

Mr. Speaker, I rise to draw the attention of this body to the passing of Nicholas Katzenbach in the past month and to recognize the life and career of one of the most noteworthy public servants of our time. Anyone who lived through the 1960's, the civil rights movement, and the Vietnam era in American politics will remember the name of Nicholas Katzenbach. However, because Nick was more interested in promoting liberty and justice than promoting himself and because he worked to help more famous people succeed--John Kennedy, Bobby Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Bill Clinton, among others--many people may not know as much as they should about this great American.

U.S. Attorney General, Under Secretary of State, author of and political strategist for the principal legislation on civil rights, international envoy, decorated war hero and prisoner of war, he was directly involved in many of the major developments and events of our government during the Kennedy and Johnson years. Coming out of a distinguished lineage and an upbringing of privilege and accomplishment--Phillips Exeter, Princeton University, Balliol College on a Rhodes Scholarship, Yale Law School and editor of the Yale Law Journal--he became a forceful activist for civil rights and equality of opportunity for all Americans and a determined advocate for an anti-imperialist posture with respect to other countries. Anyone who observed Nick's confrontation with Mississippi Governor Ross Barnett in 1962 to force the enrollment of the first African American James Meredith at Ole Miss or his confrontation with Alabama Governor George Wallace in 1963 to force the enrollment of Vivian Malone and James Hood at the University of Alabama will not forget his commanding stature, his coolness and courage, and above all his obvious commitment to equal justice under law. In those situations Nick Katzenbach embodied by himself our national dignity and the authority of our government even more than the Federal Marshalls or the National Guard flanking him.

Nick Katzenbach moved in the circles of the most powerful, where he became a master of our governmental mechanisms, yet he never forgot the purpose of power--to realize the hopes and aspirations of the people. He applied his impressive intellect to argue the law at the loftiest levels, yet never lowered his respect for the powerless whom the law is to protect. He recognized that the sharecropper or the Vietnamese rice farmer was as entitled to full respect as the banker or magnate. For years with unflinching determination he worked to extricate the United States from the Vietnam War, although unappreciated by the anti-war activists. He gave up his own vacations and holidays to work to defuse one after another domestic or international crisis or to bring prisoners home from foreign countries to the United States in time for Christmas.

Despite his many accomplishments, and despite the real progress he brought to many areas of our society, his sense of duty and devotion to our country's founding democratic ideals were so

Tribute to Nicholas Katzenbach

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great that he carried a lifelong disappointment that he and all the powerful, talented people with whom he worked still fell short of providing liberty and justice for all. The lingering harmful effect of race in our system of justice, our schools, and our economy weighed on him to the end. He lamented the crass and inglorious behavior that we see in so many public officials. I am sure Nicholas Katzenbach believed that all public officials, of course, should be as dignified, capable, and dedicated as he. Mr. Speaker, we should wish it were so.