BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Paul D. Coverdell was born on January 20, 1939 in Des Moines, Iowa. He received a BS in Journalism from the University of Missouri in 1961. He has been awarded an honorary Doctor of Law from Mercer University and an honorary Doctor of Business Administration from Piedmont College. He is married to Nancy Nally Coverdell and lives in Atlanta, Georgia.

Soon after finishing college, Coverdell began service in the Army in 1962 as a Captain in Okinawa, Taiwan, and Korea. After his military service, Coverdell moved to Atlanta in 1964 and, working with his father, founded Coverdell & Co. Inc., an insurance marketing business. Paul Coverdell was named company president in 1965 and would later become CEO of the family business.

After an unsuccessful attempt at the Georgia Senate in 1968, Coverdell ran again in 1970, winning a Republican seat in the Georgia State Senate. As a Georgia State Senator, Coverdell began serving as Senate Minority Leader in 1974, a position he held until his resignation in 1989. As a State Senator, Coverdell was concerned about education, drug abuse, and juvenile detention services. During his tenure, he lobbied for pension reform, supported DUI legislation, and worked to raise Georgia's legal drinking age.

Coverdell balanced Georgia's rural and urban needs, showing concern for crime and poverty, as well as Georgia's agricultural economy. Coverdell initiated the creation of the Urban Study Institute, which was instrumental in securing funding for Grady Memorial Hospital, a public hospital in Atlanta dedicated to helping underserved populations. He also authored several acts including the Governor's Planning Act and the Natural Resources Planning Act.

Coverdell became more active in national politics in the 1980s. In 1980 he served as Georgia's finance chairman for George W. Bush's first presidential campaign. From 1985 to 1987 Coverdell served as the elected chairman of the Georgia Republican Party, and in 1988 he served as chair of the Southern Steering Committee for the Bush Presidential Campaign.

In January 1989 Paul Coverdell was nominated by President George Bush to serve as Director of the Peace Corps, due in part to his lifelong commitment to humanitarian efforts in the state of Georgia. Coverdell was sworn into office by President Bush in an Oval Office ceremony on May 2, 1989. That same year Coverdell stepped down as president of Coverdell and Co. Inc, in order to devote all of his energy to his service at the Peace Corps.

While Paul Coverdell served as director of the Peace Corps, the world saw great political change that affected the agency's efforts. Chinese students protested the Communist government in Tiananmen Square just as Coverdell became Peace Corps Director in 1989. The Tiananmen Square Massacre effectively postponed the Peace Corps’ hard won agreement to send volunteers to China with the China One program. The Cold War came to an end in 1989 with the reunification of Germany and the fall of Communism, a revolution that allowed the Peace Corps to enter countries that had not previously welcomed the assistance of Western governments. The
Persian Gulf War began in the summer of 1990, with the United States sending over 400,000 troops from late 1990 through early 1991 and affecting volunteers serving in Muslim countries.

As director, Coverdell successfully guided the Peace Corps through these world events. In addition, he expanded the number of minority volunteers and sent volunteers to more new countries than the Peace Corps had done during the previous two decades. For the first time, under Coverdell's direction, the Peace Corps began sending volunteers to Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, serving as English teachers and business advisors.

Coverdell initiated a program called World Wise Schools, which links students in the United States with Peace Corps volunteers serving around the world. During the time Coverdell was in office, the World Wise Schools program connected volunteers with 5,000 classrooms in the United States. The program continues to grow with volunteers working with more than 7,000 teachers across the United States early in the 21st century.

In September 1991, Coverdell resigned as director of the Peace Corps to pursue a Republican seat in the United States Senate. President Bush showed his support for Coverdell, and Barbara Bush campaigned for him during the senate race. He successfully won the seat in 1992 in a runoff election against Democrat Wyche Fowler. Coverdell was re-elected to his senate seat in 1998, defeating Democrat Michael Coles.

As a United States Senator, Coverdell has supported the war against drugs and violence and has worked to ensure a good education for all children. He has sponsored efforts to allow parents to create special tax fee savings accounts for their children's education tuitions. As Chairman of the Agriculture subcommittee on Marketing, Inspection, and Product Promotion, Coverdell has promoted Georgia's agriculture and has worked to ensure food safety. Coverdell also serves on the Small Business Committee working to create a fairer tax code. Coverdell has continued to support volunteerism through his career. In June 1997 President Clinton signed into law Coverdell's Volunteer Protection Act, a law that protects volunteers, nonprofit organizations, and governmental entities from lawsuits when they are involved in charitable and non-profit activities. Coverdell has also worked hard to fight problems with drugs in the state of Georgia and is working to impose stiffer penalties for drug smugglers and violators. In an effort to fight drug crime, Coverdell has served on the subcommittee for Foreign Relations and has worked in Georgia to initiate Operation Drug-Free Georgia.

Coverdell has served as secretary to the Senate Republican Conference and is in line to become chairman of that committee at the end of 2000. He has also been named Chairman for the Senate Republican Task Force on Education.

Coverdell is known by his peers in the US Senate for being a hardworking, intelligent, and devoted Senator. He has been honored with numerous awards throughout his career including: the 1984 Hermione Weil Alexander Fund Award of Appreciation for battling drunk driving, the 1985 Leadership Atlanta Award, the 1985 Resolution Commendation for Legislative Leadership given by the Atlanta Board of Education, the 1987 Summa Cum Laude given by Georgia State University in appreciation of public service, 1994-1998 “Guardian of Small Business “ awarded
by the National Federation of Independent Businesses, and the 1996 Georgia Trend's Most Influential Georgian Award.