Smith, who was

overwhelmingly re-elected in November.

Similarly, Democrats lose nothing by jettisoning Northam because they'd maintain control of the governor's mansion: The next in line is Democratic Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax.

But the Virginia turmoil also illustrated the complications of the zero-tolerance approach.

Fairfax on Monday strongly denied allegations of sexual assault that were initially circulated on a conservative website, calling it a "smear."

The woman accusing Fairfax has retained Washington, D.C., law firm Katz Marshall & Banks and is consulting with the firm about next steps, said a person close to the legal team who was not authorized to speak publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity. One of the firm's founding partners, Debra Katz, represented Christine Blasey Ford, who accused Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh of sexually assaulting her decades ago when they were teenagers. Kavanaugh denied the allegation and later was confirmed to the court.

The Associated Press is not reporting details of the Fairfax allegation because

the AP has not confirmed it.

If Northam were to resign and Fairfax were not in position to assume the office, the governorship would go to the Democratic attorney general, a set of dominoes that has unleashed chaos in Virginia's capital.

Democratic presidential aspirants were notably silent on Fairfax. The party also stood with Keith Ellison as the then-congressman successfully ran for Minnesota attorney general last year despite allegations that he had abused an ex-girlfriend. Ellison also strongly denied those accusations.

In a sign of the cross-currents Democrats are navigating, multiple liberals asked not to be quoted when discussing the contrast because they were skeptical of the allegations but did not want to be seen as disbelieving people who reported sexual misbehavior.

Sexual harassment allegations have also rattled the potential presidential field. Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, who is mulling a second presidential run, apologized to staffers for sexual harassment allegedly committed by workers on his 2016 presidential campaign. On Saturday, Montana Gov.

Steve Bullock, another possible Democratic contender, apologized for not stopping a staffer he fired for sexual harassment from landing a job in the New York mayor's office.

Still, the Northam case stands out, said Guy Cecil, head of Priorities USA, a major Democratic super PAC and one of the Democrats who immediately

called for Northam's ouster when the yearbook photo first appeared.

"There's no question that we need to be thoughtful about when we're approaching these big questions, but I don't think we're nearing some sort of tipping point when we say a man who dressed in blackface in the '80s shouldn't be governor," Cecil said.

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