

OMAHA (KPTM)- Wednesday, current and former Nebraska congressmen and senators reacted to the death of Senator Ted Kennedy.

"It's a tremendous loss. Even at the age of 77, he was committed as ever."

For more than 40 years, former Nebraska congressman, John Cavanaugh, worked with Sen. Ted Kennedy on the campaign trail and Capitol Hill, and shared many laughs in between.

"He's a wonderful Irish catholic. Loved stories and laughter - loved life really," said Cavanaugh.

Kennedy was deemed the "Liberal Lion" by his peers, but many conservatives who worked with him, like Nebraska Congressman Lee Terry, and former senator Chuck Hagel say, Kennedy easily worked across party lines.

"He was really what made the senate run for the last decade," said Terry.

"He also was nice enough to know, the art of politics is compromise. He would compromise, in order to further his goals," said Hagel, who last spoke with Kennedy two months ago.

He says, some of their most memorable conversations took place over the phone. One phone call in particular, a few years back.

"My son who was 7-years-old at the time, answered the phone, and Kennedy said, 'is your dad there? This is Teddy Kennedy.' And as a 7-year-old will do, [my son] said, 'dad, someone

named Ted Kennedy is on the phone. Who is he? I've never heard of him!' Ted always told that story, he loved that story," said Hagel.

Even though Kennedy's own personal story was filled with bits of tragedy, those who knew him believe - his legacy will center around the 47 years of service he devoted to his country.

"As a human being, he was a quality human being," said Terry.

"He was a unique guy, and anybody who worked with him, or was associated with him was better for it," said Hagel.

Kennedy and Hagel also shared a love of dogs.

When Hagel first got his Portuguese Water dog, Kennedy liked it so much, he got one too.

You may remember, that's the same breed of dog President Obama got from Kennedy as a gift back in April.

