

REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

PRESENTATION OF

PORTRAIT BUST OF PRESIDENT JOHNSON

National Portrait Gallery  
Washington, D. C.

May 29, 1974

Mrs. Johnson, Mr. Sadik, Honored Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is my distinct personal pleasure to return to this great gallery to share in the presentation of this remarkable likeness of President Johnson. It is most unfortunate that Miss Mason cannot be with us to share in the spirit of this event and to feel the admiration her work evokes. With loving attention to detail, she has captured the dynamic and vital qualities of this man who was our leader.

It is very difficult, even now, to speak of this man as though he were gone from us. Let us, instead, look on him as a man of the present, for surely his is a vital and perpetual presence -- in the hearts of those who knew and loved him, and in the lives of those who benefitted from the goals and dreams he pursued in their behalf -- the hope that flowed from that great heart to embrace those for whom life held very little promise.

Mortality is a strange phenomenon. When reflecting on the life of a great, historical figure, the temptation is always to enlarge and exaggerate the qualities of one who is remembered fondly.

But it is impossible for any of us to grasp the full meaning of Lyndon Johnson's life. This will require the refinement of time to filter out the dust of minutiae, in order to find the solid rock of character and accomplishment.

What we can and do know is that he was a giant of a man -- groomed and nurtured in that great Texas land he loved so much -- touched by the disparities of great wealth and cruel poverty, by the arbitrary divisions between the north and the south, between the privileged and the deprived, and between the great and the mean.

Lyndon Johnson paved his way to the pinnacle of political power. He moved in the company of great world and national leaders. But he never once lost sight of his mission. Rooted firmly and squarely in the best traditions of our nation, he had a clear and perfect understanding that people, not institutions, are the foundation of our government.

He was keenly aware of the worth of every single person and of the responsibility of government to speak to the needs and aspirations of those who are deprived of the opportunity to enjoy the promises of freedom.

Looking on the life of a fallen leader, we are inclined to speak of the achievements he left behind.

Lyndon Johnson's legacy is a living one. It is here and now in the face of a black child who will never live in a society that has been divided on the basis of race.

-- It is the legacy of universal suffrage for all.

-- For elderly Americans, it is a legacy of hope for greater security in their last years.

-- It is a legacy of education for every American boy and girl, and for economic opportunity for hundreds of thousands of disadvantaged citizens.

The list is endless, but most of all, Lyndon Johnson left us with hope for the survival of our precious democracy. He showed us that the most diverse elements can be brought together, in reason, to do the things that must be done. He defined the challenges, and he showed us a way to meet them -- upright, and head-on.

This bust will remain here for our countrymen to see and ponder. I invite all Americans to remember the man Lyndon Johnson. Be proud of his accomplishments, for he was truly one of our own. Let's not look to his achievements as a static history of his period, but view them, rather, as a challenge to tackle the tough jobs as he did, with a fierce and uncompromising hatred for injustice, bigotry, and poverty which sap the life of our people and taint the blessings of liberty.

Draw on his great legacy and derive from his personal strength a determination to see a better day for all Americans. We can best serve his memory by reaffirming our faith in the spirit of the American people and their capacity for wise and progressive self-government.

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PRESENTATION OF

—  
PORTRAIT BUST OF

PRESIDENT JOHNSON

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

MAY 29, 1974

*Linda Roth*

*man*  
*Saydick*

MRS. JOHNSON, MR. SADIK,

HONORED GUESTS, LADIES AND

—  
GENTLEMEN.

—  
IT IS MY DISTINCT PERSONAL

PLEASURE TO RETURN TO THIS

GREAT GALLERY TO SHARE IN

THE PRESENTATION OF THIS

REMARKABLE LIKENESS OF PRESIDENT

JOHNSON.

-2-

It IS MOST UNFORTUNATE THAT

MISS MASON CANNOT BE WITH

US TO SHARE IN THE SPIRIT

OF THIS EVENT AND TO FEEL

THE ADMIRATION HER WORK EVOKES,

With LOVING ATTENTION TO

DETAIL, SHE HAS CAPTURED

THE DYNAMIC AND VITAL QUALITIES

OF THIS MAN WHO WAS OUR LEADER.

-3-

IT IS VERY DIFFICULT,

EVEN NOW, TO SPEAK OF ~~him~~ *him*

~~MAN~~ AS THOUGH HE WERE GONE

FROM US. Let US, INSTEAD,

LOOK ON HIM AS A MAN OF THE

PRESENT, FOR SURELY HIS IS

A VITAL AND PERPETUAL PRESENCE ----

IN THE HEARTS OF THOSE WHO

KNEW AND LOVED HIM, AND IN

THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO BENEFITTED

-4-

FROM THE GOALS AND DREAMS

HE PURSUED IN THEIR BEHALF . --

THE HOPE THAT FLOWED FROM

his             
~~THAT~~ GREAT HEART TO EMBRACE

THOSE FOR WHOM LIFE HELD

VERY LITTLE PROMISE.

-5-

✓ MORTALITY IS A STRANGE

PHENOMENON. WHEN REFLECTING

ON THE LIFE OF A GREAT, HISTORICAL

FIGURE, THE TEMPTATION IS

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THE QUALITIES OF ONE WHO

IS REMEMBERED FONDLY.

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BUT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE

FOR ANY OF US TO GRASP *at this hour*

*the* FULL MEANING OF LYNDON JOHNSON'S

LIFE. *(* THIS WILL REQUIRE

THE REFINEMENT OF TIME TO

FILTER OUT THE DUST OF MINUTIAE,

IN ORDER TO FIND THE SOLID

ROCK OF CHARACTER AND ACCOMPLISHMENT.

-7-

WHAT WE CAN AND DO KNOW

IS THAT HE WAS A GIANT OF

A MAN -- GROOMED AND NURTURED

IN THAT GREAT TEXAS *hill country*

HE LOVED SO MUCH -- TOUCHED

BY THE DISPARITIES OF GREAT

WEALTH AND CRUEL POVERTY,

BY THE ARBITRARY DIVISIONS

BETWEEN THE NORTH AND THE →

SOUTH, BETWEEN THE PRIVILEGED

AND THE DEPRIVED, AND ~~BETWEEN~~

THE GREAT AND THE MEAN.

LYNDON JOHNSON PAVED

HIS WAY TO THE PINNACLE OF

POLITICAL POWER. HE MOVED

IN THE COMPANY OF GREAT WORLD

AND NATIONAL LEADERS.

BUT HE NEVER ONCE LOST SIGHT

OF HIS MISSION. ROOTED FIRMLY

AND SQUARELY IN THE BEST

TRADITIONS OF OUR NATION,

HE HAD A CLEAR AND ~~VERY~~ *distinct*

UNDERSTANDING THAT PEOPLE,

NOT INSTITUTIONS, ARE THE

FOUNDATION OF OUR GOVERNMENT.

HE WAS KEENLY AWARE  
OF THE WORTH OF EVERY ~~SOME~~  
PERSON AND OF THE RESPONSIBILITY  
OF GOVERNMENT TO SPEAK TO  
THE NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS  
OF THOSE WHO ARE DEPRIVED  
OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENJOY  
THE PROMISES OF FREEDOM.

*He knew as did Jefferson,  
that the only legitimate  
object of government*

*as the happiness &  
well being of the people*

LOOKING ON THE LIFE  
OF A FALLEN LEADER, WE ARE  
INCLINED TO SPEAK OF THE  
ACHIEVEMENTS HE LEFT BEHIND.

*But*  
LYNDON JOHNSON'S LEGACY

IS A LIVING ONE. IT IS HERE  
AND NOW IN THE FACE OF A

BLACK CHILD WHO WILL NEVER *again*

*have to*  
LIVE IN A SOCIETY THAT HAS



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BEEN DIVIDED ON THE BASIS  
OF RACE.

-- IT IS THE LEGACY  
OF UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE FOR  
ALL.

-- FOR ELDERLY AMERICANS.  
IT IS A LEGACY OF HOPE FOR  
GREATER SECURITY IN THEIR  
LAST YEARS.

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-- IT IS A LEGACY OF  
EDUCATION FOR EVERY AMERICAN  
BOY AND GIRL, AND FOR ECONOMIC  
OPPORTUNITY FOR HUNDREDS  
OF THOUSANDS OF DISADVANTAGED  
CITIZENS.

THE LIST IS ENDLESS,

BUT MOST OF ALL, LYNDON JOHNSON

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HE DEFINED THE CHALLENGES,

AND HE SHOWED US A WAY TO

MEET THEM -- UPRIGHT, AND

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THIS BUST WILL REMAIN

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VIEW THEM, RATHER, AS A CHALLENGE

TO TACKLE THE TOUGH JOBS ~~that~~

*remain, just as he did*  
~~AS HE DID~~ WITH A FIERCE

AND UNCOMPROMISING HATRED  
→

FOR INJUSTICE, BIGOTRY, AND

POVERTY WHICH SAP THE LIFE

OF OUR PEOPLE AND TAINT THE

BLESSINGS OF LIBERTY.

*New Mrs. Johnson  
Lady Bird -  
America the beautiful*

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DRAW ON HIS GREAT LEGACY  
AND DERIVE FROM HIS PERSONAL  
STRENGTH A DETERMINATION  
TO SEE A BETTER DAY FOR ALL  
AMERICANS. WE CAN BEST SERVE  
HIS MEMORY BY REAFFIRMING  
OUR FAITH IN THE SPIRIT OF  
THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND THEIR  
CAPACITY FOR WISE AND PROGRESSIVE  
SELF-GOVERNMENT.



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