

Sept 10, 1971

STATEMENT BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
IN CEREMONY HONORING
THE LATE SENATOR GEORGE NORRIS, MC COOK, NEBRASKA

MY FRIENDS, IT'S GREAT TO BE IN MCCOOK TODAY.
WE'VE JUST COME FROM VISITING MRS. NORRIS AND I WANT
TO TELL ALL OF YOU THAT THIS WONDERFUL WOMAN IS HEALTHY
AND SPRY AT 97. SHE SENDS HER GOOD WISHES TO YOU ALL,
I ONLY WISH SHE COULD BE WITH US RIGHT NOW.

YOU KNOW, THERE OUGHT TO BE MORE TOWNS LIKE MCCOOK
IN THIS COUNTRY. AMERICA DESPERATELY NEEDS MORE MCCOOKS.

-- MORE TOWNS FIGHTING TO MAKE THEMSELVES BETTER

-- MORE TOWNS WITH LEADERS WHO JUST WON'T GIVE UP

-- MORE TOWNS FILLED WITH PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT
EACH OTHER AND WHO TRY TO MEET THE PROBLEMS OF
THEIR COMMUNITY HEAD-ON.

NOW YOU AND I KNOW THAT EVERYTHING ISN'T A BED OF
ROSES IN RURAL AMERICA.

WHEN YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVE MCCOOK BECAUSE THERE AREN'T
ENOUGH GOOD JOBS TO KEEP THEM HERE; WHEN FARM PRICES

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ARE DOWN AND WHEN INDUSTRIAL SITES ARE VACANT; THEN IT'S TIME TO SAY: "THESE ARE SOME OF OUR PROBLEMS," AND, IT'S TIME TO ASK: "HOW DO WE SOLVE THEM?"

STANDING ON THIS SPOT IN FRONT OF THE HOME OF SENATOR GEORGE W. NORRIS, I AM REMINDED THAT IT WAS COURAGE, BOLDNESS AND A STRONG VISION OF THE FUTURE WHICH PROPELLED THIS MAN FORWARD TO FIGHT GREAT BATTLES FOR THE PEOPLE OF NEBRASKA.

GEORGE NORRIS ENTERED LOCAL POLITICS WHEN THE FRONTIER WAS FADING -- WHEN THE ERA OF PIONEER FARMING WAS NEARING ITS CLOSE. AND, GEORGE NORRIS WAS ABLE TO SEE THE CITIES OF AMERICA GAIN IN POPULATION TO THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DETRIMENT OF RURAL AMERICA. HE COULD SEE THIS TREND AS EARLY AS THE CENSUS OF 1910 WHEN HE WAS A FOURTH TERM CONGRESSMAN FROM THE 5TH DISTRICT OF NEBRASKA.

IN HIS VIEW, AMERICAN DEMOCRACY WAS IN DANGER WITHOUT A HEALTHY AND VIBRANT FARM ECONOMY. FOR LIKE THOMAS JEFFERSON, GEORGE NORRIS BELIEVED THAT INDEPENDENT FARMERS FORMED THE SOLID BASE ON WHICH AMERICAN DEMOCRACY WAS BUILT. AND WITH THIS BELIEF, GEORGE NORRIS REPRESENTED THE PEOPLE OF THIS STATE FOR OVER 40 YEARS IN THE CONGRESS. HE WAS CONTINUALLY GUIDED BY HIS PHILOSOPHY THAT AMERICAN

DEMOCRACY MUST SAFEGUARD THE ECONOMIC, ETHICAL
AND POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE COMMON MAN.

AND, MY FRIENDS, GUIDED BY SUCH A HUMANE
POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND WANTING TO MAINTAIN THE BASIC
ECONOMIC HEALTH OF AMERICAN AGRICULTURE, GEORGE NORRIS
DEVOTED HIS LIFE TO THE BETTERMENT OF RURAL LIFE
FOR MILLIONS OF AMERICANS.

I BELIEVE THAT HE JUSTLY DESERVES THE TITLE OF
"FATHER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT" FOR HIS EFFORTS TO
BRING THE TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS OF THE 20TH
CENTURY TO RURAL AMERICA ON A MASSIVE SCALE.

HE BROUGHT ELECTRICITY TO RURAL AMERICA.

HE FOUGHT THE TRUSTS AND THE SPECIAL INTERESTS
IN THE NAME OF THE AMERICAN FARMER.

HE FATHERED THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY--THE
BOLDEST PROGRAM IN RURAL ELECTRIFICATION TO BE UNDERTAKEN
IN THIS CENTURY.

AND WHILE HE WAS DOING THESE THINGS, HE NEVER
FORGOT WHAT GOVERNMENT SHOULD DO AND BE. IN 1929 GEORGE
NORRIS WROTE:

"A GOVERNMENT, IN THE TRUEST SENSE, IS ONLY A METHOD TO BRING TO HUMANITY THE GREATEST AMOUNT OF HAPPINESS AND IS FOUNDED, AFTER ALL, UPON THE LOVE OF MAN FOR MAN."

IT IS NO WONDER, MY FRIENDS, THAT THIS MAN WAS CALLED THE "GENTLE KNIGHT OF PROGRESSIVE IDEALS."

WHAT HE DID MUST STAND TODAY AS AN EXAMPLE FOR MCCOOK AND FOR THE NATION.

I NOW WISH TO ANNOUNCE MY CO-SPONSORSHIP AND MY FULL SUPPORT OF THE BILL INTRODUCED BY SENATOR CURTIS TO MAKE THE NORRIS HOME A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK. ^{and SENATOR HRUSKA} ^

GEORGE NORRIS' ACHIEVEMENTS AFFECTED MORE THAN THE STATE OF NEBRASKA. THEY WERE NATIONAL IN SCOPE AND IMPORTANCE. IT IS FITTING THAT THIS NATION HONOR HIM IN THE TOWN WHICH HE LIVED AND WORKED.

GEORGE W. NORRIS MOVED TO MCCOOK IN 1898 AFTER BEING RE-ELECTED A JUDGE TO A NEBRASKA DISTRICT COURT. HE DIED HERE IN 1944 TWO YEARS AFTER HAVING SERVED FOR FIVE TERMS IN THE UNITED STATES SENATE.

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I KNOW THAT GEORGE W. NORRIS IS STILL HERE IN SPIRIT, AND THIS IS ONE REASON WHY MCCOOK WILL NOT GIVE UP, AND THIS IS WHY MCCOOK WILL PROSPER AND GROW.



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