

**REMARKS AT THE FUNERAL OF  
PRESIDENT RICHARD M. NIXON,  
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During the final week of Richard Nixon's life, I often imagined how he would have reacted to the tide of concern, respect, admiration, and affection evoked by his last great battle. His gruff pose of never paying attention to media comment would have been contradicted by a warm glow and the ever-so-subtle hint that another recital of the commentary would not be unwelcome. And without quite saying so, he would have conveyed that it would mean a lot to him if Julie and Tricia, David and Ed were told of his friends' pride in this culmination to an astonishing life.

When I learned the final news, by then so expected, yet so hard to accept, I felt a profound void. In the words of Shakespeare: "He was a man. Take him. For all in all, I shall not look upon his like again."

In the conduct of foreign policy, Richard Nixon was one of the seminal Presidents. He came into office when the forces of history were moving America from a position of dominance to one of leadership. Dominance reflects strength. Leadership must be earned. And Richard Nixon earned that leadership role for his country with courage, dedication, and skill.

When Richard Nixon took his oath of office, 550,000 Americans were engaged in combat in a place as far away from the United States as it was possible to be. America had no contact with China, the world's most populous nation. No negotiations with the Soviet Union, the other nuclear superpower. Most Moslem countries had broken diplomatic relations with the United States, and Middle East diplomacy was stalemated. All of this in

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the midst of the most anguishing domestic crisis since the Civil War.

When Richard Nixon left office, an agreement to end the war in Vietnam had been concluded, and the main lines of all subsequent policy were established: permanent dialogue with China; readiness without illusion to ease tensions with the Soviet Union; a peace process in the Middle East; the beginning, via the European Security Conference, of establishing human rights as an international issue, weakening Soviet hold on Eastern Europe.

Richard Nixon's foreign policy goals were long-range. And he pursued them without regard to domestic political consequences. When he considered our nation's interests at stake, he dared confrontations, despite the imminence of elections and also in the midst of the worst crisis of his life. And he bore, if with some pain, the disapproval of longtime friends and allies over relaxing tensions with China and the Soviet Union. He drew strength from a conviction. He often expressed to me the price for doing things halfway is no less than for doing it completely. So we might as well do them properly. That's Richard Nixon's greatest accomplishment. It was as much moral as it was political—to lead from strength at a moment of apparent weakness, to husband the nation's resilience and, thus, to lay the basis for victory in the Cold War.

Shy and withdrawn, Richard Nixon made himself succeed in the most gregarious of professions, and steeled himself to conspicuous acts of extraordinary courage. In the face of wrenching domestic controversy, he held fast to his basic theme that the greatest free nation in the world had a duty to lead, and no right to abdicate.

Richard Nixon would be so proud that President Clinton and all living former Presidents of the United States are here, symbolizing that his long and sometimes bitter journey had concluded in reconciliation.

I wish that in his final hours I could have told him about Brian McDonald, who, during the Cambodian crisis, had been fasting on a bench in Lafayette Park, across from the White House, until, as he said, "President Nixon redeemed his pledge to withdraw American forces from their anguished country in two months"—a promise which was, in fact, kept. Across the chasm of the decades, Brian called me the day Richard Nixon fell ill and

left a message: "When you talk to President Nixon, tell him that I'm praying for him."

So let us now say goodbye to our gallant friend. He stood on pinnacles that dissolved in the precipice. He achieved greatly and he suffered deeply. But he never gave up. In his solitude, he envisaged a new international order that would reduce lingering enmities, strengthen historic friendships, and give new hope to mankind—a vision where dreams and possibilities conjoined.

Richard Nixon ended the war. And he advanced the vision of peace of his Quaker youth. He was devoted to his family. He loved his country. And he considered service his honor. It was a privilege to have been allowed to help him.

ROBERT J. DOLE

*United States Senator from Kansas*

I believe the second half of the twentieth century will be known as the age of Nixon. Why was he the most durable public figure of our time? Not because he gave the most eloquent speeches, but because he provided the most effective leadership. Not because he won every battle, but because he always embodied the deepest feelings of the people he led.

One of his biographers said that Richard Nixon was one of us. And so he was. He was a boy who heard the train whistle in the night and dreamed of all the distant places that lay at the end of the track. How American. He was a grocer's son who got ahead by working harder and longer than everyone else. How American. He was a student who met expenses by doing research at the law library for thirty-five cents an hour while sharing a run-down farmhouse without water or electricity. How American. He was the husband and father who said that the best memorial to his wife was her children. How American.

To tens of millions of his countrymen, Richard Nixon was an American hero, a hero who shared and honored their belief in working hard, worshiping God, loving their families and saluting the flag. He called them the silent majority. Like them, they valued accomplishment more than ideology. They wanted their government to do the decent thing, but not to bankrupt them in the process.

They wanted his protection in a dangerous world, but they also wanted creative statesmanship in achieving a genuine peace with honor. These were the people from whom he had come and who have come to Yorba Linda these past few days by the tens of thousands—no longer silent in their grief. The American people love a fighter. And in Dick Nixon, they found a gallant one.

In a marvelous biography of her mother, Julie recalls an occasion where Pat Nixon expressed amazement at her husband's ability to persevere in the face of criticism, to which the President replied, "I just get up every morning to confound my enemies." It was what Richard Nixon did after he got up every morning that not just confounded his enemies, but turned them into admirers.

It is true that no one knew the world better than Richard Nixon. And as a result, the man who was born in a house his father built would go on to become this century's greatest architect of peace. But we should also not underestimate President Nixon's domestic achievements. For it was Richard Nixon who ended the draft, strengthened environmental and nutritional programs, and committed the government to a war on cancer. He leapfrogged the conventional wisdom to propose revolutionary solutions to health care and welfare reform, anticipating by a full generation the debates now raging on Capitol Hill.

I remember the last time I saw him—at a luncheon held on the Capitol honoring the twenty-fifth anniversary of his first inaugural. Without a note, President Nixon stood and delivered a compelling speech, capturing the global scene as only he could and sharing his vision of America's future. When it was over, he was surrounded by Democrats and Republicans alike, each wanting just one more word of Nixonian counsel, one more insight into world affairs.

Afterward, the President rested in my office before leaving the Capitol, only he got very little rest—for the office was filled with young Hill staffers, members of the Capitol police and many, many others, all hoping to shake his hand, get an autograph, or simply convey their special feelings for a man who truly was one of us.

Today our grief is shared by millions of people the world over, but is also mingled with intense pride in a great patriot who never gave up and who never gave in. To know the secret of Richard Nixon's relationship with the American people, you need only to listen to his own words: "You must never be satisfied with

success," he told us, "and you should never be discouraged by failure. Failure can be sad, but the greatest sadness is not to try and fail, but to fail to try. In the end, what matters is that you have always lived life to the hilt."

Strong, brave, unafraid of controversy, unyielding in his convictions, living every day of his life to the hilt, the largest figure of our time whose influence will be timeless—that was Richard Nixon. How American. May God bless Richard Nixon and may God bless the United States.

PETE WILSON

*Governor of California*

Richard Nixon has a beautiful family, and he was devoted to them. Anyone who ever saw them together knew that his beloved Pat, and his girls, Tricia and Julie, were everything to him. He was so proud of them, of his sons-in-law, Edward and David, and his grandchildren. But he also had a much larger extended family, a family of those who worked for him and with him—and I was and am very lucky to be a part of that family.

I was one of the many young men and women in whom he inspired the same fierce loyalty that he gave to us. From the first, I was struck by the quality of his personal generosity. When we met in 1962, he'd already debated Khrushchev and President Kennedy. He'd already run for President. He'd been a major political figure on the world stage. But, still, he had time to talk to and to help an eager young advance man who could offer him little but energy and enthusiasm.

Then in the fall of 1965, when I was thirty-two, he honored me by asking me to come to work with him on his potential bid for the presidency in 1968. But he'd heard from Bob Finch and Herb Klein that I was thinking about running for office myself. I told him it was true. And he grinned. He grinned and he said in that deep, rich voice of his, "Is it a good district? Can you win?" And then he said, "Because if you can, then Pete you've got to try or you'll never forgive yourself."

I was just another young lawyer trying to find his way in the world, and he was a former Vice President, preparing a bid for the highest office in the land. And yet, that day he was as concerned with my future as he was with his own. Time and again,

not just with me but with many others, he was always there willing to share his insight and his experience. And no American in this century had more of either to share.

It's hard to imagine a world without Richard Nixon. For half a century he played a leading role in shaping the events that have shaped our lives. It's not just that he served for three decades in high office; it's not just that he garnered more votes than any candidate in American history; it was because his intellect, his insight, and his indomitable will could not be ignored.

He moved on the world stage. He voiced bold ideas. And he left global footprints. But for all his world grasp and mastery of global strategy, it was right here in this small house, in this little town in Orange County, that Richard Nixon learned and never forgot the values that shaped him and helped him shape our world.

He learned the value of hard work. He learned that to make important change you must take risks. And he learned the Quaker virtue that if you were born with a good mind and good health, you were obliged to help others to give back to your community.

But he had something more—much more. When most people think of Richard Nixon, they think of his towering intellect, the incisive quality of his mind. Well, I will always remember him for another quality—it's the quality that great fighters have. They call it heart. Heart is what let Richard Nixon climb back into the ring time and again, when almost anyone else would have thrown in the towel. It was his heart that taught us the great lesson of Richard Nixon's life: to never ever give up. To him it was no disgrace to fight and be beaten. The only disgrace was to quit. And he never did.

Like this Golden State that bred and shaped him, he knew adversity was a challenge to overcome. He loved returning to California and he shared California's optimism. And as he saw the state he loved facing the harshest economic times since the Great Depression, his message to us was: keep walking, keep working, and keep fighting, and you'll come back better than before.

The world will remember Richard Nixon rightly as a fighter of iron will. But the greatness of a man can sometimes be best measured by the times and the reasons that he chooses not to fight. After the 1960 election, many urged Richard Nixon to contest one of the closest and most controversial elections in American history. But Richard Nixon said no. He would not go to court,

he refused to fight, and he urged others not to on his behalf. He would relinquish the prize that was his life's ambition. Why? For a simple, but these days remarkable, reason. It was because he so loved his country that he refused to risk its being torn apart by the constitutional crisis that might ensue.

Forgive my parochial pride, but in this modest home, just a few feet from this stand, was bred a grocer's son and a great American, with deep love for his country, with limitless courage and, above all, with the faith and the brimming spirit and energy that creates only a handful of great leaders from among the tens of millions of their fellow citizens. Dick Nixon's heart, shaped by the grit and mores of this small town, never left California. And now we return it to the soil that bred him.

He ended his own eulogy to Everett Dirksen with a favorite quotation from the poet Sophocles: "One must wait until the evening to see how splendid the day has been." In Richard Nixon's evening, his light burned bright with hope and wise prescriptions for America and for the world.

Today, as we take him to rest, as we seek to measure the greatness of the man and his legacy, it is clear how truly splendid Richard Nixon's day has been.

#### WILLIAM J. CLINTON, IV

##### *Forty-Second President of the United States*

President Nixon opened his memoirs with a simple sentence: "I was born in a house my father built." Today, we can look back at this little house and still imagine a young boy sitting by the window of the attic he shared with his three brothers, looking out to a world he could then himself only imagine. From those humble roots, as from so many humble beginnings in this country, grew the force of a driving dream—a dream that led to the remarkable journey that ends here today where it all began. Beside the same tiny home, mail-ordered from back East, near this towering oak tree, which, back then, was a mere seedling.

President Nixon's journey across the American landscape mirrored that of his entire nation in this remarkable century. His life was bound up with the striving of our whole people, with our crises and our triumphs.

When he became President, he took on challenges here at home on matters from cancer research to environmental protection, putting the power of the federal government where Republicans and Democrats had neglected to put it in the past: in foreign policy. He came to the presidency at a time in our history when Americans were tempted to say we had had enough of the world. Instead, he knew we had to reach out to old friends and old enemies alike. He would not allow America to quit the world.

Remarkably, he wrote nine of his ten books after he left the presidency, working his way back into the arena he so loved by writing and thinking, and engaging us in his dialogue. For the past year, even in the final weeks of his life, he gave me his wise counsel, especially with regard to Russia. One thing in particular left a profound impression on me. Though this man was in his ninth decade, he had an incredibly sharp and vigorous and rigorous mind.

As a public man, he always seemed to believe the greatest sin was remaining passive in the face of challenges. And he never stopped living by that creed. He gave of himself with intelligence and energy and devotion to duty. And his entire country owes him a debt of gratitude for that service. Oh, yes, he knew great controversy amid defeat as well as victory. He made mistakes and they, like his accomplishments, are part of his life and record.

But the enduring lesson of Richard Nixon is that he never gave up being part of the action and passion of his times. He said many times that unless a person has a goal, a new mountain to climb, his spirit will die. Well, based on our last phone conversation and the letter he wrote me just a month ago, I can say that his spirit was very much alive to the very end. That is a great tribute to him, to his wonderful wife, Pat, to his children, and to his grandchildren whose love he so depended on and whose love he returned in full measure.

Today is a day for his family, his friends, and his nation to remember President Nixon's life in totality. To them, let us say, may the day of judging President Nixon on anything less than his entire life and career come to a close. May we heed his call to maintain the will and the wisdom to build on America's greatest gift—its freedom; to lead a world full of difficulty to the just and lasting peace he dreamed of.

As it is written in the words of a hymn I heard in my church last Sunday: "Grant that I may realize that the trifling of life



creates differences, but that in the higher things, we are all one.” In the twilight of his life, President Nixon knew that lesson well. It is, I feel certain, a faith he would want us all to keep.

And, so, on behalf of all four former Presidents who are here—President Ford, President Carter, President Reagan, President Bush—and on behalf of a grateful nation, we bid farewell to Richard Milhous Nixon.

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