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POLITICS

Herb Kohl loved the Pfister Hotel coffee shop. He had one final gesture for its staff



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During Friday's public memorial for former U.S. Sen. Herb Kohl, the coffee shop at the Pfister Hotel was prominently mentioned.

Café at the Pfister was one of Kohl's favorite hangouts. He would hold court in an out-of-the-way booth that looked out onto the rest of the dining room.

The restaurant even named a sandwich for Kohl, "Senator's Tuna Sandwich," lemon-scented albacore tuna salad, lettuce and tomato on light rye bread.

For the last 12 years or so he had an 11:45 a.m. Thursday lunch reservation to meet up with his boyhood friend, former Major League Baseball Commissioner Allan H. (Bud) Selig.

"Not too long ago, I got wrapped up in something and showed up about 10 minutes late," Selig said during the memorial. "Herb was sitting at the table shaking his head."

Kohl told Selig, "What would Vince say?" a reference to the great Green Bay Packers coach Vince Lombardi, who had no tolerance for tardiness.

"And so, every Thursday at 11:45 a.m. I'll be thinking of Herb and our lunches at the Pfister," Selig said. "I'm going to miss those lunches."

It turns out, Kohl made one final trip to the Pfister two days before he died.

According to an account from a Journal Sentinel reader who was dining in the restaurant and spoke to a waitress, the senator stopped by to deliver \$300 checks to every hotel employee — waiters, waitresses, cooks, dishwashers, concierges and other staff. The reader's account was confirmed by a longtime Kohl assistant.

A waitress estimated the checks totaled some \$40,000.

A final tip from a grateful customer.