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Review of *Chuck Hagel: Moving Forward* By Charlyne Berens

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men in the domestic and global political scene. Indeed, Senator Hagel should be of keen interest to students, scholars, lawmakers, and citizens in general. Charlyne Berens's *Chuck Hagel: Moving Forward* is therefore a timely read for concerned onlookers. Yet, as Berens illustrates, the Chuck Hagel story is more than an account of a beltway career.

Berens offers a fine journalistic account of Hagel's life, including his upbringing, and how Nebraska's political and environmental variables helped mold his character. She tells us, for example, that

in the Hagel household, hard work was next to godliness. All the boys got jobs as soon as they were able. Chuck earned money delivering papers in Ainsworth when he was seven. In Rushville he and his brother Tom stacked ten-pound bags of potatoes and ice at the local grocery store. Later, in the same town, Chuck was a carhop at a local drive-in, using a booster stool to make him tall enough to hang the trays on the car windows. The boys manually set pins in a bowling alley. They shoveled snow and mowed lawns.

Berens captures this work ethic, shared by many who grew up on the Great Plains, in scenes from Hagel's childhood to his early days in the beltway. Whether as high school president, or a young soldier turning down a desk job for what proved to be heroic service in Viet Nam, or a purposeful young man resigning from a plum appointment at the Veterans Administration under President Reagan, or an influential Senator "risking the administration's wrath" over his position on Iraq, her portrait of Hagel reveals his particular brand of individualism, clearly nurtured by his Plains roots.

Berens captures joyful, painful, and poignant moments. Her account of the death of Hagel's youngest brother is only one telling example of the hardships that imprinted themselves on the character of this highly

Chuck Hagel: Moving Forward. By Charlyne Berens. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006. viii + 223 pp. Photographs, notes. \$24.95.

There is little doubt that Chuck Hagel will be remembered as one of the leading states-

capable man from the Great Plains. And, of course, his story is still moving forward.

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