

Speech Of  
VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

Crystal Ballroom  
Rice Hotel  
Houston, Texas

September 10, 1968

*Judge William Blanton Testimonial*

1 MR. LLOYD M. BENTSEN, JR.: It is  
2 nice to have partisan friends. We have so many  
3 good men here tonight, but I would like to bring  
4 to your attention some of them.

5 Ben Barnes is here with us tonight,  
6 the distinguished Speaker of the House.

7 Our articulate and able Mayor, Louie  
8 Welch.

9 Devoted Congressman, Bob Casey.

10 Our Congressman, Bob Eckhardt.

11 Distinguished Senator Barbara Jordan.

12 Able Senator Chet Brooks.

13 Our Houston and Galveston Senator  
14 Babe Schwartz.

15 Vice Chairman of the State Demo-  
16 cratic Executive Committee, Mrs. Seaborn Eastland.

17 One of my favorite, distinguished  
18 citizens, Mrs. Lloyd Bentsen, Jr., Democratic  
19 National Committeewoman.

20 We have the Chairman of the State  
21 Democratic Executive Committee, Will Davis.

22 And so many more that, if you would  
23 just hold up your hand, I will acknowledge you.

24 It is my distinct pleasure and  
25 privilege to introduce to you now one of the

1 lovliest ladies I know, the wife of the Vice  
2 President of the United States, Mrs. Hubert  
3 Humphrey, Muriel Humphrey, and her son, Douglas.

4 And now it is my sincere privilege  
5 to introduce to you one of America's most  
6 distinguished citizens. I would ask him to say  
7 something about Chicago, but he might still have  
8 relatives back there. But this man, whom I have  
9 had the pleasure of knowing for some time, brings  
10 to mind what we see in American politics today.  
11 We see those who are more comfortable in the  
12 role of a critic and then we see those who are  
13 builders, who want to see America grow and  
14 progress, who believe the good and the best  
15 about America, and we have that kind of a man  
16 with us tonight, the distinguished, the able  
17 Vice President of the United States, Hubert H.  
18 Humphrey.

19 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Thank you  
20 very much, Mr. Bentsen, and, of course, a special  
21 note of fellowship and friendship to the gentle-  
22 man whom you honored tonight, the one who has  
23 carved out a record of civic service and of great  
24 citizenship as a jurist, lawyer, Democrat. Gee,  
25 what a combination!

1 I am so very pleased, having  
2 mentioned that honored word Democrat, to see that  
3 Congressman Casey is here and Congressman  
4 Eckhardt and, of course, Will Davis is here and  
5 Ben Barnes and all the others who have gathered  
6 around the threshold tonight for this family  
7 gathering, and I am particularly pleased that  
8 Mrs. Humphrey and myself and our son, Douglas,  
9 could be invited to this occasion.

10 When we planned our visit here we  
11 heard that this wonderful party and reception  
12 was being tendered your fellow citizen, Judge  
13 Blanton, and I don't know how we were able to  
14 finangle it around, but I have some good managers  
15 somewhere around the land and they said the best  
16 thing going now or any time to come is now at  
17 this reception for Judge William Blanton.

18 I like what you had to say about our  
19 good friend, Mr. Bentsen, because it is true that  
20 he does have a lovely wife. I will tell you, if  
21 you ever have any doubt why you ought to be a  
22 Democrat, just look at her and you will join up  
23 right away.

24 It was suggested that I might want  
25 to say something about Chicago. The truth is,

1 any man that came to Houston and didn't talk  
2 about Houston ought to be run out of town, and I  
3 prefer to talk about Houston.

4 I do this despite the fact that on  
5 the way in here I met several people who said,  
6 "We are from Los Angeles." And I just left Los  
7 Angeles and we had a wonderful day and it was a  
8 full and very busy day at that great city of  
9 Los Angeles. And despite what some of you good  
10 Democrats may say, I think I ought to let you in  
11 on the news early, because there is nothing, may  
12 I say, that destroys your vitality more than a  
13 day of worry.

14 As somebody once said, "A week of  
15 work is less tiring than a day of worry." And I  
16 don't want you to worry about this election at  
17 all. I am not worried about it. I think the  
18 people are going to do what is right and I think  
19 they are going to do for me what the Governor  
20 did for the Judge and they are going to put me  
21 in a new job, like they have put this man in a  
22 new job, and both of them, I approve of.

23 Somebody said, coming in here, "We  
24 have to take the 'vice' out of that fellow."  
25 I think there is some truth to that.

Enough about that. I want to say how very pleased we are to share this hour with you, this brief moment of fellowship. We have a busy evening with you and tomorrow we have a busy day. We go to Michigan, and then the next day to the Eastern Seaboard. For some reason or another, I have decided to travel around this country a good deal, and we are seeing some good people and what I see in this country, in the main, I like. I see people in America that have great faith in our country. I see hundreds of thousands of people in this country that believe that this country can do what it needs to do, when it needs to be done.

I know that there are some very loud and articulate voices that seem to be heard over the quiet of reason and judgment, but I do not believe that that raucous and harsh and, at times, angry voice really represents the heart or the conscience or the will of the American people.

I believe that whether you are conservative or liberal, whether you are from Minnesota or Texas, whether you are from California or you are from Maine, I really believe that most of the people in this country

1 would like to have a way to do what is right.

2 I really believe that most of our people are  
3 willing to give the other fellow the benefit of  
4 the doubt. I believe that the vast majority of  
5 our people are not infected with bitterness and  
6 hate, but would like to be inspired and motivated  
7 by a sense of community and fellowship, by being  
8 fair and just and by waging whatever effort they  
9 can against any form of inequity or deprivation.

10 I know that the man that you honor  
11 tonight is one whose life has been characterized  
12 by service and, believe me, there is no higher  
13 calling than to serve someone else, to be a man  
14 of tolerance, to be a person of reason, to be  
15 one who has patience, of understanding, not only  
16 of the needs of others, but a need and under-  
17 standing of his limitations, his own great  
18 assets, and of his own service.

19 I have a feeling that if we can get  
20 the American people to listen in this fateful  
21 year of 1968, to listen and to think, to reason--  
22 to reason, rather than to just be caught up in  
23 the passions of the moment, that we are going to  
24 come out all right.

25 I am not unmindful of the conflicts

1 and of the tensions and, in some places, the  
2 bitterness that erupts into violence. But you  
3 know and I know that none of that will provide  
4 an answer to anything. There is no problem in  
5 this nation that will be solved by uncontrolled  
6 passion and emotion, by violence, either of the  
7 mob or of an individual, by hate and bitterness.

8 Every problem we have will be solved,  
9 if it is to be solved at all--and I think they  
10 can, because there is a sense of prudence,  
11 judgment, of restraint, of reason, of faith in  
12 our institutions, confidence in our people, and  
13 I believe the life of the man you honor tonight  
14 exemplifies many of those characteristics.

15 Now, I didn't ask his wife, Elizabeth,  
16 as to all of this biography, but I think that  
17 she would agree with me that he has exemplified  
18 these qualities.

19 Our judiciary is, in a sense, a  
20 protector of our rights and those who serve on  
21 it at the local, the county, state, or federal  
22 level are worthy of our respect and, might I say,  
23 that in the long perspective of history that  
24 America is what it is today in terms of our  
25 liberties, not only because of our Congressmen

1        Presidents, but more significantly because we  
2        have invested in the fidelity of the Courts, who  
3        have made it possible--the Courts and Judges who  
4        have made it possible for this nation to live  
5        in law, a government of laws, not of men, a  
6        government of civil order and civil justice; the  
7        one and inseparable fact of a free society and  
8        a democratic society.

9                I didn't intend to be quite that  
10       serious with you because this is a happy  
11       occasion. But I believe, in these troubled  
12       times, and even this moment of parties and  
13       receptions, that it is good to think about what  
14       it is that has made this country what it is.

15               What has made this country what it  
16       is, is a great depth of consciousness about  
17       people, consciousness that motivates men and  
18       women throughout the many generations of our  
19       history to do something just a little bit better  
20       than was done before, and this nation is  
21       characterized by leaders who came from the ranks  
22       of people, not an elite born to ride herd on  
23       others, but, rather, the people who raise up out  
24       of their own ranks their own leaders, so that we  
25       have government by the consent of the governed,

1 so that we have government of law, not government  
2 of edict, so that we have government that is  
3 compassionate, on the one hand, and firm in its  
4 justice, on the other.

5 I think that is what we exemplify  
6 by this meeting tonight. I think that is what  
7 you come to pay your respects to, and am I ever  
8 glad to be here. I always like to be where there  
9 are good people. I go away feeling just a little  
10 better.

11 Somebody asked me the other day if I  
12 was leaning to the left or to the right or was I  
13 in the center, and I said, "Really, it is hard  
14 enough to walk these days without leaning."

15 I think those are old, hackneyed  
16 expressions. We don't need people today that  
17 lean to the Left or to the Right and we don't  
18 even need people who try to find a comfortable  
19 center, but we need people who tend to lift us  
20 to high ground. And I come to Houston where the  
21 great Space Center is and I can't help but think  
22 that if we just lift our eyes a little from the  
23 earth on which we walk, to the stars, and try  
24 to get a broader and bigger horizon, to try to  
25 get a glimpse of eternity and the affinity of

1 space, maybe we will be better and maybe we will  
2 be able to lift this country out of its troubles,  
3 because I don't think that its troubles are going  
4 to be overcome by either the ditch of the Left or  
5 the ditch of the Right, or in the center, because  
6 I think it will be over by which you stand a  
7 little higher, like you say in Texas.

8 And, if I may, I am going to ask you  
9 to stand just a little taller and I am going to  
10 ask you to lift your eyes to a new horizon and  
11 ask you to pull down the shades on the midnight  
12 of the past and then to walk to the door and open  
13 it up and see the dawn of a new day, because I  
14 think it is ours, if we but welcome it in.

15 MR. BENTSEN: We all want to thank  
16 for this.

17 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: They tell  
18 me I have another meeting to go to. I hope I am  
19 going to see plenty of you there.

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