

# John C. Stennis

LATE A SENATOR FROM MISSISSIPPI

MEMORIAL TRIBUTES

IN THE CONGRESS OF  
THE UNITED STATES



HON. JOHN C. STENNIS  1901–1995



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Memorial Tributes  
Delivered in Congress

John Cornelius Stennis

1901-1995

*Late A Senator from Mississippi*



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JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS, Democrat, a Senator from the State of Mississippi, was born August 3, 1901 in the Kipling community of Kemper County, Mississippi, and graduated from Mississippi State University and the Law School of the University of Virginia. He served in the Mississippi House of Representatives, 1928 to 1932; as a District Attorney, 1932 to 1937; as Circuit Court Judge, 1937 to 1947; and as United States Senator, November 1947 to January 1989. He died April 23, 1995, and is interred in Pinecrest Cemetery, DeKalb, Mississippi. The late Coy Hines and he were married in 1929. He was a Presbyterian. Survivors include his son John Hampton, daughter Margaret Womble, and six grandchildren.

MEMORIAL TRIBUTES

TO

JOHN C. STENNIS

## Proceedings in the Senate

MONDAY, *April 24, 1995.*

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray:

Almighty God, our hearts are at half-mast with grief over the catastrophic bombing of the Federal building in Oklahoma City. We mourn for the victims, especially the children, of this senseless crime and reach out with profound empathy to their families. We ask You to strengthen them as they endure incredible suffering. Graciously grant physical and emotional healing to those who survived. Most of all, comfort the children who ask "why?" and give wisdom to parents as they search for words to answer. We all need help in understanding an ignominious act of tyranny like this.

We only can imagine the agony of Your heart, Father. If our indignation burns white-hot, it must be small in comparison to Your judgment. You have given us freedom of will and made us responsible for the welfare of our neighbors. Our hearts break with Your heart over those who willfully cause suffering. Therefore, we boldly ask for Your divine intervention for the speedy capture and punishment of these traitors against our Nation and the sacredness of human life. As You have given us victory in just wars, now give us a strategy to defeat the illusive and dangerous forces of organized terrorism.

Lord God of this Senate, we are never more of one mind and heart than when dealing with a threat to our national security or in responding to a catastrophe in any one of our States. We rally in support of Senators Nickles and Inhofe as they continue to care for their people.

We press on to the issues of this day with the strong inspiration of the 40 years of leadership of JOHN STENNIS in this Senate. May the memory of his faith in You and his courage in conflict give us determination to seek, as he did, to do our best. In the Lord's name. Amen.

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I will just take a moment to talk about our departed friend who served here for many, many years, Senator JOHN STENNIS. When he left the Senate in 1989, he had served in this Chamber for 41 years—nearly one-fifth of the Senate’s history. And those of us privileged to serve with him knew that he was one of the true giants of that history.

Senator STENNIS passed away yesterday at the age of 93, and I join all Senators in expressing our condolences on the death of our former colleague and in extending our sympathies to members of his family.

Senator STENNIS and I came from different regions of the country, from different political parties, and we had different views on many issues. But no one could know or serve with JOHN STENNIS without admiring his character, his integrity, or his patriotism.

JOHN STENNIS loved the Senate and worked to make it a better place. He was the first chairman of the Senate Committee on Standards and Conduct and was the author of the Senate’s first code of ethics.

JOHN STENNIS also loved America, and as chairman of the Armed Services Committee, he never wavered from his belief that America’s national defense should be second to none.

JOHN STENNIS was also a man of remarkable courage. In his seventies, he was shot and left for dead by robbers outside his Washington home. And in his eighties, he lost a leg to cancer. On both occasions, he not only recovered, but he was also back at work long before anyone thought possible.

Those of us who were here at the time will always remember the days when Senator STENNIS returned to the Chamber and the outpouring of respect and admiration that he received.

Mr. President, during his final years in this Chamber, Senator JOHN STENNIS was asked in an interview how he would like to be remembered, and he responded: “You couldn’t give me a finer compliment than just to say, ‘He did his best.’”

Today, his family, friends, and former colleagues can take solace in the fact that he will be remembered exactly how he wished—as a man who always gave nothing less than his best.

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, we in the Senate were shocked to hear the news of the passing of a cherished friend and a former colleague: former Senator JOHN STENNIS from Mississippi.

Senator STENNIS served in this Senate Chamber for 40 years—from the time of his election to the Senate in 1947, through his retirement in 1989. During that time, he dedicated himself to giving our Nation the gift of wisdom and leadership.

Senator STENNIS was greatly admired by all who had the honor to serve with him. As chairman of the Armed Services Committee, he served with several Presidents; during that time he led the committee through the darkest days of the Vietnam war. Although he often saw his position on that war opposed by some of his fellow Democrats, he always did what he believed to be correct and in the best interest of our Nation.

For many years, Senator STENNIS and I were neighbors in the Russell Building. I recall with great fondness the kindness and good cheer he showed to me and my office staff on the many occasions he stopped in to say hello. Senator STENNIS completed his Senate career by serving with great distinction as President Pro Tempore of the Senate.

I had the honor of serving with Senator JOHN STENNIS for almost my entire Senate career. Throughout the years, I came to appreciate and respect his qualities of integrity, ability, and dedication.

Mr. President, JOHN C. STENNIS was a great American. He was a dedicated Senator who proudly represented the people of Mississippi with great distinction. We have lost a colleague, we have lost a leader; but most of all, we have lost a friend.

TUESDAY, *April 25, 1995.*

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I would like to take a few minutes to discuss the life and career of Senator JOHN C. STENNIS, who passed away earlier this week.

Senator STENNIS served in this Chamber for 41 years. His work here included serving as chairman of the Senate Armed Services and the Senate Appropriations Committees and as President Pro Tempore of this body.

Among his legislative achievements was his ability to bend and flow with the times. Once a staunch segregationist, Senator STENNIS cast his vote for the Voting Rights Act of 1982.

One area in which he never changed, however, was in upholding the safety and security of this great country. Senator

STENNIS warned against overextending our military capacity. He also warned against wasteful defense spending. But he never wavered in his support of the country's national defense and ensuring that it maintained the military capacity to guarantee our freedoms and our liberties.

During his four decades in the U.S. Senate, Senator STENNIS was always an abiding example of integrity and fortitude. His respect for the institution of the Senate and the law of the United States made him an early opponent of the excesses and abuses of Senator Joe McCarthy. As a result, he and Senator Sam Ervin were named as the two Democratic members on the Watkins committee that investigated the recklessness of Senator McCarthy and led to his censorship.

In July 1965, the Senate created the Select Committee on Standards and Conduct, the forerunner of our current Select Committee on Ethics. This was a controversial creation, and everyone knew that whoever chaired it would be in a difficult position. The Senate had traditionally relied upon the voters of a State to discipline a Senator for improper behavior, and institutional discipline is a painful problem in an institution that depends on the collegiality of its Members. The only logical choice for this important and difficult leadership position was Senator STENNIS. The Mississippi Senator became so successful; and so respected in this position that the committee quickly became known as the "Stennis Committee."

Mr. President, the career of Senator JOHN C. STENNIS was marked, not only with legislative triumphs, but with numerous personal triumphs over personal adversity.

In 1973, he was shot by robbers in front of his house and left for dead.

In 1983, his beloved wife of 52 years, Coy Hines Stennis passed away.

In 1984, a battle with cancer resulted in the loss of one of his legs and confined him to a wheelchair. While in the hospital recuperating from the surgery, he was visited by the President of the United States, Ronald Reagan. President Reagan later said that he had dreaded going to the hospital that day, for he feared the impact such a life-altering operation would have on a fiercely independent man like Senator STENNIS. But the President explained, "when I left, it was I who had been strengthened."

He had been strengthened by the Senator's confidence, his faith, and his optimism.

Those qualities defined Senator STENNIS' outlook on life. On his Senate desk he kept a plaque that simply read: "Look Ahead."

"That's my philosophy," he explained. Don't waste time lamenting the past. "You have got to look ahead. I realize that life's not altogether what you make it. But that's part of it, what you make it yourself."

Senator STENNIS made for himself a wonderful life, and the Senate and the country can be grateful for it.

When he retired from the Senate in January 1989, Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd called it "the end of an era." And indeed it was.

Perhaps a greater compliment came from a Republican Member of Congress from Mississippi, who said, "We'll miss him. Even if he's a Democrat, he's a great man."

As the Senate Democratic leader, I say that is a great statement, even from a Republican.

In 1988, Congress established the John C. Stennis Center for Public Service Training at Mississippi State University. The center covers a range of historical projects, including an excellent oral history program. When a congressional historian approached him about an oral history of his own life and career, Senator STENNIS initially opposed the idea, saying it would be too self-aggrandizing. The historian proceeded to explain that it was not only an honor, it was his duty to record for posterity his personal account of the historic events and decisions in which he had been involved.

"Well, sir," responded Senator STENNIS, "If you say its my duty, then I must do it, because I've always done my duty."

It was not only his legislative accomplishments—and they were many—for which we so loved and remember him, it was also his commitment to God and country.

No person who has ever served in the U.S. Senate was ever quicker to tell you what was wrong with this country. But no person was ever quicker to tell you what was right about it, either.

Mr. President, Linda and I extend our most heartfelt condolences to the family of JOHN C. STENNIS: We share their grief and their loss. But we also thank them for sharing him with us, and I thank the people of Mississippi for selecting him to serve in the Senate for seven terms.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President once again, the silver cord has been loosened and the golden bowl has been broken: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit

shall return unto God who gave it." These words from Ecclesiastes—spoken probably ten centuries before the birth of Christ—bare the indelible stamp of permanency. Somewhere, every day, every hour, every minute, they are brought home to someone, and in their train, follow the inevitable pain and sorrow and tears, that we all must bear when loved ones and friends depart from us in this earthly life. The angel of death is no respecter of persons, and each of us will one day hear the beating of his wings—

Leaves have their time to fall,  
And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath,  
And stars to set—but all,  
Thou has all seasons for thine own, O Death!

Mr. President, it was with sorrow that I heard the sad news over the past weekend that our former colleague and friend, JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS, had passed away at the age of 93. When I came to the United States Senate in January 1959, JOHN STENNIS was a Member of this body, and we served together 30 years—until he retired at the close of the 100th Congress in 1989. So, it is with sadness that I pay tribute to the memory of this departed colleague today. As we grow older, we are obliged to bid farewell to some friend almost every day, and thus does the circle gradually, and all too rapidly, diminish; for—

There is no union here of hearts  
That finds not here an end.

Mr. President, JOHN STENNIS was a man who achieved greatly in life. For 41 years and 2 months, he represented a great and patriotic constituency in this Chamber, where some of the greatest men of the Republic have served and aspired to serve, and that achievement alone would mark him as a man among men. When we add to this the fact that he served as a member of the Mississippi State House of Representatives for 4 years, as district prosecuting attorney from 1932 to 1937, and as a circuit judge from 1937 to 1947, we begin to realize what a wonderful career we are remembering today—60 years in the public service—in elective positions, where neighbors and friends, who are often more critical than strangers, are the electors! What more could be said by way of eulogy? Volumes could be written and less said. Yet, that is the record of our former colleague and friend, who, in the merciful dispensations of an all-wise Providence, has now passed on to the other side.

JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS was born near DeKalb, Kemper County, MS, on August 3, 1901. He attended the county

schools; graduated from the Mississippi State College in 1923, and graduated from the University of Virginia Law School in 1928. He was admitted to the bar in 1928 and commenced practice in his home town of DeKalb. I had the honor of serving on the Armed Services Committee and on the Appropriations Committee with Senator STENNIS, both of which committees he had served as chairman before his voluntary retirement at the close of the 100th Congress.

JOHN STENNIS was an honest man, and he was a good man, as good men go in this life—plain and modest. He was amiable, courteous, and courtly—a southern Christian gentleman, in every sense of the word. He was intellectually honest, a man of great moral rectitude, simply in his habits, and completely devoid of hypocrisy. He was a Senator who loved the Senate and who was dedicated to its traditions. He was conscious at all times, of the great trust confided in him by the people he represented, and he carried in his heart a great reverence for this institution and for the Constitution of our country. His was a steady hand, an upright character. He was a man of justice and fairness to all. He was unassuming in his manner, sincere and firm in his convictions. Devoid of envy, he was ambitious only to serve the cause of justice and humanity, and being of, for, and from the people, he gave his life to their service. In him, the great people of Mississippi had an ever faithful friend and servant.

Mr. President, JOHN STENNIS was not a large man physically. He was actually rather slight. But he was a giant. The breadth of his character was huge, and the steel of his courage was formidable. Nothing defeated him—not the bruises of the legislative battlefield; not the frightful attack by thugs in the street, who almost caused his death, near his home; not the death of his beloved wife; not the loss of his leg to cancer.

Nothing defeated him. Nothing held him down for long. He always got up again and went on. He struggled, but he prevailed and endured. And he did it all with a quiet, unassuming dignity.

He was courtly—ever the gentleman. I called him a Senator's Senator. He represented everything fine about the Senate and everything fine about the human spirit. He was the cream of all things decent that one looks for in a leader and in a man.

Had he lived in another age he would have been just as great, as respected, as beloved, and as revered as he has

been in his own time. He would have enhanced any company in any situation in any age.

But most of all, the indomitable fortitude stands out. There is a courage possessed by some men which is extraordinary—far beyond what most individuals can ever muster in even their best and bravest moments. It is rarely accompanied by bombast and breast beating. It is carried with a quiet and calm demeanor. No outward show is necessary. In his case, the kindly visage gave no clue to the inner steel. He bore his duties and his crises, his joys and his sorrows, with equal dignity.

But it was awesome actually to watch. How many times have I come to this Chamber for a vote, bone-weary, and at some dreadful hour in the morning, and seen him sitting straight as an arrow at his desk! There he would be, 17 years my senior, frail, missing one leg, with a pleasant greeting for all, in spite of the hour. In this age of clock-watching, and quality-of-life avocation, that kind of dedication may seem an anachronism. But JOHN STENNIS was dedication and duty epitomized in the human flesh. He showed us by his example. He never lectured, never said, “Do as I do.” He just lived an exemplary life, and that was enough to teach all who were fortunate enough to be around to learn. He taught us how to be Senators, he taught us how to bear sadness and brutality without bitterness or surrender or despair. He did so by just being what he was.

Mr. President, all that even the greatest of scientists can do is to try to interpret and apply the laws, the immutable laws, the eternal laws of God. Scientists cannot create matter and they cannot create life. They can mold and develop and shape and use them, but they cannot call them into being. They are compelled to admit the truth of the old nursery rhyme, which I am sure the Presiding Officer and the other distinguished Senator from Oklahoma will remember along with me:

Nor you, nor I, nor anybody knows,  
how oats, peas, beans, and barley grows.

But the Scriptures tell us of the laws of God, and reveal to us the Source from whence this Earth, the universe, and all of us who dwell here—for a split second, as it were—between two eternities: “In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.” The Scriptures also reveal to us that God created man from the dust of the ground, and “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living soul.” God then gave Adam a helpmate, Eve, and from

those ancient parents, we have all descended, and from them, we have all inherited death. Only a Milton could so incisively provide a fitting epilogue to man's fall from grace.

They, looking back,  
all the eastern side beheld of Paradise,  
so late their happy seat,  
waved over by that flaming brand; the gate  
with dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms.  
Some natural tears they dropped,  
but wiped them soon;  
the world was all before them where to choose  
their place of rest, and Providence their guide.  
They, hand in hand, with wondering steps and slow,  
through Eden took their solitary way.

As so, it is our inevitable lot to die. But the Scriptures also tell us that we may live again in that long lost paradise from whence our parents came. There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name appears in extra-Biblical texts as early as 2000 years before Christ. His name was Job, and from his patient, suffering lips came the age-old question, "If a man die, shall he live again", and later from his lips came the answer to his own question: "Oh, that my words were written and engraved with an iron pen upon a ledge of rock forever, for I know that my Redeemer liveth and some day He shall stand upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this Body, yet, in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another."

Mr. President, many years ago I read a story of an old Anglo-Saxon king who had his barons at a great banquet. They were eating their venison and quaffing their ale. It was a bitter night outside. The storm raged. The snow was falling thick and fast. Suddenly, into the rude chamber in which they were gathered, there flew through some crack or crevice in the roof a little bird. Blinded by the light and perplexed, it flew wildly here and there and beat itself against the rude beams. Finally, it found another crevice and out it went again into the night. The king, advanced in years, spoke to his barons and said,

That bird is like a life;  
it comes from out of the night.  
It flits and flies around a little while,  
blinded by the light,  
and then it goes back out into the night again.

Mr. President, as we witness the passing of a great and good man like JOHN STENNIS, we may well take appraisal of our own public and private merits and remember that we,

too, only flit about for a little while, our voices resound in this Chamber for a few days or months or years, and then we are gone. These things are evanescent. Real substantial qualities of honesty, integrity, gentleness, modesty, and generosity will make the life of JOHN STENNIS remembered when much of what we say and do here in this Chamber shall have passed away and perished. JOHN STENNIS is gone.

. . . with your skysail set  
For ports beyond the margin of the stars . . .

And those of us who had the honor and privilege of serving with him may say of him:

His life was gentle,  
and the elements so mixed in him  
that Nature might stand up and say to all the world,  
"This was a man."

To the family and friends of JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS, my wife Erma and I extend our deepest sympathy.

I saw the sun sink in the golden west,  
No angry cloud obscured its latest ray.  
Around the couch on which it sank to rest  
Shone all the splendor of a summer day.  
And long, though lost to view, that radiant light,  
Reflected from the sky, delayed the night.  
Thus, when a good man's life comes to a close,  
No doubts arise to cloud his soul with gloom.  
But faith triumphant on each feature glows,  
And benedictions fill the sacred room.  
And long do men his virtues wide proclaim,  
While generations rise to bless his name.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I wish to compliment my friend and colleague, Senator Byrd, for the tribute to our colleague, Senator STENNIS, who served in this body so ably, so well, for so long. His service of 41 years—only the Senator from West Virginia would know who has exceeded that besides Senator Hayden, I guess—but he had a remarkable tenure in the Senate.

I had the pleasure of serving with Senator STENNIS. He was a person that had enormous credibility and reputation prior to my coming to the Senate going back for many years. He was even referred to in the Senate as a person known as the ethical watch guard of the Senate, and certainly a Southern gentleman in every single way. He was a real asset to this body, certainly to the State of Mississippi and to our country, as well. We shall all miss him, but not forget the contributions that he made to his State and country.

I compliment my colleague from West Virginia for a beautiful tribute to a wonderful colleague and Senator.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I thank my friend.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I first want to commend the distinguished Democratic leader for his comments about our departed colleague and my good friend, Senator JOHN C. STENNIS. Today, there was a very appropriate editorial published in the Clarion-Ledger, in Jackson, Mississippi, describing the effect that Senator STENNIS had, by virtue of his service in the Senate, on the State of Mississippi.

I commend the editor for such a fine article and I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the Record.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

[From the Clarion-Ledger, April 25, 1995]

JOHN C. STENNIS: INTEGRITY SET STANDARD FOR CONGRESS

The accomplishments of former U.S. Senator John C. Stennis could fill pages.

STENNIS' long and full life ended Sunday at age 93, and during the next few days, Mississippians will hear many of the Senator's accomplishments recounted.

His long and distinguished career in government left his mark on many of the policies of the United States, especially in military matters. There are many institutions that bear his name, even an aircraft carrier.

Mississippi is a much different place, and a much better place, because of the policies and economic development projects he brought to the state.

But, all of the political achievements, the things that most politicians are measured by, fall short when it comes to Senator Stennis.

STENNIS was, above all else, a man of integrity, a true statesman, whose adherence to honor and code of conduct made him legendary in the U.S. Senate, which he loved so dearly.

That is indeed a rare quality, especially in the mean-spirited politics of today.

Senator STENNIS' reputation for fairness made him a trusted colleague and confidant of Presidents of both parties. He was known as the "conscience of the Senate" because of his high ethical standards and respect for the institution.

Throughout his long career, integrity and service were watchwords. It is appropriate that, of the institutions that bear his name, the Stennis Center for Public Service at Mississippi State University seeks to encourage young people to public service careers.

In his 1947 campaign, STENNIS stated a simple creed: "I want to plow a straight furrow right down to the end of my row."

Senator JOHN C. STENNIS succeeded with that pledge.

Mr. President, I want to invite the attention of the Senate to a couple of points that are made in this fine tribute. After

talking about many of the things that Senator STENNIS did for the State the editorial writer then says:

But, all of the political achievements, the things that most politicians are measured by, fall short when it comes to Senator STENNIS.

STENNIS was, above all else, a man of integrity, a true statesman, whose adherence to honor and code of conduct made him legendary in the U.S. Senate, which he loved so dearly.

Mr. President, as I was beginning to think about putting this in the Record for the information of Senators, I realized that I sit at the desk that was occupied by Senator STENNIS during the time he served in the Senate.

As you know, there is a tradition here to put your name in the desk drawer like schoolboys used to. Senator STENNIS' name is in this desk drawer which he wrote in there and put the date that he began service, 1947, and a dash, and never did, of course, put the date on which his service ended, which the distinguished Democratic leader pointed out was in 1989.

One other aspect of this desk is that not only has it been occupied by many Mississippians over the years, Jefferson Davis, to name one, John Sharp Williams, a very distinguished Senator who had served as Democratic leader in the House before he was elected to the Senate, and then served three terms in the Senate and probably was one of the most respected national figures of his day serving in the Congress. And serving from Mississippi it made our State very proud. But Senator STENNIS occupied this desk from 1947—well over 41 years, as the Senators know.

But toward the end of his career he lost a leg to cancer, and this desk was located in the rear of the Chamber. So his wheelchair could move right up to the desk. But he never failed to rise and address the Senate even though he was confined to the wheelchair and had only one leg. He had the carpenters put a special place here where a bar could be fitted. There are two holes carved for wooden inserts in this desk to hold that bar. And the bar would rest inside the desk. Most Senators put the rule books of the Senate and a couple of other reference books in the top of their desk. But that had simply a bar there. He would put it there and pull himself up, and with that one leg stand erect to address the Senate because he respected the institution so much, its traditions, and its customs, always pointing out to other Senators that we should be in order; and having a tremendous influence because of his presence in this body.

The Senate is much better off because of his service here. The State of Mississippi is truly blessed to have been the State represented in the U.S. Senate by JOHN C. STENNIS.

Mr. NUNN. Mr. President, I would like to speak for a few minutes this evening on a subject close to my heart, and that is the memory of our former colleague, JOHN C. STENNIS, who passed away on Sunday, April 23, at the age of 93. Senator STENNIS served in this body for over 41 years, from 1947 to 1989.

For a long number of years, as I was growing up and following the activities of the Congress of the United States, Senator STENNIS was one of my heroes, and that was long before I came to U.S. Senate. JOHN STENNIS personified for me the image of what a Senator should be, and that image inspired me as I considered whether to seek a seat in the U.S. Senate in the 1972 election. From my first days in the Senate, JOHN STENNIS was a patient mentor, a strong and valuable colleague, and a cherished friend.

It has been said that "Great men are like eagles, they do not flock together. You find them one at a time, soaring alone, using their skills and strengths to reach new heights and to seek new horizons." Such an eagle was JOHN STENNIS.

JOHN STENNIS was a Senator's Senator. He was gentle and courteous in conduct, but tough and strong in conviction and in character. He was a man of singular purpose and broad vision—yet he was sensitive, very sensitive, to the needs and the wishes of others.

JOHN STENNIS personified the highest ideals of honor and integrity within the U.S. Senate. Members of the Senate from both parties and from widely divergent philosophical points of view treasured his steadfast leadership, his fearless courage, his kindness toward others, his unselfish devotion to public service, his love and respect for the U.S. Senate, the Congress, his reverence for the U.S. Constitution, and his unshakable faith in God.

Senator STENNIS was an outstanding lawyer and judge before he came to the Senate, and his judicial temperament marked every aspect of his Senate service. Time after time, the Senate turned to him to address the most difficult and divisive issues, such as the conduct of Senator Joseph McCarthy.

When the Senate established the first Select Committee on Standards and Conduct, which was the predecessor of the Ethics Committee, it was only natural that Senator STENNIS was selected as the first chairman. From 1961 to 1981, he

served as chairman of the Armed Services Committee. As chairman, he set a standard that all of his successors strive to meet. He was a man of conviction, strong, moral character, and absolute and total courage. Despite much adversity—a life-threatening gunshot wound in 1973, right after I came to the Senate that tragedy happened, also the loss in 1983 of his beloved wife, Miss Coy, and the challenges of serious operations in later years, through all of that he served the people of Mississippi and the people of this Nation with courage and with strength.

Chairman STENNIS was the Senate's preeminent authority on military affairs. His career spanned the period of the cold war. He came to the Senate in 1947, the year the Marshall plan was announced. He left in 1989, the year the Berlin Wall came down. He played a very large role in those events and all the events in between. He had guided this body through the difficult years of the post-Vietnam era and through the subsequent revitalization of America's Armed Forces.

Senator STENNIS consistently supported a strong national defense even in times when it was not popular to do so. I recall clearly the first few years after I came to the Senate in the early 1970's, when virtually all defense programs were being challenged one after another on the Senate floor. Senator STENNIS remained in the Chamber steadfast for hours and weeks and sometimes even months while the bill was pending in the Senate, making the case for maintaining a strong defense for our Nation.

At the same time, Senator STENNIS was downright intolerant of wasted and misspent dollars, and he consistently opposed those who simply wanted to write a Pentagon blank check.

Senator STENNIS remembered well the lessons of pre-World War II isolationism and he constantly opposed the recurring isolationist impulse, especially during the difficult post-Vietnam years. He was a rock of support for NATO at a time when there was strong opposition in the country to foreign military alliances. One of the first assignments he gave me when I got to the Senate was going to NATO and coming back and reporting to him on what I found there.

Yet he remained skeptical of excessive military involvement overseas and he expressed great concern about the plans for intervention in Vietnam before that intervention occurred. Once the Nation was committed to war, however, he always believed that American forces should be provided

with the means necessary and the backing to accomplish the objectives assigned to them.

It was my privilege to serve with him since coming to the Senate in 1973 until he left in 1989. He was my friend. He was my mentor. He remained my hero. I will miss him, and I will miss his sound advice and wise judgment. During my first campaign for the Senate in 1972, I came to Washington to meet with Senator STENNIS. This was before I was elected in November but after I had won the Democratic primary. I told him of my strong interest in military affairs, and I asked for his support in obtaining a seat on the Armed Services Committee if I should be elected.

I will always be grateful for his assurances of support and his assistance once I arrived, and certainly all of that played a very important part in my Senate career. With his support, I obtained a seat on the Committee on Armed Services, and I promptly sought his advice on how I should fulfill my duties. He told me, and I recall it well, that the best way to learn about the Defense Department and the military services was to deal directly and extensively with the men and women in uniform as well as the civilian employees of the Department of Defense. He encouraged me to listen to their advice and understand their point of view, to remain open and objective but always to at least listen.

He appointed me to be the chairman of the newly created Manpower and Personnel Subcommittee which gave me the opportunity to follow his advice in a great number of details and with considerable amount of time.

Over the years, I listened to and learned from Senator STENNIS as we debated the great issues of national security and other national affairs that faced our country in the 1970's and 1980's, and the lessons learned then still apply almost every day in the Senate in the 1990's. It was a marvelous education in the ways of the Senate, the conduct of national security affairs and the Constitution of the United States.

In 1987, Senator STENNIS became chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and I became chairman of the Armed Services Committee. It was my good fortune to have him continue to sit on that committee, to be able to begin my chairmanship with Senator STENNIS at my side, because I frequently consulted with him and benefited from his advice on the problems and issues that arose under the jurisdiction of the Armed Services Committee as well as many other matters that came to the floor of the Senate.

When Senator STENNIS first came to this body, he said in his classic direct style, "I wish to plow a straight furrow right down to the end of my row." There is no doubt he did exactly that. Senator STENNIS grew up on a farm and he knew how difficult it was to plow a straight furrow with a mule. You cannot plow a straight line to your immediate goal or mark a stake in the field unless you keep your eye on the distant point that establishes your sight line. That is the way JOHN STENNIS lived. He staked out his immediate goals, but he always kept his eye on the distant goal, the values and principles that enabled him to plow a straight furrow right to the end of the row.

Mr. President, I also remember well his advice to me when I came to the Senate. I hope I never will forget this. He said, "Sam, some new Senators grow and some simply swell. Make sure you continue to grow."

Mr. President, no higher honor has come my way than serving in the Senate with JOHN STENNIS. When he retired a few years back, I said then it was hard for me to imagine the Senate without JOHN STENNIS at his desk. It is now hard for me to imagine the Nation without the benefit of his talent, counsel, and his sterling example. We will miss him. We will all miss him. But his legacy of integrity and devoted service to the country will inspire the Senate and the Nation and young people particularly for generations to come.

Mr. President, Colleen, my wife, and I extend our sympathies to his son, John Hampton Stennis, his daughter, Mrs. Margaret Stennis Womble, and to all of his grandchildren and great grandchildren, indeed, to all of his family and his friends, and we thank the people of Mississippi for sending this giant to the Senate for the number of years that he served. The people of Mississippi and the people of this Nation can be very proud of Senator STENNIS. He will be remembered in history as one of the giants of the Senate. As long as there is a Senate, JOHN STENNIS will be remembered for his service, for his integrity, and for his character.

I thank the Chair.

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, I wish to pay honor today to one of the great Senators of this century, JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS. His roots began at the turn of the century as a young farmboy, in the fertile soil of Kemper County, MS. And while his subsequent career was to take him to far away places, and to positions of great honor in our Nation's Government, his beloved home country was never far from his

mind. Second only to service to his Nation, his dedication to the State of Mississippi was legendary.

He had amassed a distinguished record of public service, even before coming to the Senate in 1947. A Phi Beta Kappa law school graduate, he served as a State Representative, district attorney, and State circuit court judge. But it was here in the Senate where we shall best remember him. For more than 42 years, this Nation had the benefit of his wisdom and his guidance. He was the epitome of a Southern gentleman, and fairness and integrity were constants in his conduct. It was no mere happenstance that he was our first chairman of the Select Committee on Standards and Conduct. He was for decades the foremost guardian of our Nation's defense, forcefully and relentlessly pursuing strong defense programs throughout the Cold War years. His credentials as "Mr. Defense" made even more remarkable his misgivings and warnings to the Nation on involvement in combat in Vietnam, and he was a major author of our first war powers legislation. Chairman of Armed Services, chairman of Appropriations, President Pro Tempore—his achievements here on this floor and in this body have been equaled by few.

And who among us who knew him will ever forget his quiet courage? He quietly brushed aside the impacts of being shot and robbed while walking home. Years later, after losing a leg to cancer, he refused to yield to adversity—always rising to address this body, exuding dignity and determination with every action.

JOHN STENNIS was a patriot—a statesman—a Senator in the finest traditions of the word. He was one of the great lions of our assembly, and we will miss him. I read today where he once responded to a question about how he would like to be remembered. He said he hoped that one could say of him that "He did his best." Well, that he did. And his best will serve as a reminder and a standard to all of us, for generations to come.

Mr. President, the distinguished Senator from Georgia has touched on it when he said I wish to hoe a straight furrow right down the field, that was JOHN STENNIS. I can hear him now. He had those sayings about not swelling but growing in experience. The reverence and respect at that particular time was for Senators listening and learning and profiting from experience. Now the pledge is when you come to town you are not going to listen to anybody; you have a contract. You are going to vote for it. And by the way, do not give me

any of your experience because in 6 years I am gone. It is an entirely different atmosphere.

And when you see, as the Senator from Georgia has said in such eloquent terms, one of the finest, I am just deeply moved.

JOHN STENNIS and I became very close amid serving on committees together, particularly the Appropriations Committee later on.

But his family—the Peden clan—was from Fountain Inn, South Carolina, where Mr. Quillen was born along with other persons of eminence.

Invariably he would come back to South Carolina for the annual Peden clan reunion.

I figured, like the Senator from Georgia, that he was my sort of patron and leader. I listened to him many a time. I can tell you this. JOHN STENNIS was a man of this institution. We have Senator Byrd, who really reveres the Senate as an institution. JOHN STENNIS revered the U.S. Senate as an institution.

And as much as we liked each other and as close friends as we were, when I was chairman of the Budget Committee, he followed it very, very closely. When I was chairman back in 1980, he would say, “Fritz, you’re right. We have to somehow pay our bills. We are eating our seed corn.” He would make a little talk on the floor, not only with respect to military affairs, with tremendous authority, but with respect to fiscal matters.

And later on, when I was not the chairman of the committee, but I talked to him and tried to get a vote with respect to that budget, he would say, “I’m sticking with the chairman.” I know how you feel about this, but we have got to stay with the chairman.”

I can hear him now. He was an institution man. And that says a lot for the stability of the body and the courtesy here and the ethics that we have. He set the highest standard of anybody I have ever known.

I will never forget the afternoon he was shot. Invariably, we would get together down at the gym there at this time, 6:30 going on 7 o’clock, and get a workout. He said, “You’ve got to try to keep up with Strom.” That is my senior Senator. He said, “You will find if you stay in good physical shape, you will be able to keep up with Strom.”

We would work out. They had this wheel that you get down on your knees and you go forward and pull it backward and forward, and everything else. He was on that wheel the

afternoon he was shot. He left, if I remember correctly, about 6:15 and he was shot about 6:30 or 6:45.

He later related, when I went to see him, he said: "You know, I'm lucky. These fellows told me they wanted money and I did not have any money. And I said, "Take my watch, anything else, my ring."

And they cursed him and just fired five shots into his middle, his stomach, pancreas, and lungs—his insides.

He walked up to his house and talked to Miss Coy, Mrs. Stennis, his wife. He said, "Call an ambulance and call Walter Reed."

The ambulance came. And as they lifted him up, he remembered well hearing the chief of police, who had reached the home at that time, saying, "All right, take him over to George Washington Hospital." He raised up on that stretcher—the last he ever remembered, he said, prior to coming to some 9 hours later—and said, "Take me to Walter Reed. They are waiting for me there."

He said that was the real fortunate part, because when he got to Walter Reed, they had two Army surgeons who had finished a 2-week lecture course to the Army surgeons around the country on bullet wounds and shrapnel wounds and battlefield surgery and that kind of thing, particularly with respect to the loss of blood.

His operation took 9 hours. I will never forget him saying that. He said, "Had they not had that hard experience of when to stop and replenish and when to move forward . . ." They had to sew up all his innards or he would have been long since gone.

He came back and, as Senator Nunn points out, he did not slow down at all. Later, when the cancer got his legs, he did not.

As Senator Cochran pointed out—who sits at the STENNIS desk—he believed in this institution. He attended regularly all the sessions. He attended these debates.

I think television has ruined us all. Perhaps some would listen back in their offices. But you do not have the open exchange in the most deliberative body. You are here and get quips that staff gives you. They have prepared remarks and they run out and the Record is full and it appears it is a deliberative effort. Not at all.

Senator STENNIS did not like that, and he said so. He attended the debates. He attended all the votes and he kept going until the very, very end.

Unfortunately, he was not as conscious and alert as he could have been the last few years. I wanted to go to see him, but my staff who worked intimately with him on the Armed Services Committee and later on the Appropriations Committee, said that, "Poor JOHN would not recognize you right now."

So he has gone to his just reward after the most distinguished career in the U.S. Senate of over 41 years.

He was a Senator's Senator if there ever was one in this body. He was not only, as pointed out, an outstanding authority on military affairs, but he had that fundamental feel of paying the bills and being straightforward in his treatment here with all the Senators and setting the highest standard of ethical conduct that you could possibly imagine.

We need that inspiration today that, unfortunately, we do not have. We are all going to miss him very, very badly.

I am sorry tomorrow I cannot be at the session relative to the continued debate on product liability. I want to attend those services. But we will be back here at 4:45.

But it is good that we have those who have served with him and remember him so well that will be there and be with his family. His daughter retired first in Charleston, where her husband was the dean at the College of Charleston and later up in Greenville, South Carolina. So I am looking forward to seeing that family.

But I will never forget the inspiration he has given for all of us who have served with him to continue to serve.

WEDNESDAY, *April 26, 1995.*

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Senate Resolution 111, submitted earlier today by Senators Dole, Daschle, Cochran, and Lott.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.  
The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 111) relative to the death of the Honorable JOHN C. STENNIS, late a Senator from the State of Mississippi.

The Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the resolution is considered and agreed to.

So the resolution (S. Res. 111) was agreed to, as follows:

S. RES.

*Resolved*, That the Senate has heard with profound sorrow and deep regret the announcement of the death of the Honorable JOHN C. STENNIS, late a Senator from the State of Mississippi.

*Resolved*, That the Secretary communicate these resolutions to the House of Representatives and transmit an enrolled copy thereof to the family of the deceased.

*Resolved*, That when the Senate recesses today, it recess as a further mark of respect to the memory of the deceased Senator.

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote by which the resolution was agreed to.

Mr. FORD. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

THURSDAY, *April 27, 1995.*

Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, Senator JOHN STENNIS will long be remembered as the “conscience of the Senate” for his personal religious convictions and his many years of work on the Senate code of ethics. I will always think of him as a friend, and as one of the most effective chairmen of the Defense Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee. We shared many of the same beliefs in that the United States should always strive for the most effective Armed Forces in the world, and his leadership was always deserving of respect and admiration.

Despite physical ailments and the death of his beloved wife of 52 years, Senator STENNIS remained committed to this body and to his countrymen. He could always be found in his offices, never leaving until the Senate had adjourned for the day. He never gave up when he believed that he was right.

We need men and women who will fight for what they believe, and we should look to JOHN STENNIS as an excellent example of the forthrightness and dedication necessary to be effective leaders today.

Since Senator STENNIS retired from this body in 1989, the Senate has been denied his wisdom and his leadership. Our entire country mourns his loss.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I ask Unanimous consent that all Senators have until the close of business on May 10, 1995, to submit eulogies for our former colleague, the Senator from

Mississippi, Mr. STENNIS, and that at that time eulogies be printed as a Senate document.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TUESDAY, *May 2, 1995.*

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, it was my honor, a unique honor and special pleasure to serve in this body as the State colleague of JOHN C. STENNIS for 10 years. I deeply appreciated the bond of friendship, respect and trust that developed between us as we worked together to represent the interests of the State of Mississippi, and its citizens, in the U.S. Senate.

He had already established a reputation for intelligent leadership in this body when I arrived here, and I considered it my good fortune to be able to learn first hand from him and from his example. We were never rivals. We talked almost every day. He was always friendly and courteous to me, as he was with every other Senator. Although we were members of different political parties, that did not interfere with or detract from our relationship.

Our State has had its share of demagogues, as all other States have, and I have deplored their excesses and have been embarrassed by them. But in Senator STENNIS we saw a man as pure in heart and deed with less inclination to inflame the passions of the voters with exaggerated and flamboyant rhetoric as any we have ever elected to public office, and I admired him for that. He preferred to win a debate or an election on the basis of the well argued evidence, rather than to prey upon the fears or suspicions or prejudices of the audience.

He was the kind of Senator I try to be.

During his more than 41 years of service as a U.S. Senator, he was steady, conscientious and extraordinarily successful in every assignment and undertaking.

From his earliest days to his last days he gave the full measure of energy and his ability to the service of this body and to his State. He saw that as his duty, and he took that as seriously as anyone who has ever served here.

Others have recalled in their speeches the positions of responsibility he held and the legislation he authored and caused to be adopted. There were many of each, and they are

persuasive testimony to his effectiveness as a Senator. I will not try to recount all of them.

What may not be as easily measured is the influence he had in the Senate by the force of his character. He was the epitome of rectitude, of fairness, of decorum. His selection to be the first chairman of the Senate's Select Committee on Standards and Conduct was an illustration of the view that others in the body had of him, and the confidence they had in him to do what was right and just.

That is why he was so admired and appreciated in Mississippi. He got things done that helped our State, and its people, but he was more than an effective Senator. He was totally honest and trustworthy.

Mr. HATFIELD. Mr. President, I join with my colleagues today in remembering a man who embodied the U.S. Senate perhaps better than anyone, Senator JOHN C. STENNIS. Known as a Senator's Senator and the conscience of the institution, his presence for 41 years in the Senate was formidable, yet comforting and reassuring.

While his departure represents the passing of an era and is cause for our grief, it is also certainly cause to rejoice, for our friend is no doubt experiencing the rewards of a faithful heart and humble service. The legacy he leaves is one defined by his strength, integrity, and compassion.

Growing up in rural Mississippi, JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS learned the lessons that would last him a lifetime. Such lessons molded a man whose southern courtesy would become a mark of dignity and distinction. After receiving a law degree from the University of Virginia in 1927, young JOHN STENNIS spent 19 full years serving first as a State representative, then district prosecuting attorney and finally a circuit judge before being elected to the U.S. Senate in 1947.

Much in the same manner Senator STENNIS took so many of us under his wing, upon his arrival in the Senate, it was Senator Richard B. Russell who mentored the like-minded Mississippian. Soon, Senator STENNIS' sharp mind and unmatched work ethic earned him seats on the powerful Armed Services and Appropriations Committees. As chairman of the new Armed Services Preparedness Subcommittee, Senator STENNIS became a watchdog for the Department of Defense and the armed services. His fair investigations and scrutiny of these organizations quickly secured him a reputation which would never be tarnished: He was analytical, critical, and he held unwavering convictions.

The impact JOHN STENNIS had over this 41 years in the U.S. Senate surpasses description. Early in his Senate career he courageously spoke against McCarthyism. While assuring America would have the strongest and most capable military on the planet, he demanded accountability for each defense dollar spent. While always standing by his commitment to a strong military, he also began to see the growing danger of our Federal deficit and supported necessary defense budget cutbacks. A consummate professional, Chairman STENNIS commented more than once that his work was his play. Indeed, the joy with which he carried out our Nation's business was contagious—our Senator's Senator was humorous and likable, a role model to Members on both sides of the aisle.

The trials Senator STENNIS experienced during his sunset years in the U.S. Senate are almost unthinkable. He was shot twice by a burglar in 1973, but he returned to the work of the Senate; he lost his wife of 50 years in 1983, but he returned to the work of the Senate; and he lost a leg to cancer in 1984, but again he returned to the work of the Senate. Through all this, Senator STENNIS remained a commanding presence. As the distinguished senior Senator from Virginia once put it, Senator STENNIS “. . . had a great spiritual reservoir that came to his rescue and served as a solid, strong, foundation for him.” Well, the spiritual reservoir overflowed and served as a solid and strong foundation for the rest of us as well.

To more than one Senator, JOHN C. STENNIS was more than a colleague, even more than a mentor. Indeed, I am not the only Senator still in this body who would call Senator STENNIS a father figure—a figure worthy of our respect and deserving of our love. As long as he was in the Senate, I was his student—especially on the Appropriations Committee. Even when serving as chairman it was his counsel and leadership, his spirit and presence which guided me through the many hours of committee sessions and floor deliberations. To Senator JOHN C. STENNIS I owe a debt of gratitude that is both professional and personal. Seeing his patient and humble years presiding as chairman and as President Pro Tempore brought me peace of mind as I struggled through the difficult periods of my own service. And what would Senator STENNIS' response to this tribute be? Well, about 7 years ago, upon his retirement, he remarked that he “. . . was just trying to do what looked like to be the duty and keep it up the best he could.” He certainly did, and much, much more.

In the Book of Ezekiel, the third chapter, God declares the Prophet to be a watchman over the house of Israel. Ezekiel is commanded to warn the rebellious Israelites of God's impending judgment. Well, for the past several decades, JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS has been our watchman. He has always cared for, and often admonished, a dignified yet sometimes unruly body of U.S. Senators. He has and will continue to represent the history of this body, to represent the integrity of this body and to represent the stature of this body. For his years of service, leadership, and friendship, I am eternally grateful.

WEDNESDAY, *May 3, 1995.*

Mr. HEFLIN. Mr. President, I would like to add my voice to those which have already lamented the passing of our dear former colleague from Mississippi, JOHN STENNIS. About 25 of us went down to Mississippi last week to his funeral to say goodbye to one of the true giants in the history of this institution.

I recall about 10 years ago, some Senators, including myself, went to Senator STENNIS' hometown of DeKalb, Mississippi, where the people of DeKalb and surrounding areas had gathered to help celebrate his birthday. There was a great outpouring of love and genuine affection from friends and neighbors who had known him, his father, and others before him. No one really knows an individual in the same way that the people of his hometown do, and you could see that as they came together that day. There was an authentic feeling of closeness and friendship.

DeKalb is a small community, probably, smaller than the one I come from. The people there—the salt of the earth—knew their favorite son, JOHN STENNIS, for his character and integrity. The great outpouring of affection which was on display that day was the best evidence anyone ever needed of his graciousness, honesty, decency, and dedication to principle. All of us there could see that he stood very tall with those who knew him best.

JOHN STENNIS and I had much in common, both of us from southern families that go back for many generations. I used to enjoy the stories he would tell about his early years and how his father would raise cotton, transport it over to Alabama, and ship it down the river to Mobile. We were both

judges at one time, which gave us a unique perspective on government, individuals, and human nature in general.

JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS was born on August 3, 1901, in Kemper County, in the red clay hills of eastern Mississippi. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa from what is now Mississippi State University in 1923 and 4 years later, received his law degree from the University of Virginia. Just 1 year later, he was elected to the Mississippi Legislature. He later went on to serve as a district prosecuting attorney and circuit judge.

After 10 years on the bench, he ran in 1947 for the Senate seat held by the flamboyant Senator Theodore G. Bilbo and was elected over five opponents in November. His campaign theme was "I want to plow a straight furrow right down to the end of my row," and that philosophy guided the rest of his career in public service.

Until his last campaign, in 1982, he was never seriously challenged for reelection. Even then, facing future Republican National Committee Chairman Haley Barbour, then only 34, he won by a 2-to-1 margin.

In his early days in the Senate, JOHN would work 16 hours a day, staying in the Senate until it adjourned and then studying in the Library of Congress. He was meticulous in his work, someone who would go over something again and again until he finally mastered its complexities. He was a commanding presence in the Senate Chamber, where his voice carried such resonance. Even after we had microphones, he would often speak without one.

JOHN STENNIS served in the Senate longer than all but one other person in its history. When he retired on January 3, 1989, he had served for 41 years, 1 month, and 29 days. During the 1960's and 1970's, he was the most influential voice in Congress on military affairs. He was chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and was instrumental in the development of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, which was extremely important to both our States economically. He changed with the times, and began to support civil rights measures. Due to his integrity, diligence, and judgment, he was often called upon to investigate controversial political matters. It became routine to refer to him as the conscience of the Senate. He was a patriarch and teacher to younger Members.

In his later years, while his voice remained clear and his mind sharp, he experienced serious physical problems. He was shot and seriously wounded by a burglar at his home in 1973, and had a leg amputated in 1984 due to cancer, but

each time, he returned to his beloved Senate much sooner than had been expected.

After he retired, Senator STENNIS moved to Mississippi State University campus, home of the John C. Stennis Institute of Government and the John C. Stennis Center for Public Service, created by Congress to train young leaders. In one of his last interviews, he said, "I do believe the most important thing I can do now is to help young people understand the past and prepare for the future."

At that birthday celebration for JOHN STENNIS a decade ago, I had the honor and pleasure of speaking. I ended my speech with an old Irish prayer, which goes:

May the road rise to meet you.  
May the wind always be at your back.  
May the sun shine warm on your face.  
And the rains fall soft on your shoulders,  
And may the Good Lord hold you in the hollow of his hand during  
the remainder of your days.

He was a deeply religious man, and he told me he was particularly glad I used the prayer as a closing on that occasion.

JOHN STENNIS' days are now over, and his passing gives us reason to pause, reflect, and remember that this body is a decidedly better institution, and the United States a better nation, for having had the benefit of this statesman's service for so many years.

THURSDAY, *May 4, 1995.*

Mr. JOHNSTON. Mr. President, I would like to take a few minutes to comment on the life and career of our departed colleague and my good friend, Senator JOHN C. STENNIS, whose long and full life ended on Sunday, April 23, at the age of 93.

When Senator STENNIS retired in January 1989, he had been in the Senate 41 years, 1 month, and 29 days. This made his service in the Senate longer than all but one other person in history.

When I came to the U.S. Senate in November 1972, Senator STENNIS had been a Member of this body for nearly 25 years, and I had the great honor and privilege of serving with Senator STENNIS for 16 years—until he retired at the close of the 100th Congress in 1989. So it is with sadness

that I pay tribute to the memory of this departed colleague today.

JOHN STENNIS was a man who anyone coming to know him well would love and admire. I came to know him early on my arrival in the Senate. He was from my neighboring State, and I learned to follow his advice and leadership in certain areas of our service together.

It was also my privilege to serve with JOHN STENNIS on the Appropriations Committee beginning in 1975. We had nearly identical subcommittee assignments on the committee. He was chairman of the then Public Works Subcommittee, now the Energy and Water Subcommittee, when I came aboard and I succeeded him as chairman of that subcommittee when he became chairman of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee in 1978. We worked together on many matters of mutual interest, especially the Mississippi River and tributaries flood control works, and other infrastructure improvements throughout the country. He requested my assistance on the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway project and I was pleased to help floor manage the successful completion of that massive project which opened in 1985. The New York Times called the Tenn-Tom Senator STENNIS' "pyramid," and I am pleased to have had a role with Senator STENNIS on this impressive project.

Mr. President, in our committee assignments and work together, I was blessed as much as a fellow Senator could be blessed by association, counsel, and advice from our departed friend.

As I mentioned earlier, it has been my honor and privilege to be closely associated with Senator STENNIS for over 16 years of service together. As chairman and ranking member of the Appropriations Committee, Senator STENNIS designated and commissioned me to floor manage and handle various appropriations measures including supplemental bills and continuing resolutions. He was my chairman, and I was always happy and enthusiastic to carry out his wishes on these matters.

Mr. President, JOHN STENNIS was unqualifiedly and unreservedly a gentleman in the finest American tradition. He was a man whose word was as good as his bond. He had an almost reverent sense of discretion and personal taste in his relations to the greatest affairs of the Nation as in his relations to individuals. He was indeed a giant in the Senate.

JOHN STENNIS was a Senator's Senator. He was gentle and courteous in conduct, but tough and strong in conviction and

character. He personified the highest ideals of honor and integrity within the Senate.

JOHN STENNIS also possessed an extraordinary, and indomitable, fortitude, spirit, and fearless courage. I think of the several personal adversities he confronted with such wonderful dignity and demeanor. In 1973, he was shot by robbers in front of his house and left for dead. In 1983, his beloved wife of 52 years, he called her Miss Coy, passed away. In 1984, he lost a leg to cancer and was confined thereafter to a wheelchair but, Senator STENNIS bore these adversities with such great strength and courage that he served as a great inspiration to us all.

We are thankful for his character, for his modesty and selflessness, for his devotion to the Senate and his family, for his outgoing good will to his friends, for his high honor as a man.

Mr. President, I traveled with a number of my colleagues to the burial services for Senator STENNIS on Wednesday, April 26, at the Pinecrest Cemetery in DeKalb, Mississippi. He was born in DeKalb County in the red clay hills of eastern Mississippi and his mortal remains were buried there in the family plot next to his beloved "Miss Coy" and near his parents. Many of the Stennis' buried there were known as professional people—doctors, lawyers, teachers, and legislators. I was deeply impressed with the tribute given Senator STENNIS by his son, John Hampton Stennis. He stated Senator STENNIS' campaign pledge and creed when Senator STENNIS ran for the Senate in 1947, after having served as a circuit court judge for 10 years. That political creed was "I want to plow a straight furrow right down until the end of my row." Obviously, Senator STENNIS succeeded with that campaign pledge. And that philosophy seems to have guided his entire political career and his life. With those words John Hampton captured the spirit and philosophy of JOHN C. STENNIS.

Senator STENNIS taught through example. He was left both a challenge and a pattern of conduct for citizenship, as well as public life.

What can our citizens today find in JOHN C. STENNIS to emulate? A course of conduct that inspires confidence; absolute personal dedication; noble purposes always foremost as a motive and objective; standards in public and private life unexcelled; a willingness to serve; a willingness to lead and endlessly carry the penalty of leadership, and above all else, the attainment of being an honorable man.

I believe we find here a man and a record that fully live up to the everlasting call of the poet, Gilbert Holland, who said:

God, give us men! A time like this demands  
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith and ready hands;  
Men whom the lust of office does not kill;  
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;  
Men who possess opinions and a will;  
Men who have honor; men who will not lie;  
Strong men, who live above the fog  
In public duty and in private thinking.

Mary and I extend our heartfelt sympathy to the family of Senator STENNIS—his daughter, Mrs. Margaret Jane Womble, and son, John Hampton Stennis, and to his grandchildren of whom he was so proud.

FRIDAY, *May 5, 1995.*

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. President, I just want to say a few words about two U.S. Senators, one recently deceased and one recently embarked on a spirited new part of life, both of them dear friends of mine—Senator JOHN STENNIS of Mississippi and Senator David Pryor of Arkansas.

Mr. President, Senator STENNIS served with my father in the U.S. Senate. My father, Milward L. Simpson of Wyoming, served here from 1962 until 1966. He was a former Governor of Wyoming from 1954 until 1958, then came to the U.S. Senate, elected to fulfill a 4-year term, or remaining 4-year term, of a young man who had been elected to the Senate and died before he was sworn in. JOHN STENNIS and Mrs. Stennis immediately greeted my father when he came here in the most cordial way. They were very dear friends of my parents.

I must say that the philosophy of the western Senator, my father, and the southern gentleman, the Senator from Mississippi, were much the same with regard to national defense, fiscal matters, issues of substance in the social area, of the fabric of the country, and they became fast friends. I recall very distinctly my father called JOHN STENNIS “Mr. Integrity.”

My father invited JOHN STENNIS, Senator Willis Robertson, and two other persons to Wyoming. I recall very distinctly, I was a young man practicing law in Cody Wyoming, and they asked me to join them. Dad took his two Senate

friends fishing. You might imagine that JOHN had not ever seen too much of Rocky Mountain trout fishing nor the attire that accompanies such activities. I will never forget him coming from his cabin, very nattily dressed, and he said, "Milward, is that what we wear when we fish these trout?" My father said, "No, I think we need something more than that, something a little different." Off they went to enjoy a remarkable two days together.

My father loved JOHN STENNIS, and when my father was the recipient of the Milward L. Simpson Chair of Political Science at the University of Wyoming, JOHN STENNIS served as his honorary chairman, and said, "If there is anything I can do for my friend, Milward Simpson, I will do it." So it was a great affection and relationship, a true friendship. Then when I, of course, came to the Senate, JOHN STENNIS was the first to greet me. He said, "If there is anything I can do to help you or smooth your path here, let me do it." And he did.

He was more than charitable, kind, and attentive to me except, of course, when I tried to kill off the Tennessee Tombigbee Waterway. Then there was a definite strain in our relationship—momentary, fleeting. But he said, "Alan, I cannot believe that you would do that." And he was right. I did not believe I could, and did not. That great waterway is a great tribute to the personal perseverance of JOHN STENNIS.

But what he told me—and I shall never forget—he said "Alan, I have been watching you." I had been here maybe 4 years at the time. "I have seen you work. I know how hard you work." He really buoyed me up. He said, "You want to remember something in the Senate." He said, "People come here, and some grow and some swell." I shall never forget the phrase. "Some grow and some swell." Indeed, we know both categories. I think I have done a little of both. But when I did swell, I was put down a peg or two, to get back to growing instead of swelling. So I want to just pay tribute to JOHN STENNIS, and I know my dear parents, both gone too, would have wanted me to pay tribute to a very dear and lovely friend, and to his memory, which will certainly be present in this Chamber for the remainder of time. He was deeply loved, a man of great stature, and truly a wonderful gentleman, truly a gentleman.

So God bless his son and his daughter who survive him. They have a wonderful heritage.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, recently I received a letter from a Dr. Wayne M. Miller of Killeen, Texas. The letter was in reference to my recent eulogy for the late and beloved Senator JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS.

Dr. Miller wrote that he was deeply moved by the tribute, so much so that he sat down and composed a poem after hearing it. I call attention to the letter and to the poem enclosed with it because it demonstrates not only the sensitivity and talent of the writer, but also the power and the passion which words can evoke.

In these days of often destructive, rude, and even dangerous rhetoric, let us stop and reflect on the tremendous power of our words.

Such reflection may help those of us in public life and in the media to strive to use our voices to inspire rather than to inflame.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Dr. Wayne M. Miller's letter and poem be printed in the Record.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in Record, as follows:

KILLEEN, TX,  
*April 27, 1995.*

U.S. Senator ROBERT C. BYRD,  
*Hart Senate Office Building,*  
*Washington, DC.*

Dear Senator Byrd, when I tuned in to a C-Span telecast last night, I caught the latter part of your eloquent tribute to the late Senator STENNIS. It was truly one of the greatest speeches I have ever heard. To be sure, it had the two basic ingredients of a great speech: substantive thinking, and rhetorical skills to effectively express it.

Although I am not a West Virginian, I have admired your accomplishments and the stature of your leadership. I was reared just eighty miles north of Wheeling, in a small town of Harmony, Pennsylvania. After serving as chaplain in the Air Force, I became a field director for American Red Cross and am now retired with that organization. For the past sixteen years I have been teaching composition and rhetoric at Central Texas College.

Would it be possible to have a copy of your outstanding speech? I would be ever so grateful!

I am so happy that we still have statesmen of your caliber in our nation's capital. I am enclosing a poem which I wrote after listening to you on television. It reflects, in some small measure, my responsiveness to your deeply, moving words.

Respectfully,

*Wayne M. Miller.*

Enclosure.

To the Honorable Mr. Byrd, Distinguished U.S. Senator from the State of West Virginia, after hearing the stirring tribute delivered on the floor of Congress for the late Senator JOHN STENNIS of Mississippi (1901-1995):

Your well selected words, like highly polished marble  
(Uniquely Mr. Byrd's!)  
Were fitted in a pyramid of architectural marvel-  
Arousing such a sentiment in the shaping of your thoughts  
Keen emotions were unharnessed from what common birth allots  
And, untouted, undergirds  
The daily warp and woof of our fabric of existence.  
You talked about our too brief pilgrimage,  
And you pricked our unsuspecting Achilles Heel  
When you sharpened our awareness of fragility  
That stamps the mold of our mortality-  
And your sobering reflection of the little bird  
That fluttered through the crack from the raging storm  
Into the blinding light of the banquet hall,  
And then, so very soon, fluttered out again-  
Demonstrated our fitful wandering,  
Our groping sightlessness, our straining stammering,  
Our hurried exit from the ever-blinding light  
Of the babbling banquet hall and "much ado about nothing."  
You addressed so poignantly the human predicament  
In the never ending journey "east of Eden"—  
Never ending, that is,  
Until that special day of reckoning  
When all our shattered dreams, our broken vows . . .  
Will have their consummation  
In all-glorious transformation  
From the ugly to the beautiful  
And the painful to the joyful  
Where there will be no night,  
No parting and no sorrow.  
You led us like thirsting sheep  
To the oasis of our being—  
The wells of spiritual refreshment  
There first we saw the mirroring of our impoverished selves  
And then experienced the waters that revive us  
And show us the way of day.  
You showed us what we are—  
And what we can become  
In the "long journey into night"  
While we suffer in our little rooms,  
Waiting for the fateful end—  
To be transposed by the Great Composer  
From our discords into harmonies,  
Rejoicing with the Children of the Light.

Wayne Meredith Miller, 1995 Nominee for Poet of the Year.



## Proceedings in the House

MONDAY, *May 1, 1995.*

### MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed a resolution of the following title, in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

#### S. RES. 111

*Resolved*, That the Senate has heard with profound sorrow and deep regret the announcement of the death of the Honorable JOHN C. STENNIS, late a Senator from the State of Mississippi.

*Resolved*, That the Secretary communicate these resolutions to the House of Representatives and transmit an enrolled copy thereof to the family of the deceased.

*Resolved*, That when the Senate recesses today, it recess as a further mark of respect to the memory of the deceased Senator.

TUESDAY, *May 2, 1995.*

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. Montgomery) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, former Mississippi Senator JOHN C. STENNIS died on April 23 at the age of 93. He retired from the Senate in 1989. In the passage of time, we sometimes forget events and accomplishments, but we will not forget Senator STENNIS.

History will record Senator STENNIS as one of the great statesmen of the 20th century. He was so well respected in Washington as a southern gentleman and as a man of unquestioned integrity and character. But along with his courtly southern manner, Senator STENNIS was an effective leader who was tough when it came to maintaining a strong national defense and in looking out for his native state.

Through more than 40 years in the Nation's capital, his first priority was to put Mississippi first.

The legacy of JOHN STENNIS can be seen throughout the state of Mississippi, from the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway in the north, to Meridian's Naval Air Station to the Stennis Space Center on the gulf coast. At points in between, he was responsible for bringing Federal funds for water systems and economic development projects that helped improve the lives of his fellow Mississippians.

As chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, he felt the United States should always deal from a position of military strength. He worked hard to see that our fighting men and women, both in the active forces and the National Guard and Reserve, had the equipment and training they needed to do the job.

In honor of Senator STENNIS' commitment to the military, Ronald Reagan announced during his presidency that the Navy's next aircraft carrier would be named the *U.S.S. John C. Stennis*. The ship is undergoing sea trials this spring and summer and will be officially commissioned later this year.

Senator STENNIS always called me "his Congressman" since I represented his hometown of DeKalb in Kemper County. It was a great honor to serve as his Congressman for 28 years and his colleague for 23. He was a remarkable man whose legacy will live on, here in Washington and in his beloved Mississippi.

## Legislative Censure

*November 12, 1954.*

### FOR CENSURE OF SENATOR MCCARTHY

Senator JOHN C. STENNIS, Democrat of Mississippi, spoke before the United States Senate on November 12, 1954, in support of the resolution to censure Senator Joseph McCarthy.

Senator STENNIS, a Member of the Senate's special censure committee, indicted Senator McCarthy for his alleged continued abuse of the Senate.

The Senate had met in extraordinary session four days before to consider the report of the Select Committee appointed to study the censure charges.

The bipartisan six-man group, under Chairman Senator Arthur Watkins, Utah Republican, was set up in August. On September 27, grounds for censure on two counts were presented: (1) Senator McCarthy had acted contemptuously toward a Senate Subcommittee investigating charges against him involving his finances; (2) Senator McCarthy had used "reprehensible" language to Brigadier General Ralph Zwicker during hearings on the discharge of Major Irving Peress, an Army dentist accused of pro-communism. Behind these charges was the implication that his investigating methods, his denunciation of all who opposed him, his defiance of President Eisenhower's authority, brought into disrepute the United States Senate.

Although the debate was scheduled to begin on November 10, Senator McCarthy on November 9 released a long speech that he proposed to give before the Senate the next day. (He did not deliver it but inserted it in the Record.) Statements in that "speech" further inflamed some Senators.

Senator Watkins opened the debate. Senator McCarthy subjected him to long cross-examination. Senator Case of South Dakota, also on the Select Committee, suggested that if Senator McCarthy would apologize for charge number one both charges might be handled without censure.

In this atmosphere Senator STENNIS spoke in ringing tones and with much physical aggressiveness before the crowded galleries and chamber. He made the issue not militancy against communism, as Senator McCarthy argued it should be, but McCarthyism—"political morality in senatorial conduct." Senator Bricker, among others, replied.

On Monday, November 15, Senator Jenner led the debate for Senator McCarthy, and Senator Ervin, of North Carolina, called for censure. On November 16, Senators Watkins, Welker, and Case continued the debate, and Senator McCarthy entered the Naval Hospital at Bethesda, MD, with a disabled elbow. The Senate adjourned from November 18 until November 29.

On Thursday, December 2, after three days of debate and preliminary voting on resolutions to soften the resolution, the Senate voted 67 to 22 to "condemn" the Wisconsin Senator.

On January 20, 1955, the Senator lost his chairmanship of the Government Operations Committee and its Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations as a result of the 1954 elections, which returned a Democratic majority to the Senate. Speculation continued concerning his role as aggressive fighter against communistic subversion and as spokesman for Republican dissenters against Eisenhower.

Mr. President, what is the question here? It is purely a question of political morality in senatorial conduct. To be more precise, the question is whether I, as a Senator, approve or disapprove of these proven acts as proper standards of senatorial conduct. Each Senator must make up his own mind about what are the proper standards; but, as Senators, let us remember that it is not as individuals that we are to make up our minds in this case. We are to make them up as representatives of the 161 million people of the United States; we are setting standards of conduct for a time-proven and time-tested institution which belongs to the people—the United States Senate. . . .

This is not merely a question of an attack upon a Member of the Committee. I would not pass it by if it were. But that is not all it was. As I recall, I am the Member of the Committee who said that the remarks of the junior Senator from Wisconsin with reference to Senator Hendrickson belong in the category relating to the treatment of the Committee, because the Senator from New Jersey was a Member of that Committee, and the insult to him was not merely an insult to an individual. It was an insult to the constituted authority

of the Senate, which was carrying out a constitutional mission. Moreover, there was an insult to a constitutional authority, the personnel of which had recently been expressly approved, including Senator Hendrickson, by a unanimous vote of the Senate.

Is it a sufficient answer to say, "Joe has done some good in hunting Communists"? Shall we destroy what have been considered the necessary processes in carrying out one mission because a man has done good in another field, on another mission? I cannot assent to such an argument.

In view of the facts which I have related, do Senators believe that the mission of the Subcommittee was obstructed? Do Senators think there was an obstruction of justice? Of course, they do. There is no way to avoid such a conclusion. That is the final reason why I say there is no escape from an affirmative charge. Such conduct must be condemned. Otherwise, when challenge is made of these facts, and we fail to disapprove them, we adopt them as a standard. Let us be clear. Let us tell the youth of this country, "This is the way. This is the high road of which the Senate approves, and upon which it likes to travel in the consideration of public business." That is the conclusion of this Member of the Committee.

That is not all. After the report was filed and the subject set for special consideration by the Senate, and after the Senate had reassembled, the first words to be uttered on the floor by this same source of conduct were a continuation of the slush and the slime which have been poured on other committees which were charged with the duty of trying to look into the conduct. I have no personal resentment toward the junior Senator from Wisconsin for having made such statements. I feel sorry for him for having done so. I refer to Senator McCarthy's speech which was not delivered on the floor, but released to the press and inserted in the Congressional Record on the first day of the debate. It represented a continuation of the same pattern, his same course of conduct. It is another spot on the escutcheon of the Senate, another splash and splatter.

Every Senator must decide this case for himself. As for the Senator from Mississippi, I cannot approve such slush and slime as a proper standard of senatorial conduct as we labor to carry on and transact the business of the people. For that reason, and that reason alone, I state my position here.

I repeat that the question before the Senate is not a question of fact. The facts are agreed upon. The question is not,

“Do we approve or disapprove of everything that was done or everything that was said by every Member of the Committee at every turn throughout these proceedings?” The question is one purely of political morality in senatorial conduct. To be precise, the question is, “As a Senator, and not merely as an individual, do I approve or do I disapprove of these proven facts as proper standards of senatorial conduct?”

If we approve, then something big and fine will have gone from this Chamber and something wrong, something representing a wrong course, will have entered and gotten itself accepted as a proper standard of conduct.

As we consider that question, I hope that in some way each Senator will seek and finally find divine guidance in deciding what his duty is, and, from the same source, find help and encouragement in performing that duty.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

**Memorial Services for  
John Cornelius Stennis**



A SERVICE  
in  
THANKSGIVING  
for  
THE LIFE  
of  
The Honorable  
John Cornelius Stennis

Pinecrest Cemetery  
DeKalb, Mississippi

APRIL 26, 1995

11:00 A.M.

The liturgy, for Burial, is characterized by joy, in the certainty that “neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

This joy, however, does not make human grief unchristian. The very love we have for each other in Christ brings deep sorrow when we are parted by death. Jesus himself wept at the grave of his friend. So, while we rejoice that one we love has entered into the nearer presence of our Lord, we sorrow in sympathy with those who mourn.

May the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace.

## THE OFFICE FOR THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

Trumpet Hymn—Faith of Our Fathers.  
Opening Sentences.

### THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

O God of grace and glory, we remember before You this day our brother JOHN. We thank You for giving him to us, his family and friends, to know and to love as a companion on our earthly pilgrimage. In Your boundless compassion, console us who mourn. Give us faith to see in death the gate of eternal life, so that in quiet confidence we may continue our course on Earth, until, by Your call, we are reunited with those who have gone before; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Most merciful God, whose wisdom is beyond our understanding, deal graciously with this family in their grief. Surround them with Your love, that they may not be overwhelmed by their loss, but have confidence in Your goodness, and strength to meet the days to come; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Lesson From Micah—Micah 6:8 (New English Bible).

A Reading—John Hampton Stennis.

A lesson From Philippians—Philippians 4:8–9.

The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to Matthew—Matthew 25:31–40.

### THE HOMILY

The Reverend Jerry A. McBride.

### THE APOSTLES' CREED

In the assurance of eternal life given at Baptism, let us proclaim our faith and say,

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day He rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed by Thy Name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on Earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Prayers  
The Committal  
The Blessing  
The Dismissal  
Trumpet Hymn—America the Beautiful

THE CLERGY

The Reverend Jerry A. McBride  
The Reverend Morris K. Thompson, Jr.  
The Reverend Wally Bumpas  
The Reverend Julian Stennis

PALL BEARERS

Fred Harbour  
Clyde Herron  
James Spinks  
Authur Nester  
Richard Ball  
Norman McKenzie  
Robert McLaurin

TRUMPETER

Tim Lavigne, Department of Music, Mississippi State University

**A Lesson From Micah (6:8 New English Bible)**

God has told you what is good;  
and what is it that the Lord asks of you?  
Only to act justly, to love loyalty,  
to walk wisely before your God.



**Remarks of John Hampton Stennis**

My sister, Margaret Jane, and I as we grew up in Kemper County during the 1940's were required to memorize passages. My mother handled the Bible; my father taught us patriotic sayings and poems.

Among the first was the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America. Dad taught from the small plaque of the flag and the pledge (two fewer stars and two fewer words, but for him no different meaning) that I now hold. We were in the midst of World War II. He illustrated the meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance by Judge Learned Hands' address at "I Am An American Day," entitled "The Spirit of Liberty":

"The spirit of liberty is the spirit which is not too sure that it is right; the spirit of liberty is the spirit which seeks to understand the minds of other men and women; the spirit of liberty is the spirit which weighs their interests alongside its own without bias; the spirit of liberty remembers that not even a sparrow falls to earth unheeded; the spirit of liberty is the spirit of Him who, near two thousand years ago, taught mankind that lesson it has never learned, but has never quite forgotten; that there may be a kingdom where the least shall be heard and considered side by side with the greatest."

Our Dad's patriotism did not consist of short and frenzied outbursts of emotion, but in the tranquil and steady dedication of a lifetime.

My father's oldest sister, Aunt Janie, had given him a copy of One Hundred and One Famous Poems With a Prose Supplement. We learned almost all these poems and many others, I shall share a few lines from some.

"BE STRONG," MALTBY DAVENPORT BABCOCK

BE STRONG!

We are not here to play, to dream, to drift;  
We have hard work to do, and loads to lift;  
Shun not the struggle—face it 'tis God's gift.

"A PSALM OF LIFE," HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,  
Life is but an empty dream!—  
For the soul is dead that slumbers,  
And things are not what they seem.  
Life is real! Life is earnest!

And the grave is not its goal  
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,  
Was not spoken of the soul.

Let us then be up and doing,  
With a heart for any fate;  
Still achieving, still pursuing,  
Learn to labor and to wait.

“ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCH-YARD,” THOMAS GRAY

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,  
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;  
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile  
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,  
Awaits alike the inevitable hour:  
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid  
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;  
Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed,  
Or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre;

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page,  
Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll;  
Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,  
And froze the genial current of the soul.

The applause of list'ning senates to command,  
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,  
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,  
And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade; nor circumscribed alone  
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined;  
Forbade to wade thro' slaughter to a throne,  
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind.

“THE MAN WITH THE HOE,” EDWIN MARKHAM

God made man in his own image,  
in the image of God made He him.—Genesis.

Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans  
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,  
The emptiness of ages in his face,  
And on his back the burden of the world.  
Who made him dead to rapture and despair,  
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,  
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?  
Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?

Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?  
Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?

There is no shape more terrible than this—  
More tongued with censure of the world's blind greed—  
More filled with signs and portents for the soul—  
More packt with danger to the universe.

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,  
How will the future reckon with this Man?  
How answer his brute question in that hour  
When whirlwinds of rebellion shake all shores?  
How will it be with kingdoms and with kings—  
With those who shaped him to the thing he is—  
When this dumb Terror shall rise to judge the world,  
After the silence of the centuries?

“ULYSSES,” ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

Come, my friends,  
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world. . . .  
for my purpose holds  
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths  
Of all the western stars, until I die.  
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:  
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,  
And see the great Archilles, whom we knew.  
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and though  
We are not now that strength which in old days  
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;  
One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will  
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

From an unknown poem about a young boy who watched his father go to  
the field behind a mule-drawn plow at sunrise and return at dusk:

I believe my father had a pact with God  
To guide his plow and keep his furrow straight.



### Homily

By The Reverend Jerry Allan McBride

When all is said and done, the most important words that will be said about JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS will not be that he was a great statesman and United States Senator. He was certainly all of that; but he was so much more. In all of the ways by which we measure value in our society and our world, the person and spirit of this man transcended common worth. For the measure of JOHN STENNIS is found in his character and dignity. To his wife, he was a devoted husband and partner. To his children and grandchildren he was a loving father and grandfather and a wise teacher. To his friends

he was a man whose friendship could always be counted on. To his country he was a leader who found his “power” only in the commitment to service. And to his State he was a shining example for the very best that is in all of us.

Above all, JOHN STENNIS was a man of faith. He spent his life in ministry that was just as dedicated as if he had donned the clerical robes of a minister in his beloved DeKalb Presbyterian Church. JOHN STENNIS believed that success was ultimately measured in terms of how faithful he was to the trust that the people had placed in him. And by all accounts, the trust of the people was never betrayed, and although he rose to the highest levels of political power, he never forgot who sent him, and what his mission was. I was so very touched when I walked into the Senator’s home. It is a true monument to the goodness of JOHN STENNIS and his family. The simplicity of this great man’s surroundings spoke of an inner wisdom and a real sense of what is ultimately important; and what is not. JOHN STENNIS never forgot where he came from and subsequently he never forgot who he was. The great prophet of social justice in the eighth century B.C., Micah, asks the question, “What is it that the Lord asks of you?” And the answer, “to act justly, to love loyally, and to walk wisely before our God,” describes the life of this true servant of the people.

So we gather today for all of the reasons that people come together at a time like this. We gather to celebrate the long and meaningful life of JOHN STENNIS, and we gather to mourn. Both are a part of the cycle of creation. This great man meant so much to so many, and even though I did not know him personally, he knew me. And he knew all of the people who farmed the land, and worked the hills, and built the towns and cities of this our beloved State. JOHN STENNIS knew all Mississippians, and all Americans, and for that matter all people everywhere, and he left us such a legacy, and an example of how to live life as a public servant and a citizen of the world.

In the cynical, egocentric, and violent world in which we live, it is important that we follow the good example that JOHN STENNIS has left us. He was so many things. He was ever a gentleman who never forgot that integrity was the only way to fully honor the trust of the people. He was a man of civility who never forgot that there is a right and a wrong way for men and women to disagree, and then come to a solution that will benefit the common good. Above all, JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS was a man who, when he saw injustice would have no part of it, and he called us all to a higher standard of fairness and justice. He was a man who believed that service meant giving to others rather than gathering for himself.

In his campaign literature for the 1947 senatorial race, JOHN STENNIS stated what would be the standard for his life and his public service when he wrote:

“I want to go to Washington as the free and unfettered servant of the great body of the people who actually carry the burden of everyday life. I want to plow a straight furrow right down to the end of my row. This is my political religion and I have lived by it too long to abandon it now. I base my appeal to you on this simple creed, and with it I shall rise and fall.”

By all accounts, JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS always remembered the “great body of the people who actually carry the burden of everyday life.” He remembered them because he was one of them. And by all measures, it can be said that JOHN STENNIS did in fact “plow a straight furrow.” And not only did he plow it, but he watered, and tended, and harvested, and then he plowed again, and harvested again. JOHN STENNIS plowed the straight furrow and we are better because of who he was and what he did for every one of us. We will miss JOHN STENNIS but because of the fruits of his life, which were justice, compassion, and integrity, we will never forget the furrow he plowed.



## **Condolences and Tributes**



# Christening of the Aircraft Carrier John C. Stennis CVN-74

NEWPORT NEWS SHIPBUILDING, NOVEMBER 11, 1993

Senator JOHN C. STENNIS had a sign on his desk while he served in Washington. It said: "Look Ahead."

That sign was a symbol of this great man's forward-thinking philosophy. Senator STENNIS believed strongly in national defense preparedness, and he fought hard for a fleet of modern ships. That's one reason the Senator has frequently been called the "Father of America's Modern Navy."

That same "Look Ahead" philosophy prevails here at Newport News Shipbuilding. We look forward as we have throughout our history to building each ship the very best we can and to improving our efficiency and cost effectiveness.

Nimitz, the first ship of the class, was constructed in 7 years. Stennis will be delivered in less than 5 years. This constant improvement is the result of countless ideas and suggestions from NNS employees to do things better, faster and smarter.

Through a program we call "Opportunity For Improvement," employees have shown that they are not satisfied with the status quo. They have demonstrated time and again that they "Look Ahead" by getting involved and by contributing their ideas on how to make a good ship even better.

The involvement of our employees in this ship's construction is duplicated throughout the Shipyard—in shops, on platens, in offices. That kind of effort echoes our founder Collis P. Huntington's admonition to "always build good ships." We always will.

W.R. PHILLIPS, JR.,  
*President and Chief Executive Officer.*



JOHN C. STENNIS, FATHER OF AMERICA'S MODERN NAVY

(By Mack R. Herring, Historian, John C. Stennis Space Center, Mississippi)

U.S. Senator JOHN C. STENNIS is the senior statesman honored with the christening of the nuclear aircraft carrier CVN-74 in his name. A living legend in American politics, JOHN STENNIS occupies a unique place of honor that he earned in more than four decades of distinguished service in the United States Senate.

The courtly Senator from Mississippi, who was unanimously elected President Pro Tempore of the Senate for the 100th Congress, has been justly referred to as "the father of America's modern Navy" because of his years of consistent and steadfast support. He was compared to a great "ship of the line" by former President Ronald Reagan. When announcing that the aircraft carrier would be named for JOHN STENNIS, President Reagan said, "Senator, when I consider your career there's a certain comparison that

comes to my mind. In troubled places you've brought calm resolve, like one of the many great fighting ships you've done so much to obtain for the Navy; serene, self possessed but like a great ship of the line, possessed of a high sense of purpose."

The high sense of purpose that President Reagan spoke of was one of the many laudable descriptions of character earned by Senator STENNIS. The word "statesman" is the term that most associate with this great American, who began his career as a farmer in the gentle hills of Kemper County, Mississippi. From his roots there, he adopted a simple motto early in his political career that became his creed and the foundation for his steadfast devotion to honesty and hard work in every task he undertook: "I will plow a straight furrow right down to the end of the row."

The Presidents he served with, from Truman to Reagan, recognized his honesty and integrity and all turned to him for help and counsel during difficult times. Every President knew of Senator STENNIS' high standing with his colleagues, and recognized the influence he carried within the Senate. He always kept his relationships with the Presidents in what he believed to be their proper perspective. When asked how many Presidents he served "under," STENNIS replied, "I did not serve under any President. I served with eight Presidents."

As Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee (1969–1980), Senator STENNIS stood firm for U.S. military superiority. He fought and won many battles on the floor of the Senate on behalf of the American military men and women. A strong Navy, second to none in the world, was always at the top of JOHN STENNIS' agenda.

"The Senator recognized that America is an 'island nation' and had to have a Navy that was always capable of defending its shores and carrying the message of peace through strength throughout the world," said Rex Buffington, executive director at the John C. Stennis Center for Public Service. "Senator STENNIS felt the very presence of the carriers presented a formidable force to reckon with and were a stabilizing influence anywhere they sailed," Buffington recalls.

Senator STENNIS' philosophy as relating to the Navy was a theme at the keel laying ceremony for the nuclear-powered cruiser USS Mississippi, at Newport News Shipbuilding, in February 1975. His speech recounted the Navy's strength:

"From my vantage point for getting the full facts and knowing the needs, I know that a strong and powerful Navy—a Navy second to none—is vital and essential to the Nation's security.

"Such a Navy is needed to go into battle if war should be forced upon us. Of equal importance, such a Navy is needed in time of peace to provide the evident muscle and sinew to enforce our foreign policy and, if necessary, to call the bluff of a would-be-aggressor."

Frank Sullivan, former staff director for the Senate Appropriations Committee, said the very ship that is christened in STENNIS' name would not have become a reality without the Senator's arduous support. "In fact," Sullivan said, "Senator STENNIS was a leader in obtaining the last four carriers for the Navy."

In 1979, Senator STENNIS, in a statement of his staunch support of the nuclear carrier, said, "It carries everything and goes full strength and is ready to fight or go into action within minutes after it arrives at its destination. As I say, they get there ready to go.

"There is nothing that compares with it when it comes to deterrence, nothing this side of all-out nuclear war."

Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia, present Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said of Senator STENNIS, "His career in the Senate and particularly his leadership of the Armed Services Committee were an inspiration to me when I decided to run for the United States Senate. As chairman, he set a standard that all of his successors strive to meet. For me, no higher honor has come my way than serving in the United States Senate with this soaring eagle."

President Reagan, who depended on Senator STENNIS to be his "stalwart" for establishing a strong national defense in the waning years of the Cold War, said, "Senator STENNIS led some of the most crucial legislative battles in history on behalf of our national defense."

Another President, Richard Nixon, said, "I recall vividly a telephone conversation I had as President with JOHN STENNIS. I thanked him for the indispensable role he had played in helping us to get a defense appropriation bill through the Senate. And he replied, 'Thank you, Mr. President, but to be frank, I didn't do it for you. I did it for my country.'"

On Armed Services, STENNIS always tried to give Presidents the benefit of the doubt. On balance, he was a friend of the Pentagon over the years, one inclined to trust its leadership when the value of a particular weapons system was questioned. But he was never willing to sign a blank check for defense spending requests, and he demanded careful and detailed scrutiny of every proposed outlay. "I was raised to believe that waste was a sin," he said. "To support military readiness, a Senator does not have to be a wastrel," he observed on another occasion.

Senator J. Bennett Johnston of Louisiana said that "only a handful" in the history of the country have contributed as much to the national defense as Senator STENNIS.

His influence and power spanned the 41 years he served in the Senate.

The Washington Star wrote in 1975, "STENNIS is 'Mr. Integrity,' the embodiment of honor and fairness."

In 1982, the Washington Post wrote, "No one in the Senate questions STENNIS' integrity or contribution to that body. The possessor of a tremendous booming voice, a Phi Beta Kappa key, and a universal reputation for fair-mindedness which has long been one of his dominating features, he is a Senator's Senator, an advisor to Presidents, a man of enormous power and influence."

Three years later, the New York Times said, "He is the undisputed patriarch of the Senate, a teacher to younger Members, and conscience for the entire institution. He seldom makes national headlines but he wields considerable influence in the Senate itself and that influence came from the quality of his personal judgment."

George Will, in a syndicated column in 1986, compared the Senator's long and steady career to the "Big River" that runs along the border of his home state of Mississippi. Will wrote, "Early in many a morning, when JOHN STENNIS arrives at work, the United States Capitol is as quiet as vespers. The only voices heard have the soft sound of ashes falling upon ashes. Soon the place is noisy. He never has been, never will be. He is a Senator of the old school, the last of that school of no-waste motion and few public flourishes."

"His talk is lightly laced with regional and archaic phrases as when, speaking of a friend from distant youth, he says, 'He lived over near the Big River.' There is a faint, sweet echo of vanished America in that almost reverent reference to a dominating geographic fact."

“All flesh is as grass, but some flesh, like some grass, is especially durable. Few people have ever endured in Washington longer than the Senator from Mississippi. May his career flow on, like the Big River.”

Senator George Mitchell of Maine, Senate Majority Leader, said: “Some men spend a lifetime striving to achieve and maintain respect. Senator STENNIS has lived such a life and set an example for all of us to follow.”

STENNIS’ manners are as polished as his ethics. He once interrupted an important Senate hearing in order to guide a late-arriving woman spectator to a seat. And a dirt-farmer constituent who visited his Senate office received as much courtesy as a Secretary of Defense.

Politically and publicly, Senator STENNIS projected a character with pride, self-respect, extreme honesty, unquestionable integrity and sincerity. Privately, STENNIS is the same man. He claims his “image” is due entirely to his strict following of what he calls his personal code developed during his upbringing and formative years in Kemper County, Mississippi.

JOHN STENNIS was born August 3, 1901, in the Kipling community, about eight miles south of DeKalb. His parents were Hampton Howell and Cornelia (Adams) Stennis. He came from a long line of country doctors, though his father was a farmer and merchant in DeKalb. His father taught him responsibility and hard work at an early age, tenets he would incorporate into his personal code and practice in every aspect of his life. He had three older sisters who practiced their “school teaching” on him, giving young JOHN a head start with special tutoring in manners as well as the books. His mother carefully trained him to always “do his best and look his best.”

It was this type of family background and preparation that helped mold the 18-year-old farm boy who stepped off the train at Mississippi A&M (later to become Mississippi State University) in the fall of 1919. He quickly began to form friendships and earn confidence that would give him opportunities for service unsurpassed by anyone in Mississippi history. By the time he was graduated in 1923, he was showing signs of the leadership that would become legend.

Senator STENNIS put great stock in education or “training.” But he also knew that education was not the only preparation one needed. He once told an interviewer that his mother and father missed a college education because of “the war,” meaning the Civil War. “Down there for the last hundred years,” STENNIS said, “people lacked for money and lacked for worldly things. But they got plenty of things money can’t buy—like good neighbors, good friends, and the community spirit of sharing with the other fellow.”

After graduation from Mississippi State University, STENNIS went on to the University of Virginia in 1924 and convinced the dean of the law school to accept him without ever filing an application. His education there was interrupted, however, when his father died and he returned to the family farm.

During this interruption of his studies at Virginia, STENNIS’ friends and neighbors urged him to seek an open seat in the Mississippi House of Representatives. He was elected and took the oath of office in January 1928, beginning a career in public service that would span more than 60 years without a break. Political historians believe that to be a record for this country.

State Representative STENNIS went back to the University of Virginia in the fall of 1928 to finish law school. He continued to excel, actually memorizing the entire United States Constitution while compiling an academic record which earned him the Phi Beta Kappa key.

On Christmas Eve of the following year he married Coy Hines, a native of New Albany, Mississippi, who was serving at the time as the Kemper County home demonstration agent. They built and moved into a white frame house just south of DeKalb, which STENNIS still calls home.

In 1932, JOHN STENNIS was elected district prosecuting attorney. People throughout the district came to know STENNIS as a hard-working prosecutor who stood for what was right and unyielding in the face of adversity. It was during these years in DeKalb that the Stennis children were born: John Hampton, March 2, 1935; and Margaret Jane, November 20, 1937.

STENNIS was appointed to fill the seat of a circuit judge when a vacancy occurred due to a death in 1937. For the next 10 years, Judge STENNIS gained the respect of all and his reputation spread far beyond his district.

When U.S. Senator Theodore G. Bilbo died in office in 1947, Judge STENNIS entered the race for his seat. It was a grass roots campaign in which STENNIS promised to “plow a straight furrow right down to the end of my row.” He was elected against formidable opposition and began to build on a national reputation as the junior Senator from Mississippi. His reputation for integrity spread quickly among his colleagues, who learned that they could depend on what JOHN STENNIS said.

He demonstrated courage along with his convictions. As he earned the respect of the giants of the Senate, he gained key committee assignments which gave him the opportunity to be a major participant in decisions of vital importance to the Nation as well as his home state of Mississippi.

Time and again during his 41 years of service, the Senate turned to Senator STENNIS for guidance when its Members or its customs were under suspicion, and when an impartial and fair assessment seemed vital. From the McCarthy era to Watergate, STENNIS applied judicial skills and temperament he acquired during his 10 years on the bench in Mississippi.

Senator STENNIS’ unselfish achievements during his long years of hard work did not come without great adversity. In 1973 he was shot twice during a holdup attempt in his front yard in northwest Washington. Although doctors didn’t at first give much hope of Senator STENNIS living, then later of ever walking again, he surprised practically everyone and recovered almost completely. He said his chief thought during those doubtful days was, “Would I be useful?” Senator STENNIS’ dedication and commitment to duty would not allow him to stop or slow down.

In 1983, his wife, affectionately known as “Miss Coy,” died and he underwent surgery for repair of a weakened wall of the aorta. On December 1, 1984, his left leg was amputated to remove a cancerous tumor. Again STENNIS came back and continued to serve his country, setting a pace for Senators many years younger to follow.

JOHN STENNIS retired from the Senate in 1988 and returned home to teach at Mississippi State University. He now resides in Madison, Mississippi.

In Washington, Senator STENNIS had a sign on his desk that represented a part of his philosophy. It simply read: “Look Ahead.” His own words and deeds articulated this personal conviction as it applied to the United States Navy:

“Our Navy has an unchanging mission. Many of our resources, our allies and our enemies as well, lie overseas. In most of our wars in the last 175 years, including the Revolutionary War, this country would not have been victorious without superior Navy power being on its side.

“This mission to maintain decisive naval power for our global interests will remain as imperative for the future as the past. Our global interests and overseas dependence grows, not lessens, with each passing year.

“We must always remember that when the chips are down and shots are fired, it will be the modern-day naval patriots who will risk their lives, man the ships and fire the guns.”

JOHN STENNIS’ contributions to our Navy will last for decades to come. And as this great ship plies the oceans of the world to ensure the peace, it will be carrying the name of a man who did, indeed, “Look Ahead” for the future’s sake of his country as he plows a straight furrow right down to the end of his row.

PROGRAM

NATIONAL ANTHEM

United States Naval Academy Band.

INVOCATION

CDR Robert J. Phillips, CHC, USN, Prospective Chaplain, John C. Stennis (CVN-74).

REMARKS AND INTRODUCTION OF DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

W.R. (Pat) Phillips, Jr., President and Chief Executive Officer, Newport News Shipbuilding.

REMARKS

Dana G. Mead, President and Chief Operating Officer, Tenneco, Inc.  
The Honorable Charles S. Robb, United States Senator, Virginia.  
The Honorable Thad Cochran, United States Senator, Mississippi.  
The Honorable John W. Warner, United States Senator, Virginia.

REMARKS AND INTRODUCTION OF PRINCIPAL SPEAKER

The Honorable John H. Dalton, Secretary of the Navy.

PRINCIPAL ADDRESS

The Honorable Al Gore, Vice President, United States of America.

INTRODUCTION OF SPONSOR AND MATRON OF HONOR

Mr. Phillips.

CHRISTENING OF JOHN C. STENNIS (CVN-74)

Mrs. Margaret Stennis Womble, Sponsor.  
Mrs. Martha A. Stennis, Matron of Honor.

CLOSING REMARKS

Mr. Phillips.



# John C. Stennis

## Celebration of a Legend

THURSDAY, JUNE 23, 1988,  
*Sheraton Washington Hotel, Washington, DC.*

When JOHN STENNIS stepped off the train on the campus of Mississippi A&M in the fall of 1919, it would have been difficult to distinguish him from any other 18-year-old farm boy starting out on a new adventure. He was well-prepared, thanks to the special tutoring provided by his three older sisters who practiced their school-teaching on him. His father, Howell Stennis, taught him responsibility and hard work early-on, making young JOHN feel that even at a very young age his efforts were essential to the operation of the family farm. And his mother, Cornelia Adams Stennis, had trained each of the six Stennis children to do their best and look their best.

No one on campus that rainy September morning could have recognized that young JOHN STENNIS was bound for greatness. But he was beginning even then to form friendships and earn confidence that would give him opportunities for service unsurpassed by anyone in Mississippi history. As his popularity on campus grew, his interest in government and political science grew as well. By the time he graduated in 1923 from what would later become Mississippi State University, he was beginning to show signs of the leadership that would become legend.

A major test of personal fortitude and stamina awaited young STENNIS at the University of Virginia Law School, where he found himself alone and severely challenged by demanding law books and professors. He experienced self-doubt during the first year, then determined that he would prevail, despite the effort required. He excelled, actually memorizing the entire United States Constitution while compiling an academic record that earned him the Phi Beta Kappa key.

His final year in law school was interrupted by the necessity of going home to Kemper County to help his family. It was during this unexpected interlude in his legal studies that JOHN STENNIS was approached by friends and neighbors who urged him to seek an open seat in the Mississippi House of Representatives. He was elected and took the oath of office in January 1928, beginning a career in public service that would span more than sixty years without a single break.

State Representative STENNIS went back to the University of Virginia in the fall of 1928 to complete law school, then returned to DeKalb to open his law practice in a small building across from the courthouse. On Christmas Eve of the following year he married Coy Hines of New Albany, the Kemper County home demonstration agent. Soon they built and moved into the white frame house just south of town which JOHN STENNIS still calls home.

By the time the 1932 election rolled around, the Great Depression had hit hard. JOHN STENNIS reasoned that his best opportunity might lie in seeking the office of district prosecuting attorney. It might be the only way to use

his hard-earned law degree, since virtually no one could afford to pay a lawyer under the economic hardships imposed by the Depression.

He won election in the six-county district and went to work with vigor. The hours were long and hard, but the rewards were great. People throughout the district came to know JOHN STENNIS as a hard working prosecutor who stood for what was right and would not yield in the face of adversity.

When a death resulted in a vacancy in the circuit judge's seat, many in the district called for appointment of Prosecuting Attorney STENNIS to the post. Governor Hugh White thought STENNIS might be too young for such responsibility at age 37, but the leaders of the local communities throughout the district insisted, and JOHN STENNIS became the youngest circuit judge ever appointed.

Over the next ten years Judge STENNIS became legend in the courthouses of the counties in which he served. He was tough, but he was fair. He earned the respect of all, and his reputation spread well beyond the area as lawyers talked about his knowledge of the law and his skill in handling courtroom situations. Jurors were attracted to his warmth and dignity, and people in communities throughout the district began developing a loyalty for this man who demonstrated a real interest and concern for people.

It did not take him long to decide to run for the United States Senate when Theodore G. Bilbo died in office in 1947. He entered the race quickly and friends from throughout the state went to work immediately seeking support for their candidate, JOHN STENNIS. Fellow alumni from Mississippi State were especially active in the grass roots campaign in which Judge STENNIS promised "to plow a straight furrow, right down to the end of my row."

Judge STENNIS was the kind of man people believed in, placed confidence in, developed a loyalty to. His supporters did more than just go to the polls to vote for him; they actively worked for his election among their family and friends. It was widespread activity on the part of many that made the difference in his first election to the Senate. It was their strong commitment that gave him the edge over four opponents, including two sitting Congressmen. All of his opponents appeared better known and better financed at the beginning of the campaign.

Those diverse supporters and friends from throughout the state enabled JOHN STENNIS to come to the Senate as a true representative of all the people, free from ties to special interest. He carefully maintained his relationship with the common folk, resisting formation of any type of political organization of his own that might in some way be exclusive. Mississippians of all walks of life considered STENNIS their friend and their representative in Congress, and their loyalty and appreciation for him grew as he developed into a senator's Senator.

When he came to the Senate in 1947, the country was at the beginning of an era of growth and development that would propel the United States to world leadership in virtually every area. Opportunities abounded, and STENNIS set out to bring jobs and development to Mississippi. No one in the history of the State has ever brought so many jobs and opportunities to the people of Mississippi. It is virtually impossible to track the vast number of jobs created through military installations he attracted to Mississippi, through economic development projects he supported, and the industry he helped bring to the state. His very first legislative initiative in the Senate was creation of a federal program to help pave rural roads, an attempt to get the farmers out of the mud. He continually worked for programs that

would enhance educational opportunities for young people and give local communities the assistance they need to attract growth and development.

But JOHN STENNIS proved himself to be an exceptional Senator on the national level as well. Senate greats, such as the late Senator Richard Russell of Georgia, recognized his bright mind and solid judgment soon after he arrived in Washington. They recognized him as a worker who was willing to give his all for a worthy cause. As he earned the respect of the powers in the Senate, he also gained key committee assignment which allowed him an opportunity to participate directly in decisions of vital importance to Mississippi and the Nation.

His reputation for integrity spread quickly among his colleagues who learned that they could depend on what JOHN STENNIS said. He had courage along with his convictions. He was the first Democrat to take the Senate floor to call for censure of Senator Joseph McCarthy at a politically sensitive period in the Nation's history. He was a natural selection as the first chairman of the Senate Ethics Committee.

The Presidents he served with, from Truman to Reagan, also recognized his honesty and integrity, and all turned to him for help and counsel during difficult times. Every President knew Senator STENNIS' standing with his colleagues, and recognized the influence he carried within the Senate.

As Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Senator STENNIS stood firm for a military second to none. He fought and won many battles on the floor of the Senate in behalf of the American military men and women. As Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, he insisted on fairness and foresight in determining the Nation's spending priorities. He has pushed for strict accountability in all programs of the government, reminding colleagues and administrators that they must work to make the taxpayer's dollar go further.

When he was elected President Pro Tempore of the United States by unanimous vote at the opening of the 100th Congress, JOHN STENNIS had served in the Senate over 40 years, second only to the late Senator Carl Hayden of Arizona who served 41 years, 10 months and 12 days. But his service is marked by more than the passage of time. And even though his legislative accomplishments are great, his service to this country cannot be adequately understood by reading the Congressional Record.

The service of Senator STENNIS is marked by dignity and decency and duty. Obstacles that would have crushed a weaker man have only served to strengthen this great American statesman who has set an example of what a public servant should be for all who aspire to make a difference.

It is a legend we celebrate, and a living legend at that. From his humble beginnings as a Mississippi farm boy to a nationally recognized leader, Senator STENNIS has maintained an enthusiasm for life that is a challenge to all who daily observe him in action. He holds firmly to his "look ahead" philosophy.

As great as his contributions have been to Mississippi and the Nation thus far, we can look forward to even more significant work from this humble man whose commitment to the people has never wavered. His legacy will continue to inspire future generations of boys and girls—many at meager starting points—who set out to make life better for the people around them.

#### JOHN C. STENNIS INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENT

The John C. Stennis Institute of Government was established at Mississippi State University on July 1, 1977. Its purpose is to bring about more

effective government through research, training and service, and to promote greater citizen involvement in the political process. The Institute was created and its programs are supported largely through an endowment created by friends and admirers of Senator STENNIS.

The Institute functions as an autonomous unit within the university's Department of Political Science. It provides an outreach mechanism for faculty members in political science and other fields. The holder of the John C. Stennis Chair in Political Science directs the Institute.

The Institute's mission reflects the expressed wishes of Senator STENNIS to bring greater efficiency and effectiveness to state and local government and to help young people become informed participants in American democracy. A variety of educational, research and service activities have been conducted by the Institute or with its support.

The Institute provides technical assistance to local governments, including counties implementing the unit system of government, rural communities starting fire departments and cities working to convert to the strong-mayor form of government.

John C. Stennis Scholarships in political science have been awarded to dozens of Mississippi State students with excellent potential as leaders in public affairs.

The Institute creates classroom teaching materials on government and provides them to Mississippi schools along with services to teachers of government and civics. The Institute also conducts the annual Robert Taft Institute for Teachers held each summer in the state capital and helps sponsor the United Nations Model Security Council for high school and college students held at Mississippi State.

The dramatic changes taking place in Mississippi government and education provide the John C. Stennis Institute of Government with new opportunities during its second decade. Plans call for expanded technical assistance to state agencies and local governments and additional applied research. Executive seminars for local and state officials and a Certified Public Manager Program also have been proposed.

Through these and other programs reaching thousands of individuals, the Stennis Institute will continue to strive for good government and widespread, informed citizen participation.

#### DINNER CHAIRMEN

Senator J. Bennett  
Johnston  
Senator Sam Nunn

Senator Ted Stevens  
Senator John Warner

#### MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

Donald W. Zacharias, President

#### CHAIRMEN, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, WASHINGTON, DC

Gray Armistead  
K.K. Bigelow

Powell "Skip" Walton

#### CHAIRMEN, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, MISSISSIPPI

Robert M. Hearin

Warren A. Hood

## Senator John C. Stennis Day

AUGUST 3, 1985

As President of the Kemper County Chamber of Commerce, we welcome you to the Senator John C. Stennis Day.

We feel like this day is a special day and we want Senator JOHN C. STENNIS to know that we appreciate what he has done and is still doing for our state and country. We feel like Senator STENNIS is most deserving of the recognition that he will receive on this day.

We hope you enjoy the activities that have been scheduled and we appreciate your taking part in this special day for Senator JOHN C. STENNIS.

Sincerely,

ARTHUR M. NESTER,  
*President.*



JOHN C. STENNIS, UNITED STATES SENATOR, MISSISSIPPI

Senator JOHN C. STENNIS, the Dean of the United States Senate, holds key positions of leadership on two of the most powerful Senate committees, Appropriations and Armed Services. As the ranking Democrat on the Appropriations Committee, Senator STENNIS is involved in helping to determine funding for every branch and program of government. By virtue of his leadership positions on the committee, he is ex-officio member of every Appropriations Subcommittee. As the senior member of the Armed Services Committee, Senator STENNIS is integrally involved in determining the future scope of our national defense policy.

The Senator's influence extends far beyond the committee assignments he has earned. Because of his reputation as a man of sound judgment and outstanding character, his colleagues look to him for direction. When the Senate Ethics Committee was formed, JOHN STENNIS was the obvious choice as chairman. He drafted the first code of ethics adopted by the Senate. His integrity has earned Senator STENNIS the respect of leaders throughout the world. His good reputation coupled with his tremendous energy makes him one of the most effective members to ever serve in the United States Senate.

President Eisenhower singled JOHN STENNIS out as a man who possessed the qualities which would make him a good president. Others have pointed to his sound judgment and fine legal mind as characteristics which would be valuable to the Supreme Court of the United States. Senator STENNIS has never encouraged such recommendations. Instead he has always made it clear that it was his desire to continue to serve as Mississippi's "battling lawyer" in Washington.

The Senator's determined efforts have reaped many rewards for Mississippians. No other man has brought so many jobs to the state. Projects he supports greatly enhance the Mississippi economy. The Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway under construction in Northeast Mississippi and the Gulf Coast complex containing the National Space Testing Laboratory, the Navy Ocean-

ography Center and the Army Ammunition Plant are examples of his efforts at opposite ends of the state.

Mississippi military installations including Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, the Seabee Base in Gulfport, the Meridian Naval Air Station, Columbus Air Force Base and Camp Shelby in Forrest County have greatly benefited from the special interest Senator STENNIS gives national defense.

Likewise, many ports, harbors and flood control projects have benefited from his keen interest in development of resources in Mississippi.

His efforts in economic development for Mississippi have been equally effective. Just recently Senator STENNIS was credited with having saved the Industrial Development Bond program which was severely threatened on the floor of the Senate.

Senator STENNIS' strong support of farm and forestry improvement programs and agricultural research has helped to bring about legislation which has reaped great economic benefits for Mississippi and the Nation.

The Senator is recognized through the Nation as a leader in the movement to balance the federal budget. His voice in the Senate is always sound and strong when difficult decisions must be made for the good of the nation. His colleagues from every state in the Union recognize Senator STENNIS as a true national statesman who always puts the best interest of the nation ahead of partisan politics.

The influence Senator STENNIS wields within the Senate is clear and evident. Opposing Senators seeking to draw jobs away from Mississippi to their states constantly blame their failure on the clout JOHN STENNIS carries in the Senate.

The recent outcome of key votes in the Senate demonstrates that the Senator's effectiveness is undiminished by Republican control. Should the Democrats regain control of the Senate, Senator STENNIS would be in line to become President Pro Tempore and chairman of the Appropriations or Armed Services Committees.

PROGRAM

Ribbon Cutting Cermonies 10 a.m.—Industrial Park.

CLOIS CHEATHAM, PRESIDENT DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Open House at Kemper Newton Regional Library 1–5 p.m.

Open House at Senator Stennis Office 1–5 p.m.

Parade—2 p.m.

Entertainment 3–5 p.m.—Courthouse Square.

MJC CLOGGERS, MARTHA JEAN DUDLEY, KEMPER COUNTY WESTERN BAND

U.S. NAVY BAND, KEMPER COUNTY COMMUNITY CHORUS

Main Event 5:30 p.m.—Courthouse Square.

Welcome—Mayor F.D. Harbour.

Invocation—Reverend David Trimmier.

National Anthem—Elizabeth Johnson.

Introduction of Master of Ceremonies—Mayor F.D. Harbour.

Master of Ceremonies—J.P. Coleman.

Speakers Colleagues and Friends.

Tribute to Senator Stennis—Paul Ott.

SENATOR STENNIS

Presentation to Senator Stennis— J.P. Coleman.

God Bless America—Nikki Watson.

Entertainment Courthouse Square.

KEMPER COUNTY COMMUNITY CHOIR, QUEEN CITY CLOGGERS

UNITED STATES SENATE,  
WASHINGTON, DC,  
*August 3, 1985*

Dear JOHN:

This Senator, whose service with you has been relatively brief, feels both honored and privileged to be your colleague. I'm delighted to join with all of your friends in Mississippi in honoring you today.

You are, of course, a major link in our bridge from the past to the future, a part of the distinguished history of the United States Senate. From you, all of my contemporaries and I have learned a great deal about the traditions of the Senate and of the United States itself.

More important, however, is the example which you set for your more junior colleagues. For me, and for many others, you have provided a model of the civility, the thoughtfulness, the broad-mindedness and the wisdom to which every Senator should aspire. I wish you many more years of magnificent service.

Sincerely,

SLADE GORTON.



#### SENATOR STENNIS AS OTHERS SEE HIM

It would not be possible without the great cooperation and good counsel and very constructive contributions made by the man whom I regard as my mentor, Senator STENNIS. (Senator John Tower, Republican, Texas, May 14, 1982, after Senate passage of the 1982 Defense Authorization Bill.)

Mr. President, I wish to join the Senator from Texas, the chairman of the committee, in paying my respects to a man who, perhaps, has no peer in terms of admiration by the Senate as a whole. For many of us he has been not only a guiding light for us in the Chamber, but for me personally, and without his good counsel and participation in this complex bill, I am sure we would not have been able to reach final passage even at this early hour on the morning of May 14, and I wish to express my appreciation to the Senator from Mississippi. (Senator Howard Baker, Republican, Tennessee, May 14, 1982, after Senate passage of the 1982 Defense Authorization Bill.)

The main reason JOHN STENNIS is so effective is not because of his seniority, but because of his integrity and his statesmanship. (Senator Sam Nunn, Democrat, Georgia.)

He is a man who looks like a Senator, talks like a Senator, acts like a Senator, and who is a Senator's Senator, in my judgment. He is well-beloved by all members of this Senate on both sides of the aisle. He is highly respected in and out of the Senate. (Senator Robert Byrd, Democrat, West Virginia.)

No one in the Senate questions STENNIS' integrity or contribution to the body. The possessor of a tremendous booming voice, a Phi Beta Kappa key and a universal reputation for fairmindedness, he has long been one of its dominating figures—a Senator's Senator, an adviser to Presidents, a man of enormous power and influence. (The Washington Post, September 28, 1982.)

STENNIS, in a grueling seven-day debate in which he was sometimes on his feet for hours at a time had just shepherded to passage the \$21.9 billion military procurement bill. With his tremendous booming voice, his restless

leonine pacing, his uncanny capacity to capture the attention of every member of the Senate whenever he rises to speak in his rich Mississippi drawl, STENNIS dominated the debate and won all the major votes. (Roger Mudd, NBC Newsman.)

We have in this body a number of Republican Senators and a number of Democratic Senators. And then we have some United States Senators. JOHN STENNIS is a United States Senator. He has always done what he thought was best for his country.

If his code of conduct were followed by all politicians and by all public officials today, we would not have the shaken confidence of the people in the institutions of government. (Senator Lloyd Bentsen, Democrat, Texas.)

JOHN STENNIS' dedication to this country goes far beyond most people who ever served here in the entire history of the country. I really can't imagine the United States Senate without JOHN STENNIS. (Senator Russell Long, Democrat, Louisiana.)



# The Senator

*THE ALUMNUS, MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY*

SUMMER 1973

Mr. Fatherree. Mr. Chairman, Senator and Mrs. Stennis, President Giles, distinguished guests, ladies and gentleman.

I'm here this morning for the purpose of making a presentation in behalf of our Class. In February, 1972, Senator STENNIS, the Life Secretary of the Class, and I had occasion to discuss the plans for the 50th anniversary of our graduation, which we proudly celebrate here this weekend. At that time he requested that I take the responsibility of working with officials of the University and the Alumni staff in arranging the details of the program. This I gladly agreed to do, and have had the wholehearted cooperation and support of everyone. For this I am most grateful.

As I thought about the occasion, it occurred to me that we should do something very special in honor of our life secretary, who is without a doubt the most distinguished member of our Class—yes the most distinguished graduate of this fine institution. I talked this over with several members of the class as well as with some officials of the University. All were in agreement that it was an excellent idea. The question then was: What could be done? We considered several possibilities, every one of which would supplement the generous gift of his papers to the University, where a suite of rooms has been set aside in the Library and designated "The Stennis Suite." An ancient Bible might have been available, or a shelf of good books on political science. Either would have been appropriate. Finally, we came up with the idea of commissioning a good artist to do a painting of the Senator, to be hung in the Stennis Suite in the Library. This was agreed upon, a contract was made with an artist, and an estimate of the cost received. A decision was then made to proceed with the plan.

We are pleased that that artist is in our midst today, and if she will stand, I would like for us to recognize here, Mrs. Clara Fay West of Columbus, Mississippi. Will Mrs. West please stand? I can't see from up here. I hope she's in the audience.

At any rate, we were then faced with the matter of raising the money and arranging for a sitting without divulging our plans to the Senator. I assumed the responsibility of raising the money from members of the Class, and the Senator was asked to sit for a painting which was to be presented, so he was told, by an anonymous donor. The plan worked perfectly. It was necessary to send only a few letters before the money was in hand, and Senator STENNIS readily agreed to sit for the artist, unaware of our plans.

With this brief background, I now come to formally present and unveil a painting of United States Senator JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS, a member of the Class of 1923, and the junior United States Senator from Mississippi since 1947, a period of more than a quarter of a century. Mississippi has had no greater, no more dedicated statesman in her long and proud history. In presenting this painting, I feel that his life and record of public service

speak for themselves, and are too well known for me to list his many accomplishments and honors, to say nothing of the well deserved esteem which he has gained nationally, and the credit he has brought to his alma mater, his State and his Nation. He is truly a man among men, one who can walk with those in highest places—legislators, judges, generals, admirals, yes, even with Presidents, with the humble, share their problems, concerns and yearnings—truly, the marks of a great man, judged by any standards. Occupying positions of power, he uses such power with intelligence and care, to the interest of building a better world. A man of tremendous energy, understanding and character, it was to this man the United States Senate turned when it needed to develop a Code of Ethics for its membership, and how well they chose!

I am told that during the trying days immediately following the recent senseless tragedy that struck him down, and while he literally lay at death's door, he was thinking not so much of himself, of his responsibility, but of a Prayer Meeting which was his responsibility, the President's Prayer Breakfast.

We're delighted that he is here today. Our continuous prayer is that he will soon be completely recovered and able once again to resume his useful and effective work in the United States Senate and elsewhere.

And now, Mr. President, it is my great pleasure and honor on behalf of the Class of 1923, to present this likeness of our beloved friend of more than half a century. It's our hope that those who look upon it here will be reminded of those noble virtues with which he is so richly endowed, and further, that many young Mississippians may be motivated by his record to follow in his footsteps as they work and study here in preparation for lives of services. In so doing they can, and I quote the Senator, "find the Light that comes from Above, which will guide them aright," as it has certainly guided him. The painting will now be unveiled by little Mr. Hamp Stennis, the son of Mr. and Mrs. John Hampton Stennis of Jackson, and the grandson of Senator and Mrs. Stennis. (Unveiling).

Thank you, little Hamp.

I'm asked to announce that the painting will be on display in the Stennis Suite in the Mitchell Library this afternoon, so those of you who do not have an opportunity to see it at close range will be able to see it there.

Thank you very much.

Now the President of Mississippi State University, Dr. Giles, will come to make the acceptance.

Mr. Giles. Mr. Fatherree, as President of Mississippi State University, I do accept for the University this splendid portrait of our distinguished alumnus, Senator JOHN C. STENNIS.

You know, in the long history of mankind there have been times, and there are times now, when it seems that we have many leaders who take us through the difficult times. This was so when this great Nation of ours was founded. It seemed that we had great leadership in the country, simply by the dozen. There have been other times in the history of mankind when there has been a dearth of leadership. It is at these times that somehow, God in His wisdom has selected a few to take positions of leadership. These leaders, unlike times when leadership is here in plenty, have a special burden. Our own Senator JOHN C. STENNIS is one of those selected by the Lord in a time when there is a dearth of leadership in the land, and it has been on his shoulders that heavy burdens have fallen. Therefore, we are especially pleased and proud that Mississippi State University not only can claim him, but to have this splendid portrait of him so those who follow us

can see the likeness of the person who was a great leader in times like these.

Senator STENNIS, we're proud, and we do accept this portrait.

Thank you.

Mr. Fatherree. Thank you, Dr. Giles, and at this time we give an invitation to Senator STENNIS to respond if he cares to do so.

Senator STENNIS. Dr. Giles, members of the Class of 1923, and other fellow alumni, and other friends:

Even though I knew that the presentation of this portrait was to be a part of the program this morning, I certainly find that I'm not prepared for it, but I am grateful and I want to especially thank the Class of 1923. And no man's ever been indebted to fellow classmates more than I have, not only while we were here but during those years that have intervened. I want to especially thank them for this wonderful tribute and for the spirit behind it, and for all of the words that your able spokesman said in the presentation.

And as a member of that class, friends, let me say especially to my classmates that T.B. Fatherree has carried a great part of the load of the life secretary, especially during most of the years that I've been in Washington, and more especially the last few years, and altogether this year. I know how much work he's put in, and he's had some very fine helpers. I want to thank him especially as one member of the class and as your life secretary, and I know you feel those sentiments yourselves.

Let me say again to the membership, that I've appreciated you and remembered you all these years with the utmost satisfaction and profit. I have no prepared speech this morning, my friends. I didn't think the occasion was such that I could or should. I do want you to indulge me a few minutes here with just a little passing thought. This is a kind of day of firsts for me. This is my first venture out from the hospital to which I must return, so my first venture was a happy one to make tracks again on this wonderful campus. I have another first that comes to mind, too. It was here that I first met my wife, Miss Coy, and I want to thank her, too, for all these years—not quite fifty yet, that she's brought me of happiness and help, spelled out in the biggest kind of ways.

I have another first here, too. I finally found my first doctor, and I'll say something special about him in a minute, that actually prescribed all play and no work. And that's the prescription he has me on right now at this interval, so I said we'll adopt that, and I want you to let me go down to Mississippi State on April 14. But I told him that I don't feel that I can go without a doctor along with me, and I said, "Now what can you do about that?" He said, "Well, I've been hinting for an invitation to go down there," so I was delighted. He brought me along—I wasn't exactly bringing him. I want to impose on him for just a minute this morning, to especially introduce him to you and I'm going to ask him to take a bow. But I do want to introduce him to you now in a special way a man that has become my friend in the last several weeks, the man that led a fine team of surgeons, a fine young man, one of the prizes of the Army Medical Corps, and one of the finest surgeons in his field in the United States; the man that with the help of Providence and with the help of a team of surgeons backing him up—I have no doubt about it, he saved my life—and it is with special pleasure that I ask him to take a bow: Colonel Robert Muir, United States Army Medical Corps.

Now friends, as I say, you know where my heart is, I don't have to praise you nor praise Mississippi State. And I have no prepared remarks but I do

have a thought that I want to bring. Always, with any class, the joys and the satisfaction, of course, of a graduation reunion make for a happy occasion, but for our Class of 1923 perhaps it would be more fitting to think briefly of the time of our arrival here as Freshmen four years before our graduation. To borrow a term now in vogue in Washington because of the famous Watergate controversy, when we arrived here we were just the "raw files," the raw files of the forthcoming Class of 1923. And although we did not realize at that time, the most important fact of life for us was that some fifty years previously worthy leaders had come to the place of this campus and had planted a college. Those were hard times, those were times not encouraging; those were times that discouraged hope, in 1878. But those founders were persons who had faith in the future and faith in the youth of our Nation. And when we entered here fifty years later the college might not have been fully adequate even by standards of fifty years ago, but it was here, its doors were open to us, and it gave us a chance. And with everyone of us, that was a big thing, a great thing.

At least we were from a background that represented western civilization, I think, at its best, and we had some aptitudes that were on the positive side, the favorable side. And above all, I think these included a willingness to apply enough time and personal effort and hard work to accomplish a definite and worthy purpose.

However, I don't want to dwell here this morning, even for a few minutes, just on the past. The big news of this campus does not relate to the past. Happily, the big news relates to the future, and the present; the greatly expanded role of our University; the greatly increased number of youth who are served here each year; the vision, the planning, and the courageous leadership of President William Giles, his staff and the faculty of the University; the success of the University in becoming a greater and greater channel for service and leadership for the people of our State; the tremendous strength which the extensive and in-depth support of alumni and other friends have given to the University, and it is enough to really count. Great days are ahead for our Alumni Association. These things are the news of the day here at Mississippi State; these things are the current pattern of the day here. There is still plenty of room, fellow alumni, for all of us to help and to serve.

Specifically, I want to mention one point which is a contribution that all of us can make to the youth of today, to the youth in whom I have an abounding faith. That is, we can help make the individual realize early that his or her attainments and satisfactions must come largely, inevitably, from his or her willingness to apply steady personal effort to accomplish a worthy purpose. As was true with all of us in every generation, it is motivation which is the truly essential need of every individual, motivation of both youth and adult. There is nothing that I've found that's worthwhile that someone can give you, and there's nothing that the Government can give you that's enduring or worthwhile that really goes to make character, and goes to make enduring, worthwhile things upon which our society and our civilization, our government, even our family is built. So let it continue to be the rule of life here, as it is with Dr. Giles now, and may it always be the rule of life on this Campus, that every person, to stay here, has to apply himself and has to work at making a contribution, and has to earn and pay his own way. May it ever be such, and I think as long as our Nation stays on that path, allowing for some ups and downs and temporary clouds, that our form of government will prevail; that our society will prevail; and our civilization will stand.

God give us strength and the Light that can come from On High, the courage to do our part, and the will to look for and find and use that added strength that comes from a Higher Power. God bless you all.

Tommy Everett (President, Mississippi State Alumni Association). Thank you, Senator STENNIS. I think we will all acknowledge that modern medicine and techniques, and skilled physicians and skilled surgeons have a great deal to do with this remarkable recovery. But I feel we will all recognize also that God had a hand in it and that many prayers were answered when this man began his road to recovery. Senator STENNIS, God bless you.

#### SENATOR STENNIS REMARKS AT LUNCHEON

Mr. Chairman, unaccustomed as I am to public speaking—I really haven't been called on in a good while, since we were in the other building—with all these fine people here I don't like to talk about myself or my personal experiences. Just let me say this, friends, that I know how much help it is to have messages and expressions from thousands of you; to say that the encouraging words and expressions of good wishes, I know how much that means—it means a great deal. I shall always be grateful to the people that, whether they took time to file an expression or not, they manifested their interest and said a prayer and sent a prayer that I might recover. It did mean a lot; it still means a lot to me, and makes me very humble. As I said this morning, in introducing a man who is now my personal friend (I'm not going to introduce him again), with the help of Providence and some other good surgeons he saved my life, and I believe that with all my heart and I'm most grateful for it. Now I'm not going to make a speech, but I do want to mention two things here. Most of us are alumni and the four corners of the Nation are represented here today. I'm mighty proud of the way that Dr. Giles and his administration and all those connected with the University now, in making it a going concern (the Alumni Association included, the Development Foundation included)—I'm very proud of the fine work they are doing and the constructive outlook they have, and the talent and natural resources that they have. Every alumnus should be proud to walk down the street, any time, anywhere, and point with pride to the fact that he is an alumnus, or was at one time a student. I think we are moving forward to even greater and bigger events. Dr. Giles, I say that we can go down the street and look anyone in the eye, even right after a bad football score. We don't have any apologies to make for that. There may be someone else having to apologize before long, about some of their scores.

I want to mention another thing that makes me feel mighty good. It's the spirit and attitude and dedication and devotion of the alumni who do not live in the State, who went beyond the borders of our own State. They keep their connections, their interest, their support, and they come back here and visit with us and give time and attention. It means a great deal, often it's a considerable leavening in the bread. We want you all to come, in that group. We never take you for granted, but appreciate you.

And I'll illustrate the way we feel toward you in just a little brief story. Ike Hoover (not Herbert Hoover), was the head butler or waiter in the White House for many, many years. Like so many others, he wrote a book. And he tells a story in there about the first time he delivered a pay check to former President Calvin Coolidge, whom some of you may remember, especially for the way he squeezed a dollar, both public and private, and for his very few words. Hoover said he planned the idea of getting his own picture on the front page of every paper in the United States, so he planted a photographer outside the door, and following custom carried the new

President Calvin Coolidge his paycheck from the Treasurer on a silver platter. He thought the conversation would open up one way or another, and that he would have a chance to suggest a picture and the photographer would walk right in. He said he went in and Coolidge was busy at his desk looking at some documents. He bowed, but the President didn't look up. He stepped over in front of him and said, "Mr. President, your first paycheck." Without looking up, the President ran his hand in his pocket, pulled out a little key and put it in the drawer of his desk and turned the key and unlocked it, and pulled the drawer out and pulled out a little letter opener and slit the letter open, took the check out and laid it face down on the desk, smoothed out the envelope and put it in the drawer as if it might be put to further use, closed the drawer, turned the key, put the key back in his pocket. He said by then he (Hoover) decided there wasn't a chance to get a picture, so he was backing out in great embarrassment, and just as he clicked the door knob, though, President Coolidge looked up to him and said, "Come again."

## Mississippi Dinner Honoring United States Senator John C. Stennis

HOTEL HEIDELBERG, JACKSON, MS,  
*March 3, 1969.*

When Mississippians sent JOHN STENNIS to the U.S. Senate in 1947, he promised to “plow a straight furrow right to the end of my row.” He has kept that promise, but his record of public service has surpassed the expectations of even his closest and warmest friends. During his twenty-two years in the Senate, JOHN STENNIS has built a solid record of achievements for Mississippi and the Nation—a conservative, sound and constructive record in which every Mississippian can take pride.

Senator STENNIS has repeatedly said that he is first a Senator from Mississippi and that his first duty and loyalty is to the State and the people he represents. He has actively supported legislation to encourage all segments of Mississippi’s economy, with special emphasis on agriculture, forestry, industrial development, small businesses and public works. He has worked consistently to improve education at all levels and has given particular attention to improving the opportunities for young Mississippians.

While fully and capably representing his State, he continues to be a valuable servant of the Nation. For eight years, as chairman of the Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee, he has stood watch over our national security.

As chairman of the Senate’s Select Committee on Ethics, Standards and Conduct, he has been guardian of Senate ethics, presiding over his duties with judicial integrity, marked by a thorough knowledge and deep respect for the law based upon principles of constitutional government.

As senior member of the Aeronautical and Space Sciences Committee, he has played a major role in the development and support of our space projects. As an influential member of the Appropriations Committee, Senator STENNIS has a strong voice in the appropriation of funds for every agency of the U.S. Government. He is a member of the Agriculture, Defense, Deficiencies and Supplemental, Independent Offices, Labor, Health, Education and Welfare, and Public Works Subcommittees.

Senator STENNIS is chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, has the duty to review and approve all money appropriated for the Federal Aviation Agency, the Coast Guard, the Bureau of Public Roads, and the Civil Aeronautics Board and the Interstate Commerce Commission.

He now must shoulder additional responsibilities as chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. His thoughts and actions will have a direct bearing on world peace and the security of free nations.

As he assumes that great responsibility, Mississippians unite in expressing our confidence that he will meet the challenges of these new tasks in the same splendid and successful way he has met challenges of the past.

As a Mississippian, an American and a Statesman, he will continue to plow his furrow right down to the end of his row.

PROGRAM

INTRODUCTIONS

INVOCATION

Dr. W. Douglas Hudgins

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

Naval Air Training Command Choir

REMARKS

Lieutenant Governor Charles L. Sullivan, presiding.  
Governor John Bell Williams.  
Senator James O. Eastland.  
Honorable Melvin R. Laird.  
Captain Walter Schirra, Jr.  
Representative L. Mendel Rivers.  
Senator Richard B. Russell.  
Senator Margaret Chase Smith

INTRODUCTION OF SENATOR STENNIS

Honorable Robert D. Morrow, Sr.

RESPONSE

Senator John C. Stennis

BENEDICTION

Most Reverend Joseph B. Brunini.

GOD BLESS AMERICA

14th Army Band, Womens Army Corps

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON, DC

*February 20, 1969*

Dear JOHN: It was good to see you at the White House yesterday at our first bipartisan meeting.

I had intended then to congratulate you on your new responsibilities as Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, but time did not permit.

Now I understand that your friends are gathering at dinner to honor you on March the third. So, perhaps you'll forgive the delay in delivery if this letter is sent to you on that occasion, so that my best wishes can be added to those of your many friends.

JOHN, I'm delighted to be able to join with other national and local leaders in honoring and acknowledging the key role you have been and are playing in the defense of our country.

With warm regards,  
Sincerely,

RICHARD NIXON.



I am pleased to join the friends and admirers of Senator STENNIS in honoring the new Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

I served with JOHN STENNIS for more than a decade. We worked closely in such vital areas as military preparedness, the space program, and national defense. I came to admire his dedication and his grasp of some of the most vital issues facing our Nation.

I know that he will provide wise leadership to the Armed Services Committee.

I congratulate him, and I salute those who have gathered to honor him.  
Sincerely,

LYNDON B. JOHNSON.



Permit me to join with your many friends in congratulating you on your assumption of the Chairmanship of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Your new honor, outstanding as it is, is but another in list of achievements of a distinguished career.

Sincerely,

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER.



DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

Honorable Richard B. Russell, Senator from Georgia.  
Honorable Margaret Chase Smith, Senator from Maine.  
Honorable Barry Goldwater, Senator from Arizona.  
Honorable Milton Young, Senator from North Dakota.  
Honorable Henry Jackson, Senator from Washington.  
Honorable Robert Byrd, Senator from West Virginia.  
Honorable L. Mendel Rivers, Representative from South Carolina.  
Honorable Melvin R. Laird, Secretary of Defense.  
Honorable Stanley R. Resor, Secretary of the Army.  
Honorable John H. Chafee, Secretary of the Navy.

Dr. Robert S. Seamans, Jr., Secretary of the Air Force.  
Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, Chief of Naval Operations.  
General John P. McConnell, Chief of Staff of the Air Force.  
General Leonard F. Chapman, Jr., Commandant of the Marine Corps.  
Captain Walter Schirra, Jr., Astronaut.  
Dr. Thomas O. Paine, Acting Administrator, NASA.  
Admiral Willard J. Smith, Commandant of the Coast Guard.  
Vice Admiral H.G. Rickover, Atomic Energy Commission.  
Lt. General John L. Throckmorton, Commanding General, Third Army.  
Major General William J. Sutton, Chief, Army Reserves.  
Major General Maurice L. Watts, President, Adjutants General Association.  
Admiral John McCain, Commander in Chief, Pacific.  
Major General Winston P. Wilson, Chief, National Guard Bureau.  
Major General James C. McGehee, Commanding General, Keesler AFB.

## **Newspaper Articles and Editorials**

[From the Associated Press, April 23, 1995]

FORMER SENATOR JOHN C. STENNIS DEAD AT 93

(By Stephen Hawkins)

Former Senator JOHN C. STENNIS, a courtly Mississippi Democrat who exercised vast influence over America's military during his four decades in the Senate, died Sunday. He was 93.

STENNIS died about 3:30 p.m. at St. Dominic Hospital, where he had been taken several days ago for pneumonia, said his son John Hampton Stennis.

STENNIS earned a reputation in Washington for fairness and finesse that landed him delicate committee assignments and close association with eight U.S. Presidents. But his opposition to integration blotted his record.

STENNIS joined the Senate in 1947. At the time of his retirement in 1988, he was its oldest member.

"He was a great Senator in every way. He was effective, respected and deeply appreciated by the people in Mississippi," said U.S. Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS). "He was truly a man of great stature. We have suffered a great loss."

STENNIS, nicknamed the "conscience of the Senate" for his work on the Senate's code of ethics and strict religious convictions, overcame personal tragedy to continue public service.

He was wounded by robbers and left bleeding on the sidewalk near his northwest Washington home in 1973. Then-President Nixon, emerging from STENNIS' hospital room, said the Senator would survive because, "He's got the will to live in spades."

Coy Hines Stennis, his wife of 52 years, died in 1983. And in 1984, he lost his left leg to cancer, and had to use a wheelchair.

"Discouraged? I suppose everybody's had his ups and downs. But I've never surrendered," STENNIS said then.

STENNIS, serving as chairman of both the Armed Services Committee and the Defense Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee during the 1970s, wielded more clout over military matters than perhaps any civilian except the President.

He was a consistent advocate of the need for a strong military.

"If there is one thing I'm unyielding and unbending on, it is that we must have the very best weapons," he once said.

After militants in Iran seized the American Embassy and held its employees hostage in late 1979, STENNIS suggested a fleet of small aircraft carriers be built to counter such crises around the world.

"Trouble can come from anywhere now," he said. "We've got to be ready for instant action."

Soon after, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan and STENNIS called for U.S. military support bases near Mideast oil fields.

Though he stood for a tough military, STENNIS did not always back presidential military policy.

He was a leading backer of the Vietnam War. However, in the war's waning days, he co-sponsored legislation to set limits on a President's power to commit American forces to combat without Congressional consent.

A decade later, STENNIS opposed using that law—the War Powers Act of 1973—to permit President Reagan to keep Marine peacekeeping troops in Lebanon.

He condemned the Supreme Court's 1954 school desegregation decision, but in 1983 he switched and voted for an extension of the Voting Rights Act.

He later said he always supported the advancement of all races.

STENNIS was born August 3, 1901, in DeKalb and graduated from Mississippi State University in 1923 before attending the University of Virginia Law School.

He began his public service in 1928 in the Mississippi Legislature, then served as a district attorney and circuit judge before joining the U.S. Senate.

After his retirement, STENNIS moved to the Mississippi State University campus in Starkville, which also is the home of the John C. Stennis Institute of Government and the Stennis Center for Public Service, created by Congress.

"I do believe the most important thing I can do now is to help young people understand the past and prepare for the future," STENNIS said in 1990 while serving as executive in residence at the university. "As long as I have energy left, I want to use it to the benefit of students."

Also named for the Senator is NASA's National Space Technology Laboratory in southern Mississippi. The John C. Stennis Space Center tests rocket motors.

"How would I like to be remembered? I haven't thought about that a whole lot," STENNIS said in a 1985 interview. "You couldn't give me a finer compliment than just to say, 'He did his best.'"

The Senator's body will lie in state Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Old Capitol Museum in Jackson and from 4-6 p.m. at the DeKalb Presbyterian Church in DeKalb. Graveside services will be at 11 a.m. Wednesday at Pinecrest Cemetery in DeKalb.

Survivors include his son, a Jackson lawyer, and his daughter, Margaret Womble.



[From Reuters, Limited, April 23, 1995]

FORMER LONG-TIME MISSISSIPPI SENATOR DIES AT AGE 93

(Editorial)

Former U.S. Senator JOHN STENNIS, a conservative Democrat from Mississippi, died at 4 p.m. Sunday in St. Dominic's Hospital here, a hospital spokeswoman reported.

St. Dominic's nursing supervisor Susan Crowdus told Reuters she could not release the cause of death, but NBC News reported Sunday that STENNIS, 93, died of pneumonia.

STENNIS served four decades in the Senate, beginning in 1948. Throughout his long Senate career, he was known as a courtly gentleman, always with a friendly word for everyone, who believed in honor, patriotism and fiscal conservatism.

He stood out as soft-spoken opponent of civil rights laws and was best known during his Senate career as a leader of the congressional faction favoring a strong U.S. military.

STENNIS was chairman of the powerful Senate Armed Services Committee from 1969 until 1981, wielding his influence on every aspect of U.S. defense power.

During the 1950s, STENNIS was named to the committee investigating Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy, whose free-swinging anti-communist accusations gave rise to the word "McCarthyism." He later accused McCarthy

of spilling “slush and slime” on the Senate through his innuendo and charges.

The Senate soon afterwards took the unusual step of voting to censure the Wisconsin Senator—a move that pushed his career downhill.

He also served on the Senate Watergate Committee investigating the role of then-President Richard Nixon in the 1972 burglary of the Democratic Party headquarters.

In 1973, a gunman shot him in the stomach outside his Washington home but he soon overcame the serious injuries.

He had open heart surgery in December 1983 but returned to work in 1984. A year later, he had a cancerous leg removed. STENNIS and his wife, Coy, had two children.



[From the Clarion-Ledger, April 24, 1995]

LONGTIME POWER STENNIS DIES AT 93

(Clarion-Ledger Staff Writer)

JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS, 93, a drawling Mississippi country lawyer who attained some of the most powerful positions during four decades in the U.S. Senate, died of pneumonia Sunday at St. Dominic/Jackson Memorial Hospital.

He had been hospitalized since Thursday, said his son, John Hampton Stennis of Jackson.

The body will lie in state Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Old Capitol in Jackson and from 4–6 p.m. at DeKalb Presbyterian Church. Grave-side services are 11 a.m. Wednesday at Pine Crest Cemetery in DeKalb. Southern Mortuary Services in Jackson is handling arrangements.

STENNIS, who retired in 1988, played a major role in the country’s affairs and at one time carried as much clout over military matters as any civilian except the President.

“I shall go to the Senate without obligations or commitments, save to serve the plain people of Mississippi,” the DeKalb native said November 5, 1947, upon his election.

Throughout his Senate career, STENNIS lived in an unassuming, one-story white clapboard house built in 1930 and located a few dozen yards from Mississippi 39. His office, a nondescript red brick building across from the county courthouse, bore a simple sign above the door: “John C. Stennis, Lawyer.”

That sign was a deceptively modest description for a country-born lawyer who rose to become a confidant of American Presidents and a major player in the events that led the United States through the Cold War, the Southern civil rights movement, the Watergate scandal and into the Reagan years.

“He was one of the great statesmen for our Nation in the 20th century,” 4th District U.S. Representative Sonny Montgomery said Sunday. The two were acquainted for more than a half-century and served together 23 years in Congress. “History will record JOHN STENNIS as a true son of the South. His legacy in Mississippi will never disappear.”

One of seven children, STENNIS was born on a Kemper County farm 36 years after the end of the Civil War. He attended county schools and graduated from Kemper County Agricultural High School in 1919.

After receiving his bachelor's degree from Mississippi A&M College—now Mississippi State University—STENNIS went on to receive his law degree and a Phi Beta Kappa key from the University of Virginia in 1928.

Elected to two terms in the Mississippi House, STENNIS successfully campaigned for the district prosecuting attorney post, in which he served until 1935.

At 35, STENNIS was named by then-Governor Hugh White to fill a circuit judge vacancy, making STENNIS the State's youngest member of the bench. Through three terms, he never had a civil case overturned on appeal.

The death of fiery Senator Theodore Bilbo in 1947 provided STENNIS the opportunity to attain the government position he desired.

During the campaign, STENNIS sidestepped talk of white supremacy and focused on his pledge: "Agriculture first."

Though he refused to take part in the campaign's race-baiting demagoguery, STENNIS nonetheless was a supporter of State's rights and segregation. His appeal, however, was drawn from intellect, not hate.

"Our customs and traditions may be assailed, but we can stand firm in our rights to make our own decisions about such matters," STENNIS said on the campaign trail.

STENNIS credited much of his success as a legislator to his early association with U.S. Senator Richard Russell of Georgia, then chairman of the Armed Services Committee.

In 1969, President Richard Nixon revealed to STENNIS and Russell his plans to bomb Cambodia because they could be trusted not to leak the bombing news to the media.

While he avoided race during his 1947 campaign, STENNIS quickly got caught up in the national civil rights debate once he got to Washington.

His first two speeches on the floor of the Senate were against federal anti-lynching, anti-poll tax and equal employment legislation—claiming they represented unconstitutional interference with the State's rights to govern themselves.

He became a leader of the move to maintain racial segregation in the South and participated in filibusters that prevented votes being taken on civil rights legislation. In 1956, he helped draft the Southern Manifesto, a document signed by 101 Southern Congressmen to voice their opposition to desegregation.

But once the civil rights laws were enacted in the 1960s, STENNIS urged compliance with the changes.

In a 1965 plea, STENNIS said Mississippi "above all must maintain a spirit of law and order. Any other course will take us downward and will eventually blight our future."

By 1982, STENNIS' stance on racial issues had changed to the point he voted for an extension of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Supporters said his about-face was a genuine philosophical change and not politically based.

STENNIS also stepped to the front in 1954 when he became the first Senate Democrat to call for the censure of red-baiting Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin.

In a speech that made national headlines, STENNIS said McCarthy had poured "slush and slime" on the Senate with his attacks. Senate observers saw his speech as a serious blow at McCarthy's efforts to escape censure.

STENNIS' speech drew accolades from around the country and made him an overnight sensation. "I didn't know what it was to get such press as that," he said.

It was also in 1954 that STENNIS warned that the United States was in danger of being drawn into the fighting in Vietnam by supplying assistance to the French effort to defeat the Vietnamese communists.

Committing U.S. forces to the fight could result in a “long, costly and indecisive war that will leave us without victory,” he warned.

Later, the U.S. forces began a full-scale fight against the communists. STENNIS, who had moved up as Armed Services chairman, gave the war his total support. In 1966, he suggested the use of tactical nuclear weapons in Southeast Asia should the Chinese enter the war.

STENNIS landed on the powerful Appropriations Committee in 1955, and he used the assignment to Mississippi’s long-term benefit.

As chairman of the Energy and Water Development Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee, he was able to get the \$2 billion needed to construct the 234-mile Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, considered pure pork by critics.

In 1969, STENNIS took over as chairman of the Armed Services Committee, which gave him a strong voice on national defense issues. But the advancement came at the height of the Vietnam War when critics of the military wanted to scale back spending.

STENNIS used his newfound authority in 1969 to influence Nixon’s administration to ask the U.S. Supreme Court to delay for a year a desegregation order for 33 Mississippi school districts. It was later learned that STENNIS threatened to abandon leadership on an antiballistic missile being debated by the Senate if the order was not delayed.

For 31 years, STENNIS was the junior Senator from Mississippi, teaming with the late Senator James Eastland of Doddsville, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee and later President Pro Tempore, to form a powerful coalition involving different personalities and styles.

STENNIS’ career and his life almost ended abruptly in 1973 when he was critically wounded by gunshots from two young muggers outside his Washington home. The Senator was shot in the left side and in the thigh after his assailants took his wallet, a gold pocket watch, his Phi Beta Kappa key and a quarter. For five weeks the 71-year-old STENNIS slipped in and out of consciousness in Walter Reed Army Hospital.

STENNIS faced his first serious political challenger in 1982 from well-financed Republican Haley Barbour of Yazoo City. The campaign focused primarily on age—whether STENNIS at 81 was too old or Barbour at 34 was too young.

STENNIS defeated Barbour with 65 percent of the vote, carrying all but Rankin and Yazoo counties.

In 1983, “Mis Coy,” his wife of 54 years, died. Also that year, he had cardiovascular surgery and suffered pneumonia. A year later, doctors removed his cancerous left leg.

With his health problems and his age working against him, STENNIS announced his retirement on October 19, 1987, shortly after routine prostate surgery in Washington.

“I am forced to recognize that another six-year term in the Senate would require me to promise to continue my work here through age 93,” the 86-year-old STENNIS said in announcing his decision.

In failing health, STENNIS spent the last few years of his life in St. Catherine’s Village nursing home in Madison. Montgomery said he visited STENNIS in the nursing home about a year ago and spoke with him briefly. “He had on a bow tie and a suit, dressed just like he was getting ready to go to the Senate,” Montgomery said.

Other than STENNIS' son, survivors include: daughter, Margaret Womble of Winston-Salem, North Carolina; and six grandchildren.

Memorials may be made in STENNIS' name to an educational or religious charitable organization of the donor's choice.



[From the Clarion-Ledger, April 24, 1995]

NO NEGATIVES FOR THE KEMPER STATESMAN

(By Andy Kanengiser)

JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS brought dignity and integrity to American politics during his 41-year U.S. Senate career, rare qualities in Washington these days.

Serving Presidents from Truman to Reagan, the Gentleman from Mississippi was a powerhouse in the Nation's Capitol who never forgot his home State. With a battleship, space center, airport and public service center in his honor, few will forget the Kemper County native.

The unassuming DeKalb lawyer and circuit judge who succeeded the ardent segregationist Theodore Bilbo in a special election in 1947 would be an excellent role model for any young person aspiring to a political career, said former Governor William Waller.

"I think he had a judicious, courtly and refined approach to politics," Waller said. "He had a real statesmanlike attitude and showed conservative leadership on defense. During his longtime service in the Senate, he was constantly referred to as a likely candidate for the U.S. Supreme Court. He had no negatives."

Waller, a Jackson lawyer and Mississippi's Governor from 1972 to 1976, recalls STENNIS transcended several critical eras in U.S. politics—from the days of segregation to desegregation and affirmative action. And he did it without being controversial, Waller said.

STENNIS who died Sunday at the age of 93, didn't show the fiery rhetoric on racial issues, for years the hallmark of a number of political contemporaries in the South.

"During his early era it was popular to be a strong segregationist, but on a major scale I never believed that he was," said State Senator David Jordan of Greenwood, a longtime civil rights activist. "He was a decent person who went through a metamorphosis. Through the years, he softened up."

Mississippi State University political science professor Ed Clynych said STENNIS was "not a race baiter."

"I do think he changed over the years. His rhetoric was more temperate on civil rights," he said.

While avoiding civil rights battles, STENNIS steered federal projects to Mississippi as chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee during the Vietnam War era and the Senate Appropriations Committee in the late 1980s.

"In Mississippi, he will be remembered as the individual who did his best to help his State—he brought Mississippi several federal installations," Clynych said. From the Stennis Space Center on the Gulf Coast to Ingalls Shipbuilding to the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, he brought Washington's money to the Nation's poorest State.

Today, few members of the Republican-led Congress of 1995 want to be associated with political pork.

The mild-mannered STENNIS also brought a touch of class to a state of affairs where the American populace screams for term limits and politicians rank on the bottom rungs of opinion polls.

“I think he will be remembered, first of all, for his integrity. He was a well-respected individual,” Clynych said.

STENNIS, who received a bachelor’s degree in general science in 1923 from then Mississippi A&M College, was regarded as a saint on the Starkville campus. He never forgot where his roots were—deciding to teach political science for a year after his 1989 Senate retirement until ill health forced him to quit.

Clynych, who watched CBS News report the Senator’s death, said his former MSU colleague was very interested in students. It was a trait that stayed with him throughout his illustrious career. “He was very interested in encouraging people to get involved in the public sector. He felt public service was an important calling.”

Leaving office a lifelong Democrat, STENNIS was admired by the politically powerful from both sides of the aisle, including President Reagan, a Republican. “Senator, you have devoted your life to the service of our Nation,” Reagan told the Mississippian at a Washington farewell dinner in June 1988. “I can do no more than say, on behalf of the American people, thank you for your dedicated service.”



[From the Clarion-Ledger, April 24, 1995]

ABILITY TO ADAPT HELPED STENNIS ENDURE AND MISSISSIPPI ADVANCE

(By Butch John and Jay Hughes)

U.S. Senator JOHN C. STENNIS was remembered Sunday as a man willing and able to adapt to sweeping change in Mississippi without surrendering his dignity or his devotion to its people.

A staunch segregationist during his early years in the U.S. Senate, he became an enthusiastic proponent of equality for all Mississippians in his later years, former State Democratic Party Chairman Ed Cole said.

“He had a deep and abiding respect for people, even when they disagreed with him. He had a deep and abiding faith in the good of people, all people,” said Cole, the first black political professional employed by STENNIS.

Hired in 1981 to work in STENNIS’ Jackson Congressional office, Cole said STENNIS, 93, who died Sunday of pneumonia, never forgot the people who helped his four-decade career in the U.S. Senate.

And his State won’t forget him, said Governor Kirk Fordice, who ordered flags at State offices lowered to half-staff in mourning for STENNIS.

“All of Mississippi mourns for JOHN C. STENNIS, one of the outstanding Americans ever to serve in the United States Senate,” Fordice said. “His service to this State was long and faithful.”

Fordice, a Republican, said he once served on STENNIS’ local reelection committee in Vicksburg at the Senator’s request, “probably as a note of bipartisanship.”

“He was that kind of a guy,” Fordice said. “In the olden days I think there was a lot less partisanship.”

STENNIS never fell prey to many politicians’ flaw of forgetting the people who put him in office,” Cole said.

“I was constantly amazed how he remembered the small things people did for him—seven, eight, nine races before,” Cole said. “He would often have

you drive up a back road to see some farmer who nobody knew about, and nobody knew Senator STENNIS knew anything about. He never forgot them.”

Others who knew him said he never lost his down-home touch despite a rocketlike rise to some of the most powerful positions in the Senate.

“We used to travel some together, go around the district and to other places. He always would tell me, ‘Let’s get some ice cream; that’s my weakness.’ Wherever we were, we’d go get it. That was just the way he was,” said 3rd District U.S. Representative Sonny Montgomery, who served with STENNIS for 23 years.

“He was one of the stalwarts for the State of Mississippi,” said State Senator David Jordan of Greenwood, who as an early civil rights supporter found himself on the other side of STENNIS’ pro-segregation stand.

“I would have liked to have seen him more open to all of the State. We didn’t always have the access to him that some of the white folks had. But over the years he changed. He became a statesman for all of the people.”

Former Lt. Governor Evelyn Gandy said STENNIS remained in close contact with State officials throughout his stay in Washington. When there was a problem, she said, STENNIS would make a point to fix it.

“His heart was with the people of Mississippi, and he responded to their needs, and he helped those of us who were elected at the State level to respond to those needs,” she said.

Rex Buffington, STENNIS’ press secretary from 1978 until the Senator retired in 1988, said the key to STENNIS’ power sprang from his reputation.

“A lot of that came from being committed to doing the right thing. A lot of his power and influence came, not just from the positions that he held, but, from the esteem that people held him in,” Buffington said.

Buffington said he admired STENNIS long before going to work for him, and when he took the job he was concerned that in Washington he would find a man much different from his public reputation.

“What I found when I got there was just the opposite. He was an individual who was even greater than that wonderful image,” he said. “It was incredible, really, working for a legend, and one who lived up to and even exceeded his reputation.”

Almost immediately after leaving office, STENNIS’ health began to seriously fail and he was forced to drop out of all public life, Buffington said.

“The Senator that we knew has really been gone for a while,” he said. “It was as though when he left the Senate he finally let go.”

Buffington now serves as executive director of the Stennis Center for Public Service at Mississippi State University. It was created by Congress in 1988 to attract young people to public service careers.

Former Governor William Winter campaigned for STENNIS when STENNIS first ran for the Senate in 1947. He later served as his legislative assistant.

“he represented, to me, what a public leader ought to be like,” Winter said. “His total commitment to public service, his integrity, his impeccable personal character and his qualities as a true gentleman.”

“During his service in the United States Senate, Mississippi had one of the most effective and highly respected Senators that this or any other State ever had,” Winter said. “We shall not soon see his like again.”

Others echo Winter’s assessment.

“He truly was a man of great stature. He will long be remembered as one of the finest Senators Mississippi ever produced,” said U.S. Senator Thad Cochran, a former colleague. “He never said anything bad about anybody else and looked for the good in others. He was appreciated for that. People noticed that.”

Former Governor Ray Mabus, currently ambassador to Saudi Arabia, called STENNIS “a statesman for the ages.”



[The Commercial Appeal, April 24, 1995]

MISSISSIPPI'S STENNIS, 'MR. INTEGRITY,' DIES AT 93

(By William C. Bayne and Sarah A. Derks)

ELECTED IN 1947, HE NEVER LOST AN ELECTION

Former Senator JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS, who spent four decades in the Senate exercising vast influence over America's military, died Sunday. The Mississippi Democrat was 93.

STENNIS died about 3:30 p.m. at St. Dominic Hospital in Jackson, MS, where he had been taken several days ago for pneumonia, said his son, John Hampton Stennis.

STENNIS earned a reputation in Washington for fairness and finesse that landed him delicate committee assignments and close association with eight U.S. Presidents. But his opposition to integration blotted his record.

“He was a great Senator in every way. He was effective, respected and deeply appreciated by the people in Mississippi,” said U.S. Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS). “He was truly a man of great stature. We have suffered a great loss.”

Mississippi Governor Kirk Fordice, who called STENNIS “a key fixture in America's winning the Cold War,” also said the former Senator will be greatly missed.

“All of Mississippi mourns for Senator JOHN C. STENNIS, one of the outstanding Americans ever to serve in the United States Senate,” Fordice said. “His service to this State was long and faithful and he enjoyed national prominence as well.”

The Senator's body will lie in state Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Old Capitol Museum in Jackson and from 4–6 p.m. at the DeKalb. Grave-side services will be at 11 a.m. Wednesday at Pinecrest Cemetery in DeKalb.

It was once said that STENNIS was held in such high regard by his Senate colleagues that his integrity was “considered independently of his constituency, his political philosophy or his voting record.”

STENNIS, revered as “Mr. Integrity,” and “The Judge,” overcame personal tragedy to continue public service. He survived a near-fatal attack by gunmen who attempted to rob him in front of his Washington home on January 30, 1973. The gunmen shot him twice in the abdomen and left him to die. He was 71 at the time and his recovery included a hospital stay of more than four months.

Coy Hines Stennis, his wife of 52 years, died in 1983. In 1984, he lost his left leg to cancer and had to use a wheelchair.

As chairman of both the Armed Services Committee and the defense subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee during the 1970s, STENNIS wielded immeasurable influence.

STENNIS was by no means a traditionalist in Southern politics. His 1947 special-election campaign to fill the unexpired term of the late Senator Theodore G. Bilbo's seat differed radically from the type to which Southerners had become accustomed. He did not mention his opponents or hurl accusations at them.

He was best known in the Senate press gallery for his booming baritone, which often was heard crying, "Mr. President, may we have order?" The request usually resulted in an instant hush.

STENNIS had a mixed record on equal rights. He condemned the Supreme Court's 1954 school desegregation decision, and in 1975 he voted against extending the Voting Rights Act. But in 1983 he switched and voted for its extension.

He later said he always supported the advancement of all races. He argued that the 1954 ruling had forced the South to desegregate its schools but not the North.

His argument won support from several liberal advocates, including Senator Abraham Ribicoff (D-CT), who conceded in a Senate speech that the North was guilty of "monumental hypocrisy."

The so-called STENNIS Amendment, passed in 1972, requires school desegregation policies to be "applied uniformly in all regions of the United States."

In the 1975 debate over the Voting Rights Act, STENNIS renewed his theme against regionalized federal laws. He called the law "a monstrosity which never should have been passed," and added, "if we are to have such a law, it should be applicable nationwide and not just to seven States chosen on the basis of arbitrary criteria to ensure their inclusion."

The Voting Rights Act, first enacted in 1965, applies only to Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, South Carolina, Virginia and 39 counties in North Carolina.

STENNIS was born on August 3, 1901, the son of Hampton Howell Stennis and Cornelia Adams Stennis. He graduated from Mississippi State University in 1923 and received his law degree from University of Virginia in 1928.

He entered Mississippi politics quickly thereafter, serving in the State House of Representatives from 1928 to 1932 before joining the district attorney's office.

STENNIS was prosecuting attorney for the 16th Judicial District from 1931 to 1937 and a circuit court judge until 1947.

STENNIS was first elected November 4, 1947, in that special election to fill the unexpired term of the late Bilbo. He was overwhelmingly re-elected in 1952, 1958, 1964, 1970, 1976 and 1982, when he indicated to supporters that he was running his last political campaign. He never lost an election.

His closest election was in 1982 when, for the first time in his career STENNIS was opposed by a Republican, Yazoo City attorney Haley Barbour. STENNIS won that race with 64 percent of the vote.

In 1929, he married the former Coy Hines of New Albany, MS. The couple lived in a two-story Northwest Washington home. They rarely went out and occasionally on Saturday mornings, she would prepare one of his favorite meals; country ham and eggs with cornbread and melted cheese.

His wife's death was a crushing loss for the Senator. "She always carried her part of the load and was a great help to me," STENNIS said at the time.

In 1965, STENNIS was given the chairmanship of the newly formed Senate Ethics Committee. The panel's first unpleasant duty was the case of Senator Thomas J. Dodd (D-CT), who was accused of campaign fund finagling. STENNIS and the committee went to great lengths to give Dodd, now deceased, a chance to defend himself, but in the end, recommended censure.

Senator Mark Hatfield (R-OR), later remarked: "Some of us freshmen were sitting around once during the Dodd hearings and we agreed that if we found ourselves charged with some terrible crime and if we could pick our judge, we'd pick JOHN STENNIS to judge us."

In 1954, during STENNIS' first full term, the Mississippian became the first Democrat to ask for censure of the late Senator Joseph R. McCarthy (R-WI). If the Senate approved of McCarthy's tactics in hunting Communists and other subversives, said STENNIS, "something big and fine will have gone from this chamber."

STENNIS used his respect and standing among his colleagues to battle for the preservation of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway project. In 1980, he called in his markers from other Senators, asking them to vote to maintain funding levels on the \$1.8 billion project.

STENNIS was largely successful in his efforts, despite considerable carping from Senators who called the project one of the greatest pork-barrel schemes in history.

In 1974, when President Richard Nixon's administration was foundering in the Watergate morass, STENNIS praised Nixon as a "courageous President," citing Nixon's successes in foreign policy.

A pillar in the Presbyterian Church, STENNIS founded in the Senate what became known as the "Wednesday morning prayer breakfast group." It consisted of 20 Senators—Democrats and Republicans—who have breakfast and hold informal religious observances when the Senate is in session.

The Senator, who rarely missed a Senate session because of illness, always maintained his weight at a trim 175 pounds and swam and exercised regularly in the Senate gymnasium. STENNIS generally shunned Washington's cocktail circuit, but enjoyed an occasional scotch and soda. He also loved baseball, and before the old Washington Senators fled to Dallas, he often would slip out to the ball park.

After his retirement, STENNIS moved to the Mississippi State University campus in Starkville, which also is the home of the John C. Stennis Institute of Government and the Stennis Center for Public Service, created by Congress.

Mississippi State University created the John C. Stennis Chair of Political Science in 1971 with funds donated by the Senator and his friends. Many of his personal letters and public papers are housed at the university.

STENNIS held several honorary degrees and was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Alpha Delta (legal) and Alpha Gamma Rho fraternities. He was a Presbyterian, a Mason, and a member of the Lions Club and the Mississippi and American bar associations.

Also named for the Senator is NASA's National Space Technology Laboratory in southern Mississippi. John C. Stennis Space Center tests rocket motors.

"How would I like to be remembered? I haven't thought about that a whole lot," STENNIS said in a 1985 interview. "You couldn't give me a finer compliment than just to say, 'He did his best.'"

STENNIS is survived by his son, John Hampton Stennis, a Jackson lawyer, and his daughter, Margaret Womble. The family requests that donations be made to an educational, charitable or religious group of choice.



[From the Daily Leader (Brookhaven, Mississippi), April 24, 1995]

ONCE-POWERFUL SENATOR, JOHN STENNIS DEAD AT 93

(By Stephen Hawkins)

JACKSON—JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS, a Mississippi Democrat who trained generations of Senators in the ways of Washington, opposed vir-

tually all civil rights legislation and staunchly supported the Vietnam War, died Sunday. He was 93.

STENNIS died at St. Dominic Hospital, where he had been taken several days ago for pneumonia, said his son John Hampton Stennis.

During 41 years in the Senate, STENNIS earned a reputation for fairness and finesse that landed him delicate committee assignments and close associations with eight U.S. Presidents.

“He was a great Senator in every way. He was effective, respected and deeply appreciated by the people in Mississippi,” said U.S. Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS).

As chairman of both the Senate Armed Services Committee and the defense subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee in the 1970s, STENNIS wielded more clout over military matters than perhaps any civilian but the President.

“If there is one thing I’m unyielding and unbending on, it is that we must have the very best weapons,” STENNIS once said.

When he retired in 1988, STENNIS was the Senate’s oldest member, and had served longer than all but one other—Carl Hayden of Arizona, who retired in 1969.

Nicknamed the “conscience of the Senate” for his work on the Senate’s code of ethics and his religious convictions, STENNIS overcame personal tragedy to continue public service.

He was wounded by robbers and left bleeding on the sidewalk near his northwest Washington home in 1973. Coy Hines Stennis, his wife of 52 years, died in 1983. And in 1984, he lost his left leg to cancer, and had to use a wheelchair.

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He condemned the Supreme Court’s 1954 school desegregation decision and voted against virtually all civil rights legislation. But in 1983, he voted for an extension of the Voting Rights Act.

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After becoming Armed Services chairman in 1969, STENNIS firmly supported President Nixon’s requests to extend the Vietnam War.

In the war’s waning days, he cosponsored the war Powers Act of 1973, which sets limits on a President’s power to commit American forces to combat without congressional consent. But a decade later, he opposed forcing President Reagan to abide by the law in order to keep Marine peacekeepers in Lebanon.

STENNIS was born August 3, 1901, in DeKalb and graduated from Mississippi State University in 1923 before attending the University of Virginia Law School.

He began his public service in 1928 in the Mississippi Legislature, then served as a district attorney and circuit judge before joining the U.S. Senate.

STENNIS’ body will lie in state Tuesday at the Old Capitol Museum in Jackson and later at the DeKalb Presbyterian Church. Graveside services will be Wednesday at Pinecrest Cemetery in DeKalb, his hometown.

[From the Oxford Eagle (Oxford, Mississippi), April 24, 1995]

MISSISSIPPIANS REMEMBER JOHN STENNIS

(By Jonny Miles)

JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS, 93, a staunch proponent and defendant of Mississippi throughout his 41 years in the United States Senate, died Sunday of pneumonia at St. Dominic-Jackson Memorial Hospital.

According to published reports, STENNIS had been hospitalized since Thursday. Since retiring from the Senate in 1988, plagued with medical problems (including the removal of his cancerous left leg), the former Senator had spent the last years of his life in failing health at St. Catherine's Village nursing home in Madison.

"The people of Mississippi have lost one of the greatest statesmen in the history of our State," said Senator Trent Lott, who succeeded STENNIS in 1988. "Senator STENNIS was a tireless public servant who loved Mississippi and his country. We will remember his gentle manners, his dignity in adversity, and his determination always to plow a straight furrow."

STENNIS' political religion, he remarked back in 1947, was to plow a straight furrow right down to the end of his row.

"He was the epitome of a statesman," Lott said. "Mississippi was indeed fortunate that he was ours."

Senator Thad Cochran, who served 8 years with STENNIS in the Senate, called the late lawmaker a "great Senator in every way. He was effective, respected and deeply appreciated by the people of Mississippi. He was truly a man of great stature. We have suffered a great loss."

STENNIS, a Kemper County native and Mississippi A&M College graduate, began his four decades in Washington in 1947 by defeating five opponents in an election to fill the vacancy caused by fervent segregationist Senator Theodore G. Bilbo. In his long-held seat in the Senate—STENNIS served longer than any Senator except Arizona's Carl Hayden—the country lawyer from DeKalb was both witness and participant in historic changes in the Nation.

Very frequently, Mississippi—and STENNIS—were at the forefront of those changes. Though STENNIS ardently avoided the race-baiting politics of his predecessor, the desegregation issue became inescapable as STENNIS entered his second term as Senator. In 1965, he helped draft the Southern Manifesto, a letter of protest against the growing tide of integrationist politics in the South.

When integration became law, however, STENNIS' sympathies changed. Dr. Marty Wiseman, director of the John C. Stennis Institute for Government at Mississippi State University, said STENNIS adhered strictly to the Constitution.

"He appeared, in the early days, established in his position (favoring) State's rights," Wiseman said. But the Senator "abhorred any type of violent reaction."

Some civil rights activists saw STENNIS opposition to racial violence as a moderate stance. The Senator avoided civil rights battles and, as often as he could, avoided racial issues altogether. By 1982, he had softened to the point of voting for an extension of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

"I didn't want to go back to the days of misunderstanding," he told The Associated Press later. "I didn't want to turn around and go back. I always rejoiced to see blacks or anyone else have better opportunities."

“He seemed to always have a set of principles regardless of the politics,” explained Wiseman. “I don’t recall him doing anything for political expediency.”

STENNIS was considered a formidable power in the U.S. Senate for his chairmanships of both the Senate Armed Services Committee and the defense subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee in the 1970s. He was also afforded respect for his unyielding ethical stances, which garnered him the tag of “the conscience of the Senate.”

“He always had the idea that the people who put him there expected him to be honorable,” Wiseman said. “He wanted to give the taxpayers a dollar’s worth of service for a dollar’s worth of work. He treated it like a trust. He was the pattern that the rest of the cloth was cut from.”

STENNIS’ body will lie in state Tuesday at the Old Capitol Museum in Jackson and later at the DeKalb Presbyterian Church. Graveside services will be Wednesday at Pinecrest Cemetery in DeKalb.



[From the Daily Leader (Brookhaven, Mississippi), April 24, 1995]

#### LEADERS SAY HE WAS TRUE STATESMAN

(Staff Writer)

JACKSON, MS (AP)—Current and former Mississippi political leaders are mourning the death of former U.S. Senator JOHN C. STENNIS, whom they are calling a true statesman.

“He was one of the great statesmen for our Nation in the 20th century,” U.S. Representative G.V. “Sonny” Montgomery, (D—MS), said. “I believe history will record Senator STENNIS as a true son of the South.”

STENNIS, who retired in 1988 after 41 years in the U.S. Senate, died Sunday of pneumonia. He was 93.

“JOHN STENNIS was a statesman for the ages,” said former Mississippi Governor Ray Mabus, now the U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia. “The Mississippi gentleman and close friend will be greatly missed by every generation in our State. Most of all we’ll miss his easygoing nature and his wise legislative skill.”

Former Governor William Winter, who once served as the Senator’s legislative director in Washington, said STENNIS was his “political hero and represented for me what a public leader ought to be like. We shall not see his likes again.”

STENNIS began his public service in 1928 in the Mississippi Legislature, then served as a district attorney and circuit judge before joining the U.S. Senate, where he served as chairman of both the Armed Services Committee and the defense subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee during the 1970s.

Current Governor Kirk Fordice said, “All of Mississippi mourns for Senator JOHN C. STENNIS, one of the outstanding Americans ever to serve in the U.S. Senate. His service to this State was long and faithful.

“As chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, he was a key fixture in America’s winning the Cold War. He will be greatly missed,” Fordice said.

Montgomery, first elected to Congress in 1966, said one of the last aircraft carriers planned for the U.S. “for quite a while” will be commissioned in Virginia in December and will bear the STENNIS name.

Montgomery, who served in Congress with STENNIS for 23 years, hopes the younger generation in Mississippi will learn about “a legend in our State. He’s been out of office seven years and there is a tendency to forget. They shouldn’t forget JOHN STENNIS.”

U.S. Senator Thad Cochran called it an honor to serve in Congress with STENNIS.

“He truly was a man of great stature. He will long be remembered as one of the finest Senators Mississippi has ever produced,” said Cochran (R-MS). “He never said anything bad about anybody else and looked for the good in others. He was appreciated for that. People noticed that.”



[From the Associated Press, April 24, 1995]

#### EX-SENATOR JOHN C. STENNIS DIES

(Editorial)

Former Senator JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS was remembered as a man who wielded great power over military policy and Senate ethics but opposed virtually all civil rights legislation.

STENNIS died Sunday at St. Dominic Hospital, where he had been taken several days ago for pneumonia, said his son, John Hampton Stennis. He was 93.

During 41 years in the Senate, the Mississippi Democrat earned a reputation for fairness and finesse that landed him delicate committee assignments and close associations with eight U.S. Presidents.

“He was a great Senator in every way. He was effective, respected and deeply appreciated by the people in Mississippi,” said U.S. Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS).

As chairman of both the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Defense Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee in the 1970s, STENNIS wielded more clout over military matters than perhaps any civilian but the President. He was a strong supporter of the Vietnam War.

“If there is one thing I’m unyielding and unbending on, it is that we must have the very best weapons,” STENNIS once said.

When he retired in 1988, STENNIS was the Senate’s oldest member, and had served longer than all but one other, Carl Hayden of Arizona, who retired in 1969 after 42 years in the Senate.

Nicknamed the “conscience of the Senate” for his work on the Senate’s code of ethics and his religious convictions, STENNIS overcame personal tragedy to continue public service.

He was wounded by robbers and left bleeding on the sidewalk near his northwest Washington home in 1973. Coy Hines Stennis, his wife of 52 years, died in 1983. And in 1984, he lost his left leg to cancer, and had to use a wheelchair.

“Discouraged? I suppose everybody’s had his ups and downs. But I’ve never surrendered,” STENNIS said in 1984.

Although STENNIS never made racial issues his primary focus in the Senate, he did support segregation and was a staunch member of the Southern wing of his party.

He condemned the Supreme Court’s 1954 school desegregation decision and voted against virtually all civil rights legislation. But in 1983, he voted for an extension of the Voting Rights Act.

“I didn’t want to go back to the days of misunderstanding,” he told The Associated Press later. “I didn’t want to turn around and go back. I always rejoiced to see blacks or anyone else have better opportunities.”

After becoming Armed Services chairman in 1969, STENNIS firmly supported President Nixon’s requests to extend the Vietnam War.

In the war’s waning days, he co-sponsored the War Powers Act of 1973, which sets limits on a President’s power to commit American forces to combat without Congressional consent. But a decade later, he opposed forcing President Reagan to abide by the law in order to keep Marine peacekeepers in Lebanon.

STENNIS was born August 3, 1901, in DeKalb and graduated from Mississippi State University in 1923 before attending the University of Virginia Law School.

He began his public service in 1928 in the Mississippi Legislature, then served as a district attorney and circuit judge before joining the U.S. Senate.

STENNIS’ body will lie in state Tuesday at the Old Capitol Museum in Jackson and later at the DeKalb Presbyterian Church. Graveside services will be Wednesday at Pinecrest Cemetery in DeKalb, his hometown.



[From the Washington Post, April 24, 1995]

FORMER SENATOR JOHN STENNIS, DEFENSE AUTHORITY, DIES AT 93

(By Richard Pearson)

JOHN C. STENNIS, 93, the courtly and conservative Mississippi Democrat who during more than 40 years in the U.S. Senate became one of its most powerful members, died April 23 at a hospital in Jackson, MS. He had been admitted several days before with pneumonia.

Senator STENNIS was a state circuit court judge little known in Washington and something of an authority on farming when he was elected to the Senate in 1947, saying that he was a segregationist who would work to preserve “the Southern way of life.”

Before he left office in January 1989, he had served as the Senate’s President Pro Tempore and had been chairman of both its Armed Services and Appropriations committees. Over the years, he also had been chosen by his colleagues for other assignments, often difficult ones that brought him little thanks outside the Capitol.

He served on the committee that investigated the conduct of Senator Joseph R. McCarthy (R-WI) in 1954. He became the first Senate Democrat to take on McCarthy, accusing him of using “slush and slime” in pursuit of ever-elusive communists.

He was chosen in 1965 as the first chairman of the Select Committee on Standards and Conduct. He wrote the Senate’s first code of ethics. And he served on the Senate committee that investigated President Richard M. Nixon’s involvement in Watergate.

But it was as Armed Services chairman from 1969 to 1981 that he wielded vast influence over the country and vast power within the Senate. If he ran a tight ship, he did it with fairness and integrity, as well as sagacity.

Upon learning of Senator STENNIS’s death, Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS) hailed him as “a great Senator in every way. He was effective, respected and deeply appreciated by the people in Mississippi. He was truly a man of great stature. We have suffered a great loss.”

Testament to his grit were two events that involved personal adversity. In 1973, while walking near his Washington home, he was shot and left for dead by robbers. In 1984, he lost a leg to cancer and could return to work only in a wheelchair. On both occasions, he went back to work well before his physicians thought it likely and returned to standing ovations.

He won a special election to the Senate as a moderate segregationist alternative to two white supremacist candidates. He was an author of the 1954 "Southern Manifesto," which denounced the *Brown vs. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision that outlawed racial segregation in public schools, and voted against all civil rights legislation until 1982, when he announced his support for extension of the Voting Rights Act. He opposed civil rights with some decorum, unlike his less-restrained longtime Senate colleague from Mississippi, James O. Eastland.

Senator STENNIS often confined himself to taking mildly sly shots at northern Senators for what he called their hypocrisy in denouncing the South while glossing over racial problems in their own States. He did not use "race" as a campaign issue.

On defense issues, he changed little over the years. He was a Senator who had come to office at the birth of the Cold War and the beginning of a long arms race. He never doubted the wisdom of having a national defense that was second to none in the world, and he supported every President on requests concerning national security.

Before U.S. troops were engaged in Vietnam, he cautioned against involvement in combat operations, taking the Senate floor to warn that the eventual result might not be victory but a painful choice between endless conflict or running. Yet once U.S. forces were committed, he supported the action to the bitter end.

His influence was enormous. He not only was chairman of the Armed Services Committee but he also headed the Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, giving him double-barreled influence over defense spending.

He was no puppet of either the Defense Department or the White House. He insisted on value for dollar from armed services and defense contractors. In 1971, he joined Senators who introduced legislation that required Congressional authority for the President to maintain military combat operations after a specified period.

"The decision to make war is too big a decision for one mind to make and too awesome for one man to bear," he said. "There must be a collective judgment given and a collective responsibility shared."

In the 1970s, the country and many of the younger Senators in his own party seemed to be in revolt against the beliefs if not the person of Senator STENNIS. He lost an important turf battle when a separate intelligence oversight committee was established, outside the control of the Armed Services Committee.

In 1982, perhaps sensing that illness and age were slowing the Senator down, Haley Barbour, now chairman of the Republican National Committee, mounted a well-financed, intelligent and vigorous campaign for the seat. Since 1947, Senator STENNIS had run largely unopposed, and many wondered if he would even run for reelection. Senator STENNIS ran, carrying all but two counties with 64 percent of the vote.

His last term seemed at times like a long valedictory. He mostly declined to speak about civil rights issues, saying the climate had changed since he came to office and saying he always had favored the advancement of both races.

He was the last of the true Southern Democratic barons to many. Despite physical ailments, he would arrive at his Capitol office about 8 a.m. and remain at the Capitol until the Senate adjourned for the day. Quiet and frail, he struggled out of his wheelchair to address the Senate or when he met a lady.

He also relished looking out for Mississippi. He would remark with pride on his role in securing the construction of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, which was opposed by nearly everyone not living in Mississippi and was a mark of his clout.

JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS was born August 3, 1901, on a farm in Kemper County, MS, the youngest of seven children. He graduated from what is now Mississippi State University and the University of Virginia law school. He was elected to Phi Beta Kappa.

After graduating from law school in 1928, he began the private practice of law in DeKalb and won election to the State House of Representatives. In 1931, he became a district attorney. He was appointed a State circuit court judge in 1937 and held that post until entering the Senate. He won a special election on November 4, 1947, to fill the seat left vacant by the death of Senator Theodore G. Bilbo (D).

In a 1985 interview, Senator STENNIS said: "How would I like to be remembered? I haven't thought about that a whole lot. You couldn't give me a finer compliment than just to say, 'He did his best.'"

Senator STENNIS's wife of 52 years, Coy Hines Stennis, died in 1983. Survivors include a son and a daughter.



[From the Phoenix Gazette, April 24, 1995]

EX-SENATOR FROM MISSISSIPPI DIES AT 93; STENNIS WIELDED CLOUT OVER  
U.S. MILITARY AFFAIRS

(Editorial)

Former Senator JOHN STENNIS, a courtly Mississippi Democrat who exercised vast influence over America's military during his four decades in the Senate, died Sunday. He was 93.

STENNIS died about 3:30 p.m. at St. Dominic Hospital, where he had been taken several days ago for pneumonia, said his son John Hampton Stennis.

STENNIS earned a reputation in Washington for fairness and finesse that landed him delicate committee assignments and close association with eight Presidents. But his opposition to integration blotted his record.

STENNIS joined the Senate in 1947. At the time of his retirement in 1988, he was its oldest member.

"He was a great Senator in every way. He was effective, respected and deeply appreciated by the people in Mississippi," said U.S. Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS). "He was truly a man of great stature. We have suffered a great loss."

STENNIS, nicknamed the "conscience of the Senate" for his work on the Senate's code of ethics and strict religious convictions, overcame tragedy to continue service.

He was wounded by robbers near his Washington home in 1973.

Coy Hines Stennis, his wife of 52 years, died in 1983. And in 1984, he lost his left leg to cancer, and had to use a wheelchair.

"Discouraged? I suppose everybody's had his ups and downs. But I've never surrendered," STENNIS said then.

STENNIS, serving as chairman of both the Armed Services Committee and the Defense Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee during the 1970s, wielded more clout over military matters than perhaps any civilian except the President.

Though he stood for a tough military, STENNIS did not always back Presidential military policy.

He was a leading backer of the Vietnam War. However, in the war's waning days, he co-sponsored legislation to set limits on a President's power to commit American forces to combat without Congressional consent.

He condemned the Supreme Court's 1954 school desegregation decision, but in 1983 he switched and voted for an extension of the Voting Rights Act.

Survivors include his son, a Jackson lawyer, and his daughter, Margaret Womble.



[From the Bergen New Jersey Record, April 24, 1995]

JOHN STENNIS, FORMER SENATOR

(By the News Service Reports)

Former Senator JOHN C. STENNIS (D-MS), a deeply religious defense hawk who served four decades in the Senate and exercised a major influence on U.S. military policy, died of pneumonia Sunday afternoon in Jackson, MS. He was 93.

Nicknamed the "Conscience of the Senate" for his personal rectitude and his efforts to shape the Senate's code of ethics, he entered the Senate in 1947 and retired in 1988. Senator STENNIS had undergone cardiovascular surgery in 1983 and a year later had his left leg amputated because of a malignant tumor in his upper thigh.

As chairman of the Senate Armed Services committee for 12 years, beginning in 1969, Senator STENNIS played a key role in fighting deep cuts in the defense budget. He opposed judicial efforts to desegregate public schools in 1954, but three decades later he supported extending the Voting Rights Act.

Close to eight Presidents, Senator STENNIS was the last of the classic Southern gentlemen who so forcefully shaped the character of the mid-century Senate. He was crusty yet courtly, a stern moralist and a man of impeccable integrity with an almost mystical devotion to the Senate.

"He was a great Senator in every way. He was effective, respected, and deeply appreciated by the people in Mississippi," Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS), said Sunday. "He was truly a man of great stature."

Senator STENNIS himself was more modest about his place in history.

"How would I like to be remembered? I haven't thought about that a whole lot," he mused in a 1985 interview. "You couldn't give me a finer compliment than just to say, He did his best."

Testament to his grit were two events that involved personal adversity. In 1973, while walking near his Washington home, he was shot and left for dead by robbers. In 1984, after losing his leg to cancer, he could return to work only in a wheelchair. On both occasions, he went back to work well before his physicians thought it likely and returned to standing ovations from his Senate colleagues.

Senator STENNIS displayed a different kind of toughness in 1954, when he served on the Select Committee that probed charges against the late Senator Joseph R. McCarthy (R-WI), and became the first Senate Democrat to call for censure of the Wisconsin Senator. Though Senator STENNIS was a

dedicated conservative, he was offended by McCarthy's tactics in pursuit of ever-elusive communists.

During the censure debate, Senator STENNIS rallied support from many colleagues who had been afraid to attack McCarthy. In a vigorous speech, he accused McCarthy of besmirching the Senate's good name with "slush and slime."

That same year, 1954, Senator STENNIS was one of the first members of Congress to caution against U.S. involvement in Indochina.

In a Senate speech delivered when the Eisenhower Administration was considering intervention to prevent a French disaster in Vietnam, Senator STENNIS presciently warned that committing U.S. ground forces could lead to "a long, costly, and indecisive war."

Yet 11 years later, when President Lyndon Johnson made a large-scale commitment to fight in Vietnam, Senator STENNIS loyally backed his commander in chief. "Once the die is cast and once our flag is committed and our boys are sent out to the field, you will find solid support for the war from the South," he said.

He also firmly backed defense spending throughout his career, supporting the Pentagon even when the Vietnam War made weapons procurement unpopular. "If there is one thing I'm unyielding and unbending on, it is that we must have the very best weapons," he once said.

Senate liberals clashed frequently with Senator STENNIS on subjects ranging from defense spending to civil rights, but they invariably praised him for his fairness and courtesy.

He was an author of the 1954 "Southern Manifesto," which denounced the *Brown vs. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision that outlawed racial segregation in public schools, and voted against all civil rights legislation until 1982, when he announced his support for extension of the Voting Rights Act. He opposed civil rights with some decorum, unlike his less-restrained longtime Senate colleague from Mississippi, James O. Eastland.



[From the Rocky Mountain News, April 24, 1995]

"CONSCIENCE OF SENATE" DIES

(By the Associated Press)

Former Senator JOHN C. STENNIS a courtly Mississippi Democrat who exercised vast influence over America's military during his four decades in the Senate, died Sunday.

STENNIS, 93, died around 3:30 p.m. at St. Dominic Hospital, where he had been taken several days ago for pneumonia, said his son, John Hampton Stennis.

STENNIS joined the Senate in 1947. At the time of his retirement in 1988, he was its oldest member. He was nicknamed the "conscience of the Senate" for his work on the Senate's code of ethics and his strict religious convictions.

Serving as chairman of the Armed Services Committee and the Appropriations Committee's Defense Subcommittee in the 1970s, STENNIS wielded more clout over military matters than perhaps any civilian except the President.

He was a consistent advocate of the need for a strong military.

"Trouble can come from anywhere," he once said. "We've got to be ready for instant action."

STENNIS did not always back Presidential military policy. He was a leading backer of the Vietnam War, but in the war's waning days, he co-sponsored legislation to set limits on a President's power to commit U.S. forces to combat without congressional consent.

A decade later, STENNIS opposed using that law—the War Powers Act of 1973—to permit President Reagan to keep Marine peacekeeping troops in Lebanon.



[From the New Jersey Bergen Record, April 24, 1995]

FORMER SENATOR STENNIS; AT 93; HELD MISSISSIPPI SEAT FOR FOUR  
DECADES

(By the Wire Service)

Former Senator JOHN C. STENNIS, a courtly Mississippi Democrat who exercised vast influence over America's military during his four decades in the U.S. Senate, died Sunday. He was 93.

Mr. STENNIS died about 3:30 p.m. at St. Dominic Hospital, where he had been taken several days ago for treatment of pneumonia, said his son, John Hampton Stennis.

Mr. STENNIS earned a reputation in Washington for fairness and finesse that landed him delicate committee assignments and close association with eight U.S. Presidents. But his opposition to integration blotted his record.

He joined the Senate in 1947. At the time of his retirement in 1988, he was its oldest member.

Mr. STENNIS, nicknamed the "conscience of the Senate" for his work on the Senate's code of ethics and his strict religious convictions, overcame personal tragedy to continue public service.

He was wounded by robbers and left bleeding on the sidewalk near his northwest Washington home in 1973. President Richard M. Nixon, emerging from Mr. STENNIS' hospital room, said the Senator would survive because, "He's got the will to live in spades."

Coy Hines Stennis, his wife of 52 years, died in 1983. And in 1984, he lost his left leg to cancer, and had to use a wheelchair.

"Discouraged? I suppose everybody's had his ups and downs. But I've never surrendered," he said then.

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He was a consistent advocate of the need for a strong military.

"If there is one thing I'm unyielding and unbending on, it is that we must have the very best weapons," he once said.

After militants in Iran seized the American Embassy and held its employees hostage in late 1979, Mr. STENNIS suggested that a fleet of small aircraft carriers be built to counter such crises around the world.

"Trouble can come from anywhere now," he said. "We've got to be ready for instant action."

Soon after, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan and Mr. STENNIS called for U.S. military support bases near Mideast oil fields.

Though he stood for a tough military, Mr. STENNIS did not always back presidential military policy.

He was a leading backer of the Vietnam War. However, in the war's waning days, he co-sponsored legislation to set limits on a President's power to commit American forces to combat without congressional consent.

A decade later, Mr. STENNIS opposed using that law, the War Powers Act of 1973, to permit President Ronald Reagan to keep Marine peacekeeping troops in Lebanon.

He condemned the Supreme Court's 1954 school desegregation decision, but in 1983 he switched and voted for an extension of the Voting Rights Act.

He later said he always supported the advancement of all races.

Mr. STENNIS was born August 3, 1901, in DeKalb, MS, and graduated from Mississippi State University in 1923 before attending the University of Virginia Law School.

He began his public service in 1928 in the Mississippi Legislature, then served as a district attorney and circuit judge before joining the U.S. Senate.

After his retirement, Mr. STENNIS moved to the Mississippi State University campus in Starkville, which also is the home of the John C. Stennis Institute of Government and the Stennis Center for Public Service, created by Congress.

"I do believe the most important thing I can do now is to help young people understand the past and prepare for the future," Mr. STENNIS said in 1990 while serving as executive in residence at the university. "As long as I have energy left, I want to use it to the benefit of students."

Also named for the Senator is NASA's National Space Technology Laboratory in southern Mississippi. The John C. Stennis Space Center tests rocket motors.

"How would I like to be remembered? I haven't thought about that a whole lot," Mr. STENNIS said in a 1985 interview. "You couldn't give me a finer compliment than just to say, He did his best."



[From the Rhode Island Providence Journal-Bulletin, April 24, 1995]

EX-SENATOR JOHN STENNIS, 93 DIES; SERVED IN CONGRESS FOR 41 YEARS

(By Associated Press)

Former Senator JOHN C. STENNIS, 93, a courtly Mississippi Democrat who exercised vast influence over America's military during his four decades in the Senate, died yesterday at St. Dominic Hospital, where he had been taken several days ago for pneumonia.

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He condemned the Supreme Court's 1954 school desegregation decision, but in 1983, he switched and voted for an extension of the Voting Rights Act.

He later said he always supported the advancement of all races.

He leaves a son and a daughter.



[From the New York Times, April 24, 1995]

JOHN C. STENNIS, 93, LONGTIME CHAIRMAN OF POWERFUL COMMITTEES IN  
THE SENATE, DIES

(By David E. Rosenbaum)

Senator JOHN C. STENNIS, a courtly Mississippi Democrat who served in the Senate longer than all but one other person in history, died today at St. Dominic-Jackson Memorial Hospital in Jackson, MS. He was 93 years old.

Mr. STENNIS died of complications of pneumonia, said Rex Buffington, director of the John C. Stennis Center for Public Service at Mississippi State University in Starkville.

When he retired on January 3, 1989, Mr. STENNIS had been in the Senate 41 years, 1 month and 29 days. Only Carl Hayden of Arizona, who retired in 1969 after 41 years and 10 months in the Senate, served longer.

Although he was President Pro Tempore of the Senate, a largely honorary position given to the Senator in the majority party who has the most seniority, and was chairman of the Appropriations Committee in the 100th Congress, his role in his last years on Capitol Hill was largely that of patriarch and teacher to younger Senators.

He no longer dominated legislation as he had in the 1960's and 1970's, when he was the most influential voice in Congress on military affairs and when, widely respected for his integrity, diligence and judgment, he was called upon time and again to investigate touchy political matters, particularly those that had embarrassed the Senate. It became routine to refer to him as the conscience of the entire institution.

In many respects, JOHN STENNIS was the last of the Senate's Southern barons—Democrats elected from one-party States who gained power through

seniority and often wielded it autocratically to block the more liberal initiatives of the Senators from the rest of the country. His support for the military was unswerving, and his advocacy of racial segregation was unalloyed for most of his career.

But in style and temperament, Senator STENNIS was cut from a mold different from most of the other Southerners who came to power shortly after World War II. He did not drink, smoke, swear in public or use racial epithets. Perhaps more important, he changed with the times, began supporting some civil rights measures, and, in his last elections, he ran well among black voters.

His colleagues from outside the South did not fear him so much as they liked and admired him. At the height of one of the battles over civil rights legislation that occupied the Senate in the 1960's, Senator Paul H. Douglas, Democrat of Illinois, a leader of the faction supporting the measure, declared, "If I were ever to have to go on trial, I would want JOHN STENNIS to be my judge."

It was his personal qualities that led Senator STENNIS' colleagues to choose him so often to head political inquiries. As early as 1954, when he was a junior Senator, he was named to the committee that investigated charges against Senator Joseph R. McCarthy (R-WI).

Eight years later, he was put in charge of an investigation of accusations that the Pentagon was muzzling officers who wanted to speak up against communism. In 1967, he headed the investigation of Senator Thomas J. Dodd (D-CT), that led to Senator Dodd's censure for misuse of funds and to a new code of ethics for the Senate.

In 1973, President Richard M. Nixon took advantage of Senator STENNIS's reputation for integrity and proposed that, instead of turning over the Watergate tapes to the independent prosecutor, he allow the Senator to listen to them and authenticate summaries prepared by the White House.

Mr. STENNIS at first agreed. But when the prosecutor, Archibald Cox, objected to the suggestion and was discharged for his defiance, the STENNIS compromise collapsed.

Mr. STENNIS was chairman of the Armed Services Committee at the height of the Vietnam War, and President Nixon relied on him to defend the Administration against countless end-the-war amendments and efforts to cut the Pentagon's budget. More often than not, Mr. STENNIS was successful, despite opposition by most of his fellow Democrats.

Later, when President Jimmy Carter rejected some of the Pentagon's spending requests, Senator STENNIS tried to accommodate him, although, personally, he would have preferred a larger military budget.

Years later, the Senator said in an interview that he never tried to second-guess a President on foreign policy and military matters.

"I lean with the President on our system of government," he declared, expressing a view that many modern Senators consider old-fashioned. "Makes no difference who he is. I would back those fellows on a lot of things."

While he often counseled young Senators and helped them through the parliamentary maze that the Senate, over time, has constructed for itself, Mr. STENNIS in his later years seemed to long for the days when junior Senators bided their time and held their tongues.

"I'm not blaming them," he once said of his younger colleagues. "They come here on the average well-educated. But they don't have the maturity, if I may use that term. They don't have the experience in public affairs that the old-timer had. It takes time to mature."

JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS was born on August 3, 1901, in Kemper County in the red clay hills of eastern Mississippi. He was a member of one of the leading families in the rural county. His father was a farmer, but the Stennis' were known as professional people—doctors, lawyers, teachers and legislators.

JOHN C. STENNIS graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Mississippi State University in 1923 and, four years later, received his law degree at the University of Virginia. A year out of law school, he was elected to the Mississippi Legislature, and that was followed by elections as district prosecuting attorney and circuit judge.

After 10 years on the bench, he ran in 1947 for the Senate seat vacated by the death of the flamboyant Senator Theodore G. Bilbo and was elected that November over five opponents. "I want to plow a straight furrow right down to the end of my row," Mr. STENNIS asserted in that campaign. The philosophy seems to have guided the rest of his political career.

Until his last campaign, in 1982, he was never seriously challenged for re-election, and even then, facing a 34-year-old Republican, Haley Barbour, who made the Senator's advanced age a major issue, Mr. STENNIS won by about 2 to 1.

In his early days in the Senate, he worked 16 hours a day, staying in the Senate until it adjourned and then studying in the Library of Congress until it closed. He was, as an aide described him, "a plodder, a guy who would go over something once and then again and then again until he finally understood all the complexities."

Asked once what his hobby was, Mr. STENNIS said, "My work is my play and my play is my work." That work often paid off in the currency of special projects for his constituents. The Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, a massive public works project that opened in Mississippi in 1985, is his pyramid.

Few other Senators had such a commanding presence as Mr. STENNIS did in his heyday. When he stood on the floor to speak, he would start by snapping his fingers, making a sound that could be heard in every corner of the chamber, and a page would come scurrying with a glass of water.

Then, his throat cleared, he would rise behind the lectern on his desk at the rear of the chamber, and a hush would fall over the Senate. His speeches resembled lectures. He would not tolerate interruptions, often pointing his finger and making a "shush" sound when another Senator tried to speak.

He paced up and down the center aisle as he talked, with such resonance that, even after microphones were installed in the Senate, he often spoke without one.

His voice remained clear and his mind sharp as he grew older, but he had serious physical problems. He was shot and seriously wounded by a burglar at his home in 1973, and his left leg was amputated in 1984 because of cancer. But each time, he returned to his Senate work much sooner than expected.

But the injury and the illness took their toll. After he lost his leg, bars were constructed on his desk in the Senate chamber so he could pull himself out of his wheelchair and stand when he delivered one of his rare speeches on the floor.

Mr. STENNIS's friends said he suffered from extreme loneliness after his wife, the former Coy Hines, whom he called "Miss Coy," died in 1983. They had been married more than 50 years.

After his retirement, Mr. STENNIS moved to the Mississippi State University campus at Starkville, the home of the John C. Stennis Institute of Gov-

ernment and the John C. Stennis Center for Public Service, created by Congress to train young leaders. Also named for him is NASA's National Space Technology Laboratory near Bay St. Louis, MS. The John C. Stennis Space Center tests rocket motors. The Nation's newest aircraft carrier was christened the *John C. Stennis* and is scheduled to be commissioned next December.

"I do believe the most important thing I can do now is to help young people understand the past and prepare for the future," Mr. STENNIS said in a 1990 interview while serving as executive-in-residence at Mississippi State.

In declining health, Mr. STENNIS lived in recent years in a nursing home in Madison, near Jackson. He is survived by two children, Margaret Womble, of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and John H. Stennis, of Jackson, MS.

Mr. Buffington said Mr. STENNIS' body will lie in state at the Old Capitol in Jackson on Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and then at DeKalb Presbyterian Church in DeKalb from 4-6 p.m. Graveside services are to be held at the DeKalb Cemetery on Wednesday at 11 a.m.



[From the Los Angeles Times, April 24, 1995]

JOHN C. STENNIS; LONGTIME SENATOR; LAWMAKER FROM MISSISSIPPI  
CHAired ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE FOR 12 YEARS AND STRONGLY IN-  
FLUENCED MILITARY POLICY

(By a Times Staff Writer)

Former Senator JOHN C. STENNIS (D-MS), a deeply religious defense hawk who served four decades in the Senate and exercised a major influence on U.S. military policy, died of pneumonia Sunday afternoon at St. Dominic Hospital in Jackson, MS. He was 93.

Nicknamed the "Conscience of the Senate" for his personal rectitude and his efforts to shape the upper House's code of ethics, STENNIS retired in 1988. He had undergone cardiovascular surgery in 1983 and a year later had his left leg amputated because of a malignant tumor in his upper thigh.

As chairman of the powerful Senate Armed Services Committee for 12 years, beginning in 1969, STENNIS played a key role in fighting off deep cuts in the defense budget. He opposed judicial efforts to desegregate public schools in 1954, but three decades later he supported extending the Voting Rights Act.

Close to eight Presidents, STENNIS was the last of the classic Southern gentlemen who so forcefully shaped the character of the mid-century Senate. He was crusty yet courtly, a stern moralist with an almost mystical devotion to the Senate.

"He was a great Senator in every way," Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS), said Sunday. "He was effective, respected and deeply appreciated by the people in Mississippi. He was truly a man of great stature."

STENNIS himself was more modest about his place in history. "How would I like to be remembered?" he mused in a 1985 interview. "I haven't thought about that a whole lot. You couldn't give me a finer compliment than just to say, 'He did his best.'"

Despite his genteel manners, STENNIS could be tough. Early in 1973, when the Senator was 71, he was held up by two young hoodlums in front

of his home in northwest Washington. They robbed him and then shot him twice. One bullet pierced his stomach, pancreas and colon.

Surgeons at the Army's Walter Reed Hospital at first doubted he would survive. But then-President Richard Nixon, emerging from STENNIS' hospital room, predicted that the Senator would make it because "he's got the will to live in spades." Within 8 months, STENNIS was back on the Senate floor.

STENNIS attributed his remarkable recovery to prayer and to his excellent physical condition, achieved from years of exercising in the Senate gym.

"I just prayed that I could be useful again," he said, reflecting on his ordeal. "That's what the consuming thought was, the consuming question—could I survive and be useful? I decided that I could."

STENNIS displayed a different kind of toughness in 1954 when he served on the select committee that probed charges against the late Senator Joseph R. McCarthy (R-WI), and became the first Senate Democrat to call for censure of the free-swinging Wisconsin lawmaker. Although STENNIS was a dedicated conservative and an outspoken foe of communism, he was offended by McCarthy's tactics.

During the censure debate, STENNIS rallied support from many colleagues who had been afraid to attack McCarthy. In a vigorous speech, he accused McCarthy of besmirching the Senate's good name with "slush and slime."

That same year, STENNIS was one of the first members of Congress to caution against U.S. involvement in Indochina.

In a Senate speech delivered when the Eisenhower administration was considering intervention to prevent a French disaster in Vietnam, STENNIS presciently warned that committing U.S. ground forces could lead to "a long, costly and indecisive war."

Yet 11 years later, when President Lyndon B. Johnson made a large-scale commitment to fight in Vietnam, STENNIS loyally backed his commander in chief. "Once the die is cast and once our flag is committed and our boys are sent out to the field, you will find solid support for the war from the South," he said.

He also firmly backed defense spending throughout his career, supporting the Pentagon even when the Vietnam War made weapons procurement unpopular. "If there is one thing I'm unyielding and unbending on, it is that we must have the very best weapons," he once said.

As the Vietnam War wound down, however, STENNIS co-sponsored the War Powers Act of 1973, which limits the President's power to send troops into combat without congressional consent.

Senate liberals clashed frequently with STENNIS on subjects ranging from defense spending to civil rights, but they invariably praised him for his fairness and courtesy.

And those were the qualities he prized.

From the time he entered politics in 1928 as a member of the Mississippi Legislature, he tried to base his life on this motto: "I will plow a straight furrow right down to the end of my row."

That slogan reflected his rural background. JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS was born August 3, 1901, in DeKalb, Mississippi, and grew up on a cotton and cattle farm in what he described as the "poor end of the poor end" of his state. He graduated from Mississippi State University and the University of Virginia Law School, and served as a district attorney and circuit judge before entering politics.

His Scots Presbyterian parents taught him to appreciate the value of a dollar. "I was raised to believe waste was a sin," he once said. STENNIS prac-

ticed that belief with a vengeance: He carefully saved all the string from packages that arrived at his home.

As a courtly Southern gentleman, STENNIS was known to interrupt a Senate committee hearing to find a seat for a woman spectator. But he had little tolerance for miniskirts and other modern feminine trends.

When a female Senate aide once sat on a sofa wearing a skirt that exposed a good deal of her thigh, STENNIS averted his eyes and grumbled to a colleague: "I'm going to get a bolt of cloth so that lady can finish her dress."

After his retirement, STENNIS served as executive-in-residence at the Mississippi State University campus in Starkville. The university houses the John C. Stennis Institute of Government and the Stennis Center for Public Service, created by Congress.

"I do believe the most important thing I can do now is to help young people understand the past and prepare for the future," STENNIS said in 1990. "As long as I have energy left, I want to use it to the benefit of students."

STENNIS is survived by two children. His wife, Coy Hines Stennis, whom he always called "Miss Coy," died in 1983.



[From the Atlanta Journal and Constitution, April 24, 1995]

JOHN STENNIS, 93, FORMER MISSISSIPPI SENATOR

(By Tom Bennett)

JOHN C. STENNIS, a courtly Mississippi Democrat who exercised vast influence over America's military during his four decades in the Senate and was the mentor of Georgia's Sam Nunn, died Sunday in Jackson, MS. He was 93.

He died at St. Dominic Hospital, where he had been taken several days ago for pneumonia, said his son, John Hampton Stennis.

He spent 40 years in the Senate, from 1948 until he retired in 1988.

"He was a great Senator in every way. He was effective, respected and deeply appreciated by the people in Mississippi," said Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS). "He was truly a man of great stature. We have suffered a great loss."

A Democrat, Mr. STENNIS was tutored by a famous Georgian, and later he returned the favor. Georgia's Richard B. Russell taught him the ways of the Senate. Mr. STENNIS replaced Mr. Russell as chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee in 1969, and after Mr. Russell's death in 1971, Mr. STENNIS took over his office and desk. In turn, when the young Sam Nunn of Georgia went to Washington as a U.S. Senator in 1973, Mr. STENNIS took him under his wing and helped him get a seat on Armed Services. In 1987, Mr. Nunn became Armed Services chairman, restoring Southern leadership in an important post.

Often, his votes aided Georgians. For example, he blocked a 1969 attempt by Senator William Proxmire of Wisconsin to amend a spending measure and cut off \$533 million for 23 C-5A cargo planes to be built by the Lockheed-Georgia Co.

Mr. STENNIS chaired the Armed Services Committee from 1969 to 1980, then headed the Senate Appropriations Committee from 1980 to 1988. In both roles, he wielded tremendous power over U.S. military spending.

He earned a reputation in Washington for fairness and finesse that landed him delicate committee assignments and close associations with eight U.S. Presidents. But his opposition to integration blotted his record.

He seemed indestructible, keeping his seat for decades, before and after the civil rights revolution, and especially so on January 30, 1973. That day he survived a shooting during an armed robbery outside his Washington home.

Two men confronted the Senator as he stepped from his car. He turned over his billfold, wristwatch and Phi Beta Kappa key. Then the robbers said, according to Mr. STENNIS, "We ought to shoot you anyway," and they did, twice.

One bullet entered the Senator's left thigh and settled against a bone; it was removed later in surgery. A second bullet entered his chest, tore downward through his stomach and intestine and lodged in his lower back. Surgery at Walter Reed Army Medical Center lasted 6 hours. When Mr. STENNIS returned to his Senate seat, Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson lauded him, saying, "The Senate is whole again."

He was born August 3, 1901, in DeKalb, MS. He graduated from Mississippi State University in 1923, then attended the University of Virginia Law School.

He began his public service in 1928 in the Mississippi Legislature, then served as a district attorney and circuit judge.

The Senator's body will lie in state Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Old Capitol Museum in Jackson and from 4–6 p.m. at DeKalb Presbyterian Church in DeKalb. Graveside services will be at 11 a.m. Wednesday at Pinecrest Cemetery in DeKalb.

Survivors include his son, a Jackson lawyer, and his daughter, Margaret Womble.



[From the Indianapolis News, April 24, 1995]

#### JOHN STENNIS WAS SENATOR

(By Wire Reports)

JACKSON, Mississippi.—JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS, 93, a Mississippi Democrat who trained generations of Senators in the ways of Washington, opposed virtually all civil rights legislation and staunchly supported the Vietnam War, died Sunday, several days after being hospitalized with pneumonia.

During 41 years in the Senate, STENNIS earned a reputation for fairness and finesse that landed him delicate committee assignments and close associations with eight U.S. Presidents.

"He was a great Senator in every way. He was effective, respected and deeply appreciated by the people in Mississippi," said U.S. Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS).

As chairman of both the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Defense Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee in the 1970s, STENNIS wielded more clout over military matters than perhaps any civilian but the President.

Nicknamed the "conscience of the Senate" for his work on the Senate's code of ethics and his religious convictions, STENNIS overcame personal tragedy to continue public service.

He was wounded by robbers and left bleeding on the sidewalk near his northwest Washington home in 1973. Coy Hines Stennis, his wife of 52 years, died in 1983. And in 1984, he lost his left leg to cancer, and had to use a wheelchair.

"Discouraged? I suppose everybody's had his ups and downs. But I've never surrendered," STENNIS said in 1984.



[From the Gannett News Service, April 24, 1995]

#### FORMER SENATOR STENNIS DIES

(By the Jackson, Mississippi Clarion-Ledger)

JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS, 93, a drawling Mississippi country lawyer who attained some of the most powerful positions during four decades in the U.S. Senate, died of pneumonia Sunday at St. Dominic-Jackson Memorial Hospital.

He had been hospitalized since Thursday, said his son, John Hampton Stennis of Jackson.

STENNIS, who retired in 1988, played a major role in the country's affairs. At one time he carried as much clout over military matters as any civilian except the President.

"I shall go to the Senate without obligations or commitments, save to serve the plain people of Mississippi," the DeKalb native said November 5, 1947, upon his election.

Throughout his Senate career, STENNIS lived in an unassuming, one-story white clapboard house. His office, a nondescript red brick building across from the county courthouse, bore a simple sign: "John C. Stennis, Lawyer."

That sign was a deceptively modest description for a country-born lawyer who rose to become a confidant of Presidents and a major player in events that led the United States through the Cold War, the civil rights movement, the Watergate scandal and into the Reagan years.

"He was one of the great statesmen for our nation in the 20th century," Representative Sonny Montgomery (D-MS), said Sunday. "History will record JOHN STENNIS as a true son of the South. His legacy in Mississippi will never disappear."

One of seven children, STENNIS was born on a Kemper County farm 36 years after the end of the Civil War.

Elected to two terms in the Mississippi House, STENNIS successfully campaigned for the district prosecuting attorney post, in which he served until 1935.

While he avoided race during his 1947 campaign, STENNIS quickly got caught up in the national civil rights debate once he got to Washington.

His first two speeches on the Senate floor were against Federal anti-lynching, anti-poll tax and equal employment legislation—claiming they represented unconstitutional interference with the States' rights to govern themselves.

He became a leader in supporting segregation in the South and participated in filibusters that prevented votes on civil rights legislation. In 1956, he helped draft the Southern Manifesto, signed by 101 Southern Congressmen to voice their opposition to desegregation.

But once the civil rights laws were enacted in the 1960s, STENNIS urged compliance.

In a 1965 plea, STENNIS said Mississippi “above all must maintain a spirit of law and order. Any other course will take us downward and will eventually blight our future.”

By 1982, STENNIS’ stance on racial issues had changed to the point he voted for an extension of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

In 1954, he became the first Senate Democrat to call for the censure of red-baiting Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin.

In a speech that made national headlines, STENNIS said McCarthy had poured “slush and slime” on the Senate with his attacks. Senate observers saw his speech as a serious blow to McCarthy’s efforts to escape censure.

STENNIS’ speech drew accolades from around the country. “I didn’t know what it was to get such press as that,” he said.

It was also in 1954 that STENNIS warned that the United States was in danger of being drawn into the fighting in Vietnam by supplying assistance to the French effort to defeat the Vietnamese communists.

Committing U.S. forces could result in a “long, costly and indecisive war that will leave us without victory,” he warned.

But STENNIS, after he had moved up as Armed Services chairman, gave the war his total support. In 1966, he suggested the use of tactical nuclear weapons in Southeast Asia should the Chinese enter the war.

STENNIS landed on the powerful Appropriations Committee in 1955. In 1969, he became chairman of the Armed Services Committee.

In 1973, he was critically wounded by gunshots from two young muggers outside his Washington home. The Senator was shot in the left side and in the thigh after his assailants took his wallet, a gold pocket watch, his Phi Beta Kappa key and a quarter. For 5 weeks the 71-year-old STENNIS slipped in and out of consciousness in Walter Reed Army Hospital.

STENNIS faced his first serious political challenger in 1982 from well-financed Republican Haley Barbour of Yazoo City. The campaign focused primarily on age—whether STENNIS at 81 was too old or Barbour at 34 was too young.

STENNIS won with 65 percent of the vote.

In 1983, “Miss Coy,” his wife of 54 years, died. Also that year, he had cardiovascular surgery and suffered pneumonia. A year later, doctors removed his cancerous left leg.

With his health problems and his age working against him, STENNIS announced his retirement on October 19, 1987, shortly after routine prostate surgery in Washington.

“I am forced to recognize that another 6-year term in the Senate would require me to promise to continue my work here through age 93,” the 86-year-old STENNIS said.



[From the Fresno Bee, April 24, 1995]

JOHN C. STENNIS, SENATOR FROM 1947 TO 1988, DIES; MISSISSIPPI  
DEMOCRAT WIELDED MILITARY CLOUT

(By Stephen Hawkins)

Former Senator JOHN C. STENNIS, a courtly Mississippi Democrat who exercised vast influence over America’s military during his four decades in the Senate, died Sunday. He was 93.

Senator STENNIS died around 3:30 p.m. at St. Dominic Hospital, where he had been taken several days ago for pneumonia, said his son John Hampton Stennis.

Senator STENNIS earned a reputation in Washington for fairness and finesse that landed him delicate committee assignments and close association with eight U.S. Presidents. But his opposition to integration blotted his record.

Senator STENNIS joined the Senate in 1947. At the time of his retirement in 1988, he was its oldest member.

“He was a great Senator in every way. He was effective, respected and deeply appreciated by the people in Mississippi,” said U.S. Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS). “He was truly a man of great stature. We have suffered a great loss.”

Senator STENNIS was born August 3, 1901, in DeKalb and graduated from Mississippi State University in 1923 before attending the University of Virginia Law School.

Serving as chairman of both the Armed Services Committee and the Defense Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee during the 1970s, he wielded more clout over military matters than perhaps any civilian except the President.

He was a leading backer of the Vietnam War. But in the war’s waning days, he co-sponsored legislation to set limits on a president’s power to commit U.S. forces to combat without congressional consent.

He condemned the Supreme Court’s 1954 school desegregation decision, but in 1983 he switched and voted for an extension of the Voting Rights Act.

He later said he supported the advancement of all races.



[From the Commercial Appeal (Memphis), April 24, 1995]

MISSISSIPPI’S STENNIS, “MR. INTEGRITY,” DIES AT 93, SENATOR FOR FOUR  
DECADES NEVER LOST AN ELECTION

(By William C. Bayne and Sarah A. Derks)

Former Senator JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS, who spent four decades in the Senate exercising vast influence over America’s military, died Sunday. The Mississippi Democrat was 93.

STENNIS died about 3:30 p.m. at St. Dominic Hospital in Jackson, MS, where he had been taken several days ago for pneumonia, said his son, John Hampton Stennis.

The Senator earned a reputation in Washington for fairness and finesse that landed him delicate committee assignments and close association with eight U.S. Presidents. But his opposition to integration blotted his record.

He joined the Senate in 1947. At the time of his retirement in 1988, he was its oldest member.

“He was a great Senator in every way. He was effective, respected and deeply appreciated by the people in Mississippi,” said U.S. Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS). “He was truly a man of great stature. We have suffered a great loss.”

Mississippi Governor Kirk Fordice, who called STENNIS “a key fixture in America’s winning the Cold War,” also said the former Senator will be greatly missed.

“All of Mississippi mourns for Senator JOHN C. STENNIS, one of the outstanding Americans ever to serve in the United States Senate,” Fordice said.

“His service to this state was long and faithful and he enjoyed national prominence as well.”

Former Mississippi Governor William Winter, 72, called STENNIS a “political hero.”

“He represented what I thought a political leader ought to be,” said Winter, who worked for STENNIS as a legislative assistant in the early 1950s and was governor from 1980 to 1984.

The Senator’s body will lie in state Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Old Capitol Museum in Jackson and from 4–6 p.m. at DeKalb Presbyterian Church in DeKalb. Graveside services will be at 11 a.m. Wednesday at Pinecrest Cemetery in DeKalb.

STENNIS, revered as “Mr. Integrity,” and “The Judge,” overcame personal tragedy to continue public service. He survived a near-fatal attack by gunmen who attempted to rob him in front of his Washington home on January 30, 1973. The gunmen shot him twice in the abdomen and left him to die. He was 71 at the time and his recovery included a hospital stay of more than 4 months.

Coy Hines Stennis, his wife of 52 years, died in 1983. In 1984, he lost his left leg to cancer.

As chairman of both the Armed Services Committee and the Defense Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee during the 1970s, STENNIS wielded immeasurable influence.

STENNIS was by no means a traditionalist in Southern politics. His 1947 special-election campaign to fill the unexpired term of the late Senator Theodore G. Bilbo’s seat differed radically from the type to which Southerners had become accustomed. He did not mention his opponents or hurl accusations at them.

He was best known in the Senate press gallery for his booming baritone, which often was heard crying, “Mr. President, may we have order?” The request usually resulted in an instant hush.

STENNIS had a mixed record on equal rights. He condemned the Supreme Court’s 1954 school desegregation decision, and in 1975 he voted against extending the Voting Rights Act. But in 1983 he switched and voted for its extension.

He later said he always supported the advancement of all races. He argued that the 1954 ruling had forced the South to desegregate its schools but not the North.

The so-called STENNIS Amendment, passed in 1972, requires school desegregation policies to be “applied uniformly in all regions of the United States.”

In the 1975 debate over the Voting Rights Act, STENNIS renewed his theme against regionalized federal laws. He called the law “a monstrosity which never should have been passed,” and added, “if we are to have such a law, it should be applicable nationwide and not just to seven states chosen on the basis of arbitrary criteria designed to ensure their inclusion.”

The Voting Rights Act, first enacted in 1965, applies only to Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, South Carolina, Virginia and 39 counties in North Carolina.

A former staff assistant to STENNIS, Ed Cole, who is black, said STENNIS did not object to equal rights for all races but to the working of the Voting Rights Act extension and the idea that the law would apply only to the South.

STENNIS was born on August 3, 1901, the son of Hampton Howell Stennis and Cornelia Adams Stennis. He graduated from Mississippi State Univer-

sity in 1923 and received his law degree from the University of Virginia in 1928.

He entered Mississippi politics sickly thereafter, serving in the state House of Representatives from 1928 to 1932 before joining the district attorney's office.

STENNIS was prosecuting attorney for the 16th Judicial District from 1931 to 1937 and a circuit court judge until 1947.

STENNIS was first elected November 4, 1947, in that special election to fill Bilbo's unexpired term. He was overwhelmingly re-elected in 1952, 1958, 1964, 1970, 1976 and 1982, when he indicated to supporters that he was running his last political campaign. He never lost an election.

In 1929, he married the former Coy Hines of New Albany, MS. The couple lived simply in a two-story Northwest Washington home. They rarely went out and occasionally on Saturday mornings, she would prepare one of his favorite meals: country ham and eggs with cornbread and melted cheese.

His wife's death was a crushing loss for the Senator.

"She always carried her part of the load and was a great help to me," STENNIS said at the time.

In 1965, STENNIS was given the chairmanship of the newly formed Senate Ethics Committee. The panel's first unpleasant duty was the case of Senator Thomas Dodd (D-CT), who was accused of campaign fund finagling. STENNIS and the committee went to great lengths to give Dodd, now deceased, a chance to defend himself, but in the end, recommended censure.

Senator Mark Hatfield (R-OR), later remarked, "Some of us freshmen were sitting around once during the Dodd hearings and we agreed that if we found ourselves charged with some terrible crime and if we could pick our judge, we'd pick JOHN STENNIS to judge us."

In 1954, during STENNIS's first full term, the Mississippian became the first Democrat to ask for censure of the late Senator Joseph R. McCarthy (R-WI). If the Senate approved of McCarthy's tactics in hunting Communists and other subversives, said STENNIS, "something big and fine will have gone from this chamber."

STENNIS used his respect and standing among his colleagues to battle for the preservation of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway project. In 1980, he called in his markers from other Senators, asking them to vote to maintain funding levels on the \$1.8 billion project.

STENNIS was largely successful in his efforts, despite considerable carping from Senators who called the project one of the greatest pork-barrel schemes in history.

In 1974 when President Richard Nixon's administration was foundering in the Watergate morass, STENNIS praised Nixon as a "courageous President" citing Nixon's successes in foreign policy.

A pillar in the Presbyterian Church, STENNIS founded in the Senate what became known as the "Wednesday morning prayer breakfast group." It consisted of 20 Senators, Democrats and Republicans, who have breakfast and hold informal religious observances when the Senate is in session.

The Senator, who rarely missed a Senate session because of illness, maintained his weight at a trim 175 pounds. STENNIS generally shunned Washington's cocktail circuit, but enjoyed an occasional scotch and soda. He also loved baseball, and before the old Washington Senators fled to Dallas, he often would slip out to the ball park.

After his retirement, STENNIS moved to the Mississippi State University campus in Starkville, which also is the home of the John C. Stennis Institute of Government and the Stennis Center for Public Service.

Mississippi State University created the John C. Stennis Chair of Political Science in 1971 with funds donated by the Senator and his friends. Many of his personal letters and public papers are housed at the university's library.

STENNIS held several honorary degrees and was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Alpha Delta (legal) and Alpha Gamma Rho fraternities. He was a Presbyterian, a Mason and a member of the Lions Club and the Mississippi and American bar associations.

Also named for the Senator is NASA's National Space Technology Laboratory in southern Mississippi. The John C. Stennis Space Center tests rocket motors.

"How would I like to be remembered? I haven't thought about that a whole lot," STENNIS said in a 1985 interview. "You couldn't give me a finer compliment than just to say, 'He did his best.'"

STENNIS left politics though because "he knew when it was time for him to leave," Cole said.

"He was a proud man" and disliked depending on people for help because of his health.

He was troubled about having only one leg because "he couldn't stand when ladies entered the room," Cole said. "That was a great concern to him."

STENNIS is survived by his son, John Hampton Stennis, a Jackson lawyer, and his daughter, Margaret Womble. The family requests that any donations be made to an educational, charitable or religious group.



[From the Chicago Tribune, April 24, 1995]

FORMER MISSISSIPPI SENATOR JOHN STENNIS

(By Associated Press)

Former Senator JOHN STENNIS, a courtly Mississippi Democrat who exercised vast influence over America's military during his four decades in the Senate, died Sunday. He was 93.

Senator STENNIS died about 3:30 p.m. at St. Dominic Hospital, where he had been taken several days ago for pneumonia, said his son John Hampton Stennis.

Senator STENNIS earned a reputation in Washington for fairness and finesse that landed him delicate committee assignments and close association with eight U.S. Presidents. But his opposition to integration blotted his record.

He joined the Senate in 1947. At the time of his retirement in 1988, he was its oldest member.

Senator STENNIS, nicknamed the "conscience of the Senate" for his work on the Senate's code of ethics and his strict religious convictions, overcame personal tragedy to continue public service.

He was wounded by robbers and left bleeding on the sidewalk near his northwest Washington home in 1973. President Richard Nixon, emerging from STENNIS' hospital room after the attack, said the Senator would survive because "he's got the will to live in spades."

Coy Hines Stennis, his wife of 52 years, died in 1983. And in 1984, he lost his left leg to cancer and had to use a wheelchair.

Senator STENNIS, serving as chairman of both the Armed Services Committee and the Defense Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee dur-

ing the 1970s, wielded more clout over military matters than perhaps any civilian except the President.

He was a consistent advocate of the need for a strong military.

“If there is one thing I’m unyielding and unbending on, it is that we must have the very best weapons,” he once said.

After militants in Iran seized the U.S. Embassy and held its employees hostage in late 1979, Senator STENNIS suggested a fleet of small aircraft carriers be built to counter such crises around the world.

“Trouble can come from anywhere now,” he said. “We’ve got to be ready for instant action.”

Soon after, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, and Senator STENNIS called for U.S. military support bases near Mideast oil fields.

Though he stood for a tough military, he did not always back Presidential military policy.

He was a leading backer of the Vietnam War. However, in the war’s waning days, he co-sponsored legislation to set limits on a President’s power to commit U.S. forces to combat without Congressional consent.

A decade later, Senator STENNIS opposed using that law—the War Powers Act of 1973—to permit President Ronald Reagan to keep marine peacekeeping troops in Lebanon.

He condemned the Supreme Court’s 1954 school desegregation decision, but in 1983 he voted for an extension of the Voting Rights Act. He later said he always supported the advancement of all races.

JOHN STENNIS was born August 3, 1901, in DeKalb, MS, and graduated from Mississippi State University in 1923 before attending the University of Virginia Law School. He began his public service in 1928 in the Mississippi Legislature and then served as a district attorney and circuit judge before joining the U.S. Senate.

“How would I like to be remembered? I haven’t thought about that a whole lot,” Senator STENNIS said in a 1985 interview. “You couldn’t give me a finer compliment than just to say, ‘He did his best.’”



[From the Charleston Daily Mail, April 24, 1995]

#### EX-MISSISSIPPI SENATOR DIES

(Editorial)

JACKSON, MS—JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS, a Mississippi Democrat who trained generations of Senators in the ways of Washington, opposed virtually all civil rights legislation and staunchly supported the Vietnam War, has died. He was 93.

STENNIS died Sunday at St. Dominic Hospital, where he had been taken several days ago for pneumonia, said his son John Hampton Stennis.

During 41 years in the Senate, STENNIS earned a reputation for fairness and finesse that landed him delicate committee assignments and close associations with eight U.S. Presidents.

“He was a great Senator in every way. He was effective, respected and deeply appreciated by the people in Mississippi,” said U.S. Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS).

As chairman of both the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Defense Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee in the 1970s, STENNIS wielded more clout over military matters than perhaps any civilian but the President.

“If there is one thing I’m unyielding and unbending on, it is that we must have the very best weapons,” STENNIS once said.

When he retired in 1988, STENNIS was the Senate’s oldest member, and had served longer than all but one other—Carl Hayden of Arizona, who retired in 1969.

STENNIS was born August 3, 1901, in DeKalb and graduated from Mississippi State University in 1923 before attending the University of Virginia Law School.

He began his public service in 1928 in the Mississippi Legislature, then served as a district attorney and circuit judge before joining the U.S. Senate.

STENNIS’ body will lie in state Tuesday at the Old Capitol Museum in Jackson and later at the DeKalb Presbyterian Church. Graveside services will be Wednesday at Pinecrest Cemetery in DeKalb, his hometown.



[From the Austin American-Statesman, April 24, 1995]

#### FORMER SENATOR JOHN STENNIS OF MISSISSIPPI DIES AT 93

(Editorial)

JACKSON, MS—Former Senator JOHN STENNIS, a Mississippi Democrat who exercised vast influence over America’s military during his four decades in the Senate, died Sunday. He was 93.

STENNIS died about 3:30 p.m. CDT at St. Dominic Hospital, where he had been taken several days ago for pneumonia, said his son John Hampton Stennis.

STENNIS earned a reputation in Washington for fairness and finesse that landed him delicate committee assignments and close association with eight U.S. Presidents. But his opposition to integration blotted his record.

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“He was a great Senator in every way. He was effective, respected and deeply appreciated by the people in Mississippi,” said U.S. Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS).

STENNIS overcame personal tragedy to continue public service.

He was wounded by robbers and left bleeding on the sidewalk in Washington in 1973. President Nixon, emerging from STENNIS’ hospital room, said the Senator would survive because “he’s got the will to live in spades.”

Coy Stennis, his wife of 52 years, died in 1983. In 1984, he lost his left leg to cancer.

“Discouraged? I suppose everybody’s had his ups and downs. But I’ve never surrendered,” STENNIS said then.

STENNIS, serving as chairman of both the Armed Services Committee and the Defense Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee during the 1970s, wielded more clout over military matters than perhaps any civilian except the President.

He was a leading backer of the Vietnam War. However, in the war’s waning days, he co-sponsored legislation to set limits on a president’s power to commit American forces to combat without congressional consent.

A decade later, STENNIS opposed using that law—the War Powers Act of 1973—to permit President Reagan to keep Marine peacekeeping troops in Lebanon.

He condemned the Supreme Court's 1954 school desegregation decision, but in 1983 he switched and voted for an extension of the Voting Rights Act.



[From the Clarion-Ledger, April 25, 1995]

STENNIS FRIENDS RECALL LEADER'S HUMAN QUALITIES

(By Mac Gordon)

HIGH OFFICE DIDN'T STEAL COMMON TOUCH, THOSE WHO KNEW HIM SAY

DeKALB—JOHN C. STENNIS was remembered in his hometown Monday as a gentleman, and a man of the highest integrity.

But retired farmer James "Red" McCoy, 79, who has known the Stennis family all his life and whose late mother-in-law helped raise the 41-year U.S. Senator, described STENNIS more succinctly.

"He was number one around here," said McCoy, sitting glumly on a bench in front of Sciple's Grocery just off the square surrounding the Kemper County Courthouse.

STENNIS, who died Sunday of complications from pneumonia, was considered a regular kind of guy by most folks here in the piney, red clay hills of east central Mississippi.

He certainly lived like most folks. Take his unpretentious house on the southern edge of town. A U.S. Senator, for whom aircraft carriers and space centers are named, has a big faded-green hot water heater standing in the middle of the kitchen and window air conditioners perched all around.

"He was just glad to have that hot water heater. He wanted everybody to see it," laughed retired pharmacist John T. Reed, 63, who lives across the Mississippi 39 entrance to the 1,073-population town from the STENNIS home.

Bobbie Harbour, who ran STENNIS's DeKalb office the final 13 years he served, said STENNIS always enjoyed coming back to the neat residence that she hopes will be preserved in his memory.

"He always said that he had a house in Washington but a home in Kemper County," Harbour said.

Harbour said STENNIS was rarely marked in his hometown as one of the Nation's mightiest politicians. In fact, STENNIS was sometimes not even recalled as a member of the U.S. Senate.

"One time a visitor came to town and asked this elderly man sitting around the square how he could locate Senator STENNIS. The local man said, 'I don't know a Senator STENNIS. Now we have Judge STENNIS here.' A lot of people remember him that way," Harbour said, harkening to the decade STENNIS spent as a circuit judge before winning a special election to the Senate in 1947.

Harbour said locals had long expected STENNIS' death. But that didn't make it any easier to take.

"We always thought he would be there," she said.

DeKalb lawyer Jimmy Spinks, 48, recalled STENNIS as being strong enough to survive serious gunshot wounds outside his Washington home in 1973.

"We had a prayer service at our church for him because we didn't think he would make it. But he was of strong stock. He had taken care of himself," Spinks said.

STENNIS' character, said Spinks, was such that "he never had any bitterness about that (shooting). I don't know that he ever mentioned it."

Harbour said she hopes Mississippians will remember STENNIS in November when they decide whether to place term limits on members of Congress.

"I think Senator STENNIS, Senator Jim Eastland and Congressman Jamie Whitten are probably the best argument Mississippi has against term limits," Harbour said of the trio that accumulated vast power during their combined 130 years in Congress.



[From the Reflector (Mississippi State University), April 25, 1995]

SENATOR JOHN C. STENNIS DIES AT AGE 93

(By Alison Stamps)

A MAN TO REMEMBER

As Mississippi reflects on the life and accomplishments of its great statesman and former Senator, JOHN C. STENNIS, Mississippi State also suffers the loss of one of its most revered alumni.

STENNIS, 93, died of pneumonia Sunday in Jackson.

The body will lie in state Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Old Capitol in Jackson and at DeKalb Presbyterian Church from 4-6 p.m. Wednesday, a graveside service will be held at 11 a.m. at Pinecrest Cemetery in DeKalb. Jackson's Southern Mortuary Services is handling arrangements.

STENNIS, born August 3, 1901 in Kemper County, came to Mississippi A&M College in 1919 and received his bachelor of science degree in general science.

According to Rex Buffington, STENNIS' press secretary of 10 years and executive director of MSU's Stennis Center for Public Service, the steps of Lee Hall are where STENNIS found "his sense of purpose, the calling to which he would devote his life."

Buffington said STENNIS was in his sophomore year when he sat alone to think on the steps, and he heard through an open window professor A.B. Butts giving a lecture on government. His heart was moved towards public service, and Mississippi was granted Senator STENNIS.

STENNIS also met his wife of 55 years at MSU. He was in his senior year delivering a telephone message to Miss Coy Hines, who was attending a meeting of home demonstration agents on campus.

"JOHN C. STENNIS could never walk past the spot on campus, near where the student Union now stands, where he met 'Miss Coy' without pausing to recall that fateful day and how it enriched his life. He would also wonder at how many other romances were begun on the campus, some lasting for a lifetime, others for only a brief period, but all special in their own way," Buffington said.

He never lost his love for MSU, and he became involved in the Mississippi State Alumni Association serving as president of the organization from 1940-1941.

Director of the John C. Stennis Institute of Government at MSU Marty Wiseman said STENNIS fit the "psyche" of Mississippi State.

"He was just right—so much integrity and stature," Wiseman said. "He was genuinely proud of Mississippi State."

Wiseman said STENNIS would never say anything negative about another person or thing—even the University of Mississippi.

Wiseman said he would see STENNIS grin and chuckle when asked about MSU's rival, but Wiseman said he would always say that he was "a Senator for Oxford, too."

"While we will miss his presence, we take this opportunity to recommit ourselves to following the example that he set in his thousands of actions as a servant to the citizens of his beloved Mississippi, Wiseman said.

"I was really grateful I had the chance to know him," David Dallas, STENNIS' former staff member-in-residence, said. "I know he's in a much better place now."

Dallas said he never got the chance to meet either of his grandfathers, so STENNIS became the grandfather he has never had. He added they had fun in their relationship.

Dallas said STENNIS never disappointed people and that "he was a true statesman."

"Whether as a State legislator, a judge, a U.S. Senator or finally as a university teacher, Senator STENNIS was determined to give an honest day's work for those who placed their trust in him," Wiseman said.

"It's a sense of loss even though his career was over," Wiseman said, "because he was such a symbol."

Wiseman said STENNIS showed that one could have integrity and still be a politician.

Wiseman said integrity was very important to STENNIS—whether in Starkville or in Washington, DC.

Dallas agreed and said, "If there was just one more JOHN C. STENNIS in Congress, there would be a greater sense of integrity in the Senate."

STENNIS was not only recognized throughout the State he represented, but he was also well known and respected nationally.

Dallas said STENNIS received a copy of John F. Kennedy's "A Profile in Courage," and the President (to the best of Dallas' memory) had written to STENNIS in the cover, "A Senator of Courage in the finest tradition of its State."

"I don't think the Nation has produced another such statesman," Dallas said.

He added that STENNIS not only saw the important issues of Mississippi, but was a "trustee" of the State.

Dallas said he was not "a poll person," but did "what he felt was right for Mississippi and the United States."

"The wealth he might have never occurred to him," Wiseman said, adding STENNIS was finicky with his dollars—whether his own or the taxpayers'.

Wiseman said STENNIS will be missed, but he added his presence will live on through all he accomplished and through the John C. Stennis Institute of Government.

"It is a heavy but proud burden that we (the Stennis Institute of Government) bear as we strive to daily follow the principles set before us in the life of Mississippi's most admired public servant—Senator JOHN C. STENNIS," Wiseman said.

Wiseman said the Institute often receives phone calls about problems rural, small towns are having, and a staff member travels to help those who may be in need. He said STENNIS felt if the problem was big enough for the call, it was large enough for someone to go down and see the problem in person—thus, the Institute's staff continues the STENNIS greatness by getting personally involved.

“This is 80 percent STENNIS inspiration—nobody is too small,” Wiseman said.



[From the Reflector (Mississippi State University), April 25, 1995]

A LIFETIME SPENT IN THE SERVICE OF HIS FELLOW MISSISSIPPAINS

(Special to the Reflector)

After receiving a bachelor of science degree in general science in 1923 from what was known as Mississippi A&M College, U.S. Senator JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS spent his life as a public servant to Mississippi and the country.

STENNIS received a law degree from the University of Virginia in Charlottesville and came home to practice law in DeKalb. In 1928, he was elected to serve in the Mississippi House of Representatives.

From 1931–1937, STENNIS was a district prosecuting attorney. He became the youngest circuit-court judge in Mississippi in 1937 and continued his work until 1947, when he ran for a U.S. Senate seat.

With the campaign slogan, “ I will plow a straight furrow right down to the end of my row. This is my political religion,” STENNIS defeated five opponents and began his 41-year U.S. Senate career, serving from President Truman to President Reagan.

STENNIS retired in 1988, but not before he made an impact on Mississippi and Washington, DC.

In 1958, the same year he was named as MSU’s first “Alumnus of the Year,” STENNIS was named chairman of a Senate Armed Services Subcommittee. In 1969 STENNIS was named chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee and served in this position until 1980.

STENNIS also impacted the State as a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee when helping to obtain funding for harbor and Mississippi River projects. In 1987 STENNIS was named chairman of this committee and became President Pro Tempore of the Senate.

In 1965 STENNIS was appointed (and then named by fellow members as chairman) to the first Senate Select Committee on Standards and Conduct, also known as the Ethics Committee.

One of most visible accomplishments came in 1970 when STENNIS urged Congress to begin construction on the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway.

he was later rewarded for his services to Mississippi and to the United States when President Reagan announced a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier would be named for the Senator. In 1993 the USS Stennis was christened at Newport News, Virginia.



[From the Clarion-Ledger, April 26, 1995]

HUNDREDS PAY RESPECTS TO STENNIS

(By Emily Wagster)

THE POWERFUL SENATE LEADER NEVER FORGOT HIS ROOTS, MOURNERS SAY

Hundreds of mourners Tuesday filed past the casket of JOHN C. STENNIS at the State’s Old Capitol, remembering him as a State legislator, district

attorney, judge and, finally, one of the most powerful U.S. Senators of his time.

J.K. Morgan recalled STENNIS in another important role: Boy Scout master in Kemper County.

“It was 1925, 1926, 1927, along in there,” said Morgan, now 80 and living in Jackson. “We had only 10 or 11 Boy Scouts. He would take us out once a year to a pasture on the edge of a small creek. We would spend the night and have a meeting. He was a good man.”

STENNIS, 93, died Sunday of complications from pneumonia.

He will be buried today after graveside services at Pinecrest Cemetery in his native DeKalb.

STENNIS was first elected to the Senate in 1947 and retired in 1988. He shaped national policy as Senate Armed Services Committee chairman during the Vietnam War and Senate Appropriations Committee chairman in 1987 and 1988. In January 1987, his colleagues elected him Senate President Pro Tempore, making him third in line to the Presidency.

On Tuesday, mourners remembered STENNIS as a man who never forgot his Mississippi roots.

U.S. Representative Gene Taylor, first elected to Congress after STENNIS' retirement, said he talked to STENNIS in 1989 about meetings the Senator conducted in Hancock County in the late 1950s. STENNIS had to convince people to give up their homes and land for what became a NASA research facility that bears his name—the John C. Stennis Space Center.

“The thing that struck me was that 30 years later, he could still remember the names of the people he talked to at that meeting,” Taylor said.

Lt. Governor Eddie Briggs of DeKalb, several state legislators and State Supreme Court justices were among those paying their respects Tuesday. Many mourners never met STENNIS but felt touched by his work.

“It's just a blessing that he had a record so long,” said Jimmie Evans of Jackson. “I know the Lord guided his work.”

STENNIS was only the second Mississippian to lie in state at the Old Capitol this century. The first was J.P. Coleman, Governor from 1956 to 1960, who died in September 1991.



[From the Associated Press, April 26, 1995]

#### LONGTIME SENATOR REMEMBERED AS A MAN OF FAITH

(By Gina Holland)

JOHN C. STENNIS, the Mississippi Democrat who gained immense clout over military matters during 41 years in the Senate, was remembered today as a “man of faith.”

About 300 people, including congressional leaders and an emissary for President Clinton, attended a graveside service. STENNIS was buried on the crest of a hill, next to his wife, at Pinecrest Cemetery.

A single trumpeter played “America the Beautiful” as mourners gathered around the wood casket draped with red roses.

STENNIS died Sunday in Jackson after being hospitalized for pneumonia. He was 93.

Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-SD), called STENNIS “a very rare person” who “had much respect from both the Republican side and the Democratic side. He was viewed as a statesman.”

The Reverend Jerry A. McBride of St. James Episcopal Church in Jackson said STENNIS was “above all a man of faith” who “saw his life, every day of it, as a way to serve people.”

Mack McLarty, Clinton’s former chief of staff and now a top Clinton adviser, represented the White House. Among others at the funeral were Senators Trent Lott (R–MS), Jesse Helms (R–NC), John Glenn (D–OH), and Sam Nunn (D–GA).

“He was not only a Christian gentleman, he was a great man, a good man,” said Senator Robert Byrd (D–WV), who served 30 years with STENNIS. “He taught a lot of us how to be a senator.”

The often loquacious STENNIS earned a reputation in Washington for finesse that earned him top committee assignments and immense clout on military matters.

In the 1950s and 1960s, he was known for his segregationist views, but he supported extension of the Voting Rights Act in 1983 and won strong support from black voters when he ran his last campaign in 1982.

STENNIS joined the Senate in 1947 and retired in 1988. After retiring, he moved to the Mississippi State University campus to teach before failing health forced him to move to a Madison nursing home.

STENNIS graduated from Mississippi State and the University of Virginia Law School. He served as a district attorney, circuit judge and Mississippi legislator before running for the Senate.



[From the Clarion-Ledger, April 26, 1995]

#### STENNIS EMBODIED SOMETHING MISSING IN MANY POLITICIANS

(By Danny McKenzie)

My brother has often told me that during his former life, when he presided over a school in Kemper County, it was not at all unusual for him to pick up the telephone in his office and hear a familiar voice on the other end:

“Nooooorman,” Senator JOHN C. STENNIS would say. “Everything all right? Is there anything you need that I can help you with? How’s everybody gettin’ along?”

He always had time “for a chat,” Norman said, no matter that it might take time away from his devotion to national government. The situation back home was of equal, or greater, importance to the United States Senator.

STENNIS was a firm believer in keeping in touch with his constituents, my brother said, though the Senator would never use such a 50-cent word to describe his friends back in east Mississippi.

#### LONGING FOR HOME

He wanted to know what was going on, especially in Kemper County, Norman told me. And Norman said it was fairly easy to tell that even as influential and downright powerful STENNIS was in our Nation’s capital, the Senator definitely longed to be back home.

My brother said he learned early during his tenure in STENNIS’ home county that the Senator wanted to know the truth—plain and simple, no sugar-coating.

That yearning for honest information about Kemper County came as no great surprise to Norman because he knew that was the way John C. Sten-

nis lived his life: plain and simple, and uncompromisingly faithful to the truth.

On this, the day STENNIS is to be buried in his precious Kemper County, we as a society need to heed the words spoken about this man, this prototypical Southern gentleman.

Such terms as integrity, honesty, civility, loyalty, morality, dignity. They all are accurate descriptions of STENNIS and they all describe the manner in which he lived and worked.

There are politicians and there are political leaders. During his 41 years in the Senate, STENNIS was among a small group of the latter.

There is a difference, and STENNIS not only knew the difference and understood the difference, he embodied it.

Early in his career he was, as were most Southern political leaders, a staunch segregationist. But STENNIS came to understand that the issue of racism was tearing apart America and became an ardent supporter for equality.

He did not change his ways because it was politically popular—which, of course, it was not—but because it was the right thing to do. Period.

Therein lies the difference between a politician and a political leader.

#### THE INHERENT GOODNESS

STENNIS was also a believer in the inherent goodness of people, and by treating all people with respect he thereby brought out the best in his fellow man.

Those who knew him best will testify that STENNIS' demeanor was the same in the Senate and among his fellow Senators as it was at his home and in his law office in DeKalb.

Here was a man who was not only loved and admired but respected, truly respected, by all those with whom he dealt. He was fair. He had integrity. He had style.

Yet, today, it seems we have a group of politicians more interested in forcing upon us their own agendas, with no thought or concerns about the divisiveness or downright destruction it foments in our society.

The tragic part of today is not that JOHN STENNIS has died, but that so too, it seems, have his qualities.

What better way to honor the memory of one of the truly great leaders of American government than to return to the age of civility, to the age of common decency?



[From the Meridian Star, April 26, 1995]

STENNIS COMES HOME FOR FINAL TIME

(By John Surratt)

DEKALB PAYS HOMAGE TO FAVORITE SON

DEKALB—Like they did 13 years ago when he won his last election to the U.S. Senate, Kemper County residents turned out to welcome JOHN STENNIS home.

More than 50 people lined the sidewalk leading to the DeKalb Presbyterian Church to welcome the motorcade bringing their favorite son home for the last time.

After the casket bearing the former Senator was in place, they entered the church and paid their final respects to the man who many have called a great statesman and a great American.

Graveside services for STENNIS were to be today at 11 a.m. at Pinecrest Cemetery in DeKalb.

STENNIS was a political contrast: a man who wielded tremendous influence and commanded great respect in Washington; the next door neighbor when he returned to the hills and forests of Kemper County.

"He was probably the greatest Senator the United States has ever known," Sue Harpole of Scooba said as she waited for the motorcade.

"But he was just 'JOHN' to his neighbors when he was here," Juanice Evans of DeKalb added.

"He was always a perfect gentleman," Harpole said. "Even when he lost his leg, he still stood up for a lady. Harpole and Evans said county residents were saddened by STENNIS' death, but were also relieved because STENNIS no longer had to suffer physical pain.

"For years, I thought 'Senator' was his first name," Kemper County Supervisor Roy O. VanDevender said. "I had always seen him when I was little. Whenever he came around, people would say, 'There's Senator STENNIS.' When I was older, I realized what that title meant."

When he went to college at Mississippi State University, VanDevender realized how important STENNIS was.

"People would say, 'You're from DeKalb?! That's where Senator STENNIS is from!' Around here, he was just a friend. He was a part of the community."

Commercial Bank President Jeff McCoy was another DeKalb resident who never knew about STENNIS until he was older. "I'd deliver groceries to his house," he said. "He was Miss Coy's husband who worked in Washington."

McCoy said STENNIS, who was a bank director, helped him get his first bank stock. When STENNIS was in town, McCoy said, they would meet and discuss how the economy and federal banking laws were affecting the local bank.

VanDevender said one of the most important things STENNIS did for the county was to include it under the umbrella of the Appalachian Regional Commission, a federal agency that provides economic and other assistance to State and local governments.

STENNIS once told him how he got the county in ARC. "I was driving him to Meridian one day, and as we drove through the hills he asked me: 'Do you know what these hills are?' I told him I had no idea. 'These are the foothills of the Appalachians,' he said and he laughed."

"Everything you hear about him is true," said Sterling Davis, a former county justice of the peace and State representative from Kemper.

"Before the cock crowed three times, JOHN STENNIS was up and working," he said. "He was outstanding. He ranks up there with (Henry) Clay, (Daniel) Webster, (John C.) Calhoun. He was probably a better Senator than (Lyndon) Johnson or (John) Kennedy.

"He was a very complicated man; he had several things going on in his head. He could talk with you and he would come out with information about something that was going on somewhere. It was just astounding how up-to-date he was."

Davis said he went to STENNIS on several occasions for political advice.

"I went to him in 1956 to ask him who to vote for Speaker of the (State) House between William Winter and Walter Sellers," he said. "He told me,

'Voter for Winter; you'll never regret it. He also said good things about Mr. Sellers.'"

STENNIS, a former circuit judge, also gave Davis judicial advice. He said, "When you're a judge you have to be careful, because what might seem like nothing to you is very important to the people involved. Do your homework."

Davis and VanDevender said STENNIS was always current on events back home. VanDevender remembered when STENNIS called him after he lost a 1983 race for justice court judge.

"I was surprised that he even followed it," he said. "He told me, 'What I really wanted to find out was how you behaved. That's what I wanted to see.'"

VanDevender had congratulated his opponent to local residents, he said. "He would send me a letter on my anniversary every year," Evans said. "Not a form letter, a handwritten letter."

"If your child did something well in school, they received a letter," Harpole said. "That was something very special."

When STENNIS was home, he was cared for by several people, including Jack Webb and Eli Burton and his wife Maggie.

Burton said his wife was the STENNIS cook and housekeeper for 50 years. He tended the Senator's yard for 20.

"If he told you anything, it was right," Burton said. "He was a fine fellow."

"He was as good a person as anyone I've known in my life," Webb said.

Webb said STENNIS would talk with him at times as he did yard work. "He always made sure I had plenty of water to drink," he said.

"He was greatly loved here," Evans said. "He will be greatly missed."



[From the Associated Press, April 26, 1995]

#### STENNIS BURIED IN SIMPLE CEREMONY

(By Ron Harrist)

JOHN C. STENNIS, a country lawyer who rose to one of the most powerful positions in the U.S. Senate, was buried Wednesday on a knoll in his hometown.

About 300 people, including congressional leaders and an emissary for President Clinton, attended a gravesite service. STENNIS was buried on a hill crest, next to his wife, at Pinecrest Cemetery.

A trumpeter played "America the Beautiful" as mourners watched the dark wood coffin, draped with red roses.

STENNIS died Sunday of pneumonia at 93.

The Mississippi Democrat once headed the Senate Armed Services and Appropriation committees and, as Senate President Pro Tempore, was third in line to the Presidency.

"He was a Christian gentleman, a great man, a good man," said Senator Robert Byrd, the West Virginia Democrat who served 30 years in the Senate with STENNIS.

The Reverend Jerry McBride of St. James Episcopal Church in Jackson said in his eulogy, "We live in a cynical, violent and self-centered world, but we know we can step out of this madness by following the footsteps and example of JOHN STENNIS."

Clinton adviser Mack McLarty represented the White House.

STENNIS, elected to the Senate in 1947, was known in the 1950s and 1960s for segregationist rhetoric, but supported extension of the Voting

Rights Act in 1983 and won black voters' support when he ran his last campaign in 1982.

His reputation for finesse earned him top committee assignments in Washington and the confidence of eight Presidents.

He retired in 1988, slowed by medical problems. He kept close ties to the people of DeKalb.

"He set some standards for this state, some standards for public service that will always stand," said former Governor William Winter.



[From the New Albany Gazette, April 26, 1995]

CHARACTER JUDGED BY STENNIS' MEASURE

(By Sid Salter)

Dignity. Integrity. Courage.

For all who knew him, those words embody the life and work of JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS—son of Kemper County, MS, and citizen of the world. In this century, it is his life—public and private—that established the benchmark by which the careers of all other political figures are measured in this State. And on Capitol Hill, it was his unyielding devotion to principle, character and humility that became the measure of those who served with him there in the U.S. Senate and that of those younger politicians who followed him here in Mississippi.

He made a simple promise as a young politician: "I want to plow a straight furrow to the end of my row." It was a promise that a potential constituent of even the most humble means in rural Mississippi could embrace and understand. After winning election to the Senate in 1947, he kept a small sign on his desk that spoke volumes to his personal commitment to the people who sent him there: "Mississippi Comes First."

When death came to STENNIS at the age of 93 on Sunday at a Jackson hospital, the promise of his youth had been kept and the commitment of his prime had been fulfilled—and a 62-year career in public service as a district attorney, State representative, circuit judge and U.S. Senator remained unblemished by scandal, untainted by personal gain and unquestioned as a true statesman.

History will record that few—if any—Mississippi public servants have ever done more to tangibly change the face of this State than did JOHN STENNIS. This State's largest single employer—Ingall's Shipyard in Pascagoula—was a product of sheer will and determination by the Senator.

Yet STENNIS remained in many ways an enigma to his colleagues in Washington.

For all the power he amassed, for all the clout he wielded and for all the confidence placed in him by occupants of the White House from Truman to Reagan, JOHN STENNIS remained at the core a simple, humble country lawyer from DeKalb, MS.

He and Miss Coy maintained their modest white frame home on Highway 39. When he would return home to Mississippi and encounter someone he didn't recognize, he would introduce himself: "My name is JOHN STENNIS."

JOHN STENNIS never owned a credit card. He operated out of a checkbook and his hip pocket. Former aides like to tell of an incident one Sunday morning in Washington when he took a large group of his staffers to church with him. It seems the Senator was miffed when the collection plate passed down the row and the staffers didn't put anything in the plate.

The next Sunday, he lined them up like children—passing out dollar bills to each of them and insisting that they put something in the church till that day.

He never went out in public in less than his uniform—a dark suit, immaculately—shined black shoes, a crisp white shirt and a conservative necktie.

He represented the poorest State in the Nation, and made it his business and the Nation's business to relieve some of that poverty. He succeeded arguably the State's most ardent segregationists in the late U.S. Senator Theodore Bilbo and for a time argued for that position himself, but his change of heart on the issue came surely and confidently in the mid-1960's as did the country's and for the rest of his career he devoted himself to broadening peace and understanding between black and white Mississippians.

Neither age, infirmity or the life-threatening results of wounds he received in a 1973 robbery-shooting outside his Washington home kept him from logging work days that would have exhausted younger, stronger men.

Mississippi State University never had a stronger, more loyal or more beloved alumnus than JOHN STENNIS. There, Congress established the John C. Stennis Center for Public Service. Private donors established the John C. Stennis Institute of Government, the John C. Stennis Chair in Political Science and the John C. Stennis Scholarship in Political Science.

The Stennis Scholars produced at MSU represent an eclectic group. Some are now political science professors. Some are lawyers. Some are bureaucrats. Some have entered public service and some have sought and won elective office.

Until infirmity forced the Senator into a retirement home, all those scholars had an opportunity to interact with JOHN STENNIS, to know him and to be influenced deeply by him.

And one of those former STENNIS Scholars—one grateful admirer who cherished the time he spent with JOHN STENNIS and who believes deeply in the example of public service he established in this State and Nation—is writing this column.



[From the New Albany Gazette, April 26, 1995]

MISSISSIPPI LOSES REVERED STATESMAN

(By Betty Jo Stewart)

JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS is dead.

The 93-year-old Mississippian from DeKalb who served four decades in the United States Senate, rose to positions of national power and met personal crises with strength and courage died Sunday. He was at St. Dominic/Jackson Memorial Hospital where he had been hospitalized since Thursday. STENNIS had pneumonia.

STENNIS had special ties to Union County. He had married a native daughter, Coy Nebraska Hines, from a family of 12 children. She died in August 1983 after a marriage of 54 years.

Graveside services for STENNIS will be held at 11 a.m. today at the Pinecrest Cemetery in DeKalb where he will be buried.

STENNIS' body lay in state Tuesday morning at the Old Capitol in Jackson and in the late afternoon at the DeKalb Presbyterian Church.

STENNIS was born August 3, 1901 near DeKalb in Kemper County, the son of Hampton Howell Stennis and Margaret Cornelia Adams Stennis. He received a bachelor of science degree in general science from the Mississippi A&M College in Starkville, now Mississippi State University, in 1923. He then attended the University of Virginia Law School where he received a law degree and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa.

He practiced law at DeKalb and served from 1928–1932 as a member of the Mississippi House of Representatives. On December 24, 1929 he married Coy Hines, who was a Kemper County home demonstration agent. He was a district prosecuting attorney from 1931–1937.

Their son, John Hampton Stennis, was born March 2, 1935 and their daughter Margaret Jane, November 20, 1937.

In 1947, STENNIS defeated five opponents to fill the Senate vacancy caused by the death of Theodore G. Bilbo. He had promised, “I will plow a straight furrow right down to the end of my row. This is my political religion.”

When he retired from the Senate in 1988, he was the oldest member of the Senate. He had served with and had close association with eight U.S. Presidents. In January 1969 he was named chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee and served as chairman through 1980. It was a powerful role for STENNIS.

In 1987 he was chosen by his colleagues as President Pro Tempore of the Senate, third in line of succession to the Presidency.

STENNIS’ power allowed him to affect favorable legislation for Mississippi, the 234-mile Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway being one of many.

He courted death on several occasions. In 1973 he was shot twice in a robbery attempt outside his home in Washington, DC. In 1984 his left leg was amputated because of a cancerous tumor.

STENNIS had faced his first serious challenge for his seat in 1982 by Haley Barbour of Yazoo City, who now chairs the Republican Party.

In 1988 STENNIS retired. He was honored by President Reagan, members of Congress, military and business leaders, Governor Ray Mabus and other Mississippians at a Washington Hotel.

At that occasion, Reagan announced that a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier would be named for STENNIS. It was christened at Newport News, Virginia in November 1993 and is to be commissioned this year.

Also named for the Senator is NASA’s National Space Technology Laboratory in Hancock County.

After his return to Mississippi, STENNIS moved to the campus of Mississippi State University. It is there that the John C. Stennis Institute of Government and the Stennis Center for Public Service, created by Congress, is located.

STENNIS is remembered fondly by his brother-in-law, Marvin Hines, 88, the only surviving member of the Hines family.

Hines said, “He’s the best in the world, an all-around good man. I never found any fault with him in all my years.”

At family reunions, Hines recalled, “He always made a speech.”

Hines visited DeKalb as long as the Stennis family was there.

Hines was unable to attend the funeral services due to his wife’s illness and his declining health; however other family members and friends did go.

[From the Indiannapolis News, April 27, 1995]

JOHN STENNIS

(Editorial)

In the more than 40 years that he served in the U.S. Senate, few men received more respect than Mississippi's JOHN STENNIS.

A courtly Southerner from the old school, he was called the conscience of the Senate because of his religious convictions and his commitment to upholding ethical standards for public officials.

He was unfailingly civil with those who disagreed with him and maintained friendships that transcended ideological and party ties.

He was a good man.

But a good man often can serve a bad cause. STENNIS certainly did.

He was one of the roadblocks on the journey to end institutionalized racial discrimination in this country. For nearly a quarter century, STENNIS opposed every civil rights measure or activity that came before the country.

He condemned the 1954 *Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education* Supreme Court decision that ended school segregation. He resisted attempts to pass anti-lynching bills and measures that would end the discriminatory poll tax and literacy tests for black voters. He voted against the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Civil Rights Act of 1968.

When it came to race, he was wrong, wrong, wrong.

This is one of the abiding ironies of history.

Lyndon Johnson came to the U.S. Senate about the same time that STENNIS did. Johnson, on a personal level, was not nearly as admirable or decent as STENNIS was. Johnson could be cruel, vindictive and mean-spirited. He bent or broke the rules repeatedly. He was not a good man.

But he did serve a good cause. Even though STENNIS was a better man, in presiding over the end of legalized segregation, Johnson did more to advance the greater good.

To his credit, STENNIS eventually saw the light. In 1983, near the end of his long career, he voted to extend the Voting Rights Act.

It was a moment that not only ultimately ennobled his years of public service, but illustrated the ways in which the path of virtue ultimately will be illuminated for men of good will.

And JOHN STENNIS certainly was a man of good will.

STENNIS died earlier this week. He was 93.

He will be remembered as a man of conscience and grace. He was a champion in many of America's great struggles, and he will be mourned as a man who always sought to find the best in others and ultimately found it in himself as well.



[From the Commercial Appeal (Memphis), April 27, 1995]

STENNIS MEMORIALIZED AS "A GREAT MAN," LAST RESPECTS PAID TO STATESMAN

(By Ron Harrist)

JOHN CORNELIUS STENNIS, a simple country lawyer who became one of the nation's most powerful men, was buried Wednesday on a knoll in the red clay of his beloved hometown.

Gathered in a loose circle around the gravesite at the Pinecrest Cemetery, colleagues, relatives and friends shared favorite anecdotes about the man who once headed the U.S. Senate Armed Services and Appropriations committees and as Senate President Pro Tempore was third in line to the Presidency.

STENNIS died Sunday of pneumonia in a Jackson hospital at age 93. He was buried among family members and next to his wife, Coy, who died in 1983.

“We live in a cynical, violent and self-centered world, but we know we can step out of this madness by following the footsteps and example of JOHN STENNIS,” Reverend Jerry McBride of St. James Episcopal Church in Jackson said during the eulogy.

“He was a Christian gentleman, a great man, a good man,” said Senator Robert Byrd (D-WV), the first person off two chartered buses that carried a delegation from Washington.

“If I could express the feelings of many of us, he taught a lot of us how to be a senator,” said Byrd, who served 30 years with STENNIS in the U.S. Senate.

STENNIS, a graduate of Mississippi State University and the University of Virginia Law School, was elected to the Senate in 1947 and kept close ties to the people of DeKalb, a poor farming community, and surrounding Kemper County. They first elected him to public office in 1928 as a member of the Mississippi Legislature. He later served as a district attorney and circuit judge.

“He set some standards for this state, some standards for public service that will always stand,” said former governor William Winter.

Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-SD), who led the Washington delegation, said STENNIS was “a very rare person” who “had much respect from both the Republican side and the Democratic side. He was viewed as a statesman.”

Mack McLarty, former chief of staff to President Clinton and now a top Clinton adviser, represented the White House.

STENNIS retired from the Senate in 1988 after being slowed by medical problems complicated by losing a leg to cancer and suffering a gunshot wound during an attack outside his Washington residence.

In the nation’s capital, STENNIS gained a reputation for finesse that earned him top committee assignments and the confidence of eight Presidents.

In the 1950s and 1960s, STENNIS was known for his segregationist rhetoric, but he supported extension of the Voting Rights Act in 1983 and won the support of black voters when he ran his last campaign in 1982.

Jeannie Howard, at 81 the oldest member of the Stennis family and the late Senator’s only niece, said it was only fitting that the ceremony was held in the April sunshine just a few blocks from where STENNIS once served sodas at his brother’s drug store.

“He loved his family and he loved these people,” said Mrs. Howard, of Waco, Texas.

More than 300 people attending the ceremony silently watched over the dark wood casket, draped with red roses, as a single trumpeter played “America the Beautiful.” The sound echoed across nearby hillsides.

John Hampton Stennis of Jackson recalled his father’s love for the land in a eulogy, saying, “My sister and I think my father had a pact with God to guide his plow and keep his furrow straight.”

When the crowd began to overflow the small cemetery, residents in this town of 1,073 stood on street corners to watch the service.

One local resident drove near the cemetery “just to let the Senator know I care,” but was politely turned away by police.



[From the Clarion-Ledger, April 27, 1995]

FIVE HUNDRED BID STENNIS FAREWELL

FORMER SENATOR REMEMBERED AS PATRIOT, FRIEND

(By Emily Wagster)

DeKALB—A long trumpeter played America the Beautiful Wednesday as 500 gathered in the rolling red-clay hills of east Mississippi to remember former U.S. Senator JOHN C. STENNIS.

A political stalwart once third in line to the Presidency, STENNIS died of pneumonia Sunday in Jackson at age 93. He was buried in his hometown next to his wife, Coy, who died in 1983.

Family, friends and local folks mingled with STENNIS' former Washington colleagues for a humble, half-hour graveside service at Pinecrest Cemetery.

“Senator STENNIS was a true hero,” said U.S. Senator John Glenn (D-OH).

STENNIS served 41 years in the Senate, retiring in 1988. He was Armed Services chairman during the tumultuous years of the Vietnam War. In 1987, he became chairman of the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee and was chosen by his colleagues as President Pro Tempore, putting him third in line in Presidential succession.

The late Senator's son, John Hampton Stennis of Jackson, remembered his father as a devoted public servant and patriot. During World War II, when the elder STENNIS was district attorney and circuit judge in Kemper County, he made sure his children understood their responsibilities as Americans.

“Daddy taught us patriotic things and poetry,” John Hampton Stennis said as his sister, Margaret Womble sat nearby. “In teaching us the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag, he made sure we understood the meaning.”

About 20 Senators and Congressmen, including Mississippi's U.S. Senators Thad Cochran and Trent Lott and 3d District U.S. Representative Sonny Montgomery, flew in from Washington. White House senior adviser Mack McLarty attended on behalf of President Clinton.

Military leaders, congressional staff members and spouses brought the Washington delegation to about 100.

“The fact that there were so many people here shows exactly the high regard they have for their former colleague,” said former Mississippi Governor William Winter, who started his political as a STENNIS legislative assistant.

Governor Kirk Fordice, Lt. Governor Eddie Briggs, Secretary of State Dick Molpus, Auditor Steve Patterson and other State officials traveled from Jackson. Legislators came from around Mississippi.

After the funeral, U.S. Senator Sam Nunn (D-GA), recalled that a promise STENNIS made helped him win a Senate seat in 1972. After Nunn won the Democratic primary for the Senate seat in Georgia, he visited Washington with his great uncle, a former House Armed Services Committee chairman. They called on STENNIS—and the Mississippi Democrat pledged he'd get Nunn a seat on Armed Services.

Nunn went back and told folks what STENNIS said. He believes that helped him win.

“There’s a saying that eagles don’t flock. You find them one at a time,” Nunn said. “JOHN STENNIS was an eagle.”

Nunn praised STENNIS’ work as chairman of the Select Committee on Standards and Conduct. “He was the very essence of integrity and character,” Nunn said.

Senator Jesse Helms (R–NC), said STENNIS won the respect of Republicans and Democrats alike.

Helms first met STENNIS in the early 1950s, when STENNIS was already a Senator and Helms was in Washington as administrative assistant to U.S. Senator Willis Smith and Alton Lennon.

“When I lost my mind and ran for Senate in 1972, he made calls up to North Carolina unbeknownst to me,” Helms said. “He gave me encouragement when I needed it.”

STENNIS was shot by robbers outside his Washington home in 1973, and Helms recalls that the Mississippi Senator handled himself with dignity. Helms went to visit STENNIS in Walter Reed Hospital, and when he arrived there was a delay.

A nurse came out and told Helms, “He doesn’t want to see anybody unless he has his coat and tie on.” Sure enough, Helms was let into STENNIS’ room a few minutes later, and there sat STENNIS in coat and tie.

John Hampton Stennis recalled that the book *One Hundred and One Famous Poems* sat on the family coffee table when he was growing up, and several of the poems remind him still of his father.

One is Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s *A Psalm of Life*, which includes the stanza:

“Lives of great men all remind us  
“We can make our lives sublime,  
“And, departing, leave behind us  
“Footprints on the sands of time.”



[From the Washington Times, April 28, 1995]

JUSTICE TO A JUST MAN: JOHN STENNIS

(By R.J. Woosley)

The obituaries of Senator JOHN STENNIS, who died on Sunday, list his accomplishments and positions, but the reasons for the great honor and affection with which he was almost universally regarded can only be understood if viewed through a somewhat finer and more personal filter.

Mr. STENNIS was at the height of his power in the summer of 1970 when he began a job interview with a nervous young Army captain by asking a big question. About to complete my 2 years of active duty, I was applying for a job on the staff of the Armed Services Committee, which he chaired. “How do you think we ought to deal with the military?” he asked. I looked puzzled, not sure what he was driving at. “Well,” he rescued me, “I think we ought to be sort of like a father . . . but an old-fashioned father, don’t you see? They’re good people and they’re trying to do something very important, so you have to help them and take care of them, but sometimes they ask for too much and you have to be ready with a tight rein.”

During the 3 years that I worked for him, JOHN STENNIS’ old-fashioned father formula came to the fore again and again. But his exercise of fatherly

duties—both to care for and to guide—did not stop with the nation’s armed forces. He dealt with much of the rest of the world from that combined perspective of affection and responsibility—junior Senators, his staff, sometimes whole nations.

Once, early in my time with him, I began to describe my draft of a bill by explaining the probable political effect and likely media treatment if he submitted it. He interrupted, “Jim, first help me understand my duty here—then we’ll worry about all that other.”

On another occasion, a staff member of Senator William Proxmire’s gave me advance notice of a forthcoming speech of his that would attack the committee’s approval of the Navy’s restructuring of the F-14 fighter contract. I told the staffer that I thought I should give Mr. STENNIS a heads-up; he had no objection.

When I told Mr. STENNIS about the forthcoming speech, he turned grave, asked me to sit down, and began carefully, “I always want you to tell me what you can honorably tell me, but I don’t know about this . . .” It took me a few seconds to realize that his worry was not about the aircraft program, or the political battle that was brewing, or the press attention Mr. Proxmire would get, but rather that I might be violating a confidence with someone on Mr. Proxmire’s staff by telling him. I assured him that this wasn’t the case, and he said, “Well, that’s all right then,” and changed the subject—clearly relieved that he hadn’t had to explain to me that he did not expect his staff to break promises of confidentiality to their counterparts in order to keep him informed.

When the Nixon administration agreed that Okinawa should revert to Japan, opposition began to develop in the Senate. It was clear to everyone that, if Mr. STENNIS joined in, he could very well bring along enough votes to sink the reversion treaty. In part because of a favorite relative who had died on the Bataan Death March, in part because of disputes about textile imports, he did not ordinarily go out of his way to befriend Japan. But once he received what he finally decided were adequate assurances about continued U.S. access to military bases on Okinawa, he agreed to support the treaty. After announcing his decision, in a straightforward and unremarkable staff-drafted speech, Mr. STENNIS glanced at the Senate press gallery, jammed with Japanese faces. His final words, impromptu, were all his own.

Southerners, he observed, knew something about being defeated and occupied. The United States had been in Okinawa for just over a quarter of a century as an army of occupation, and it was not fair to the Japanese for us to perpetuate that role—it was our duty not to remain an occupying power there any longer than truly necessary.

He considered carefully what was fair and just for all his children—four-star generals, staff members, the people of Japan.

Honor. Duty. Fair. Just.

Big words. An old-fashioned father’s words.

JOHN STENNIS’ words.



[From the Commercial Dispatch, April 30, 1995]

SENATOR STENNIS PLOWED A STRAIGHT FURROW

(By Charles Harmond)

I was sitting at home last Sunday watching the evening news when the talking head said that retired sports commentator Howard Cosell had died.

This was followed by the announcement that former U.S. Senator JOHN C. STENNIS of Mississippi had also died that Sunday.

The order of those two bits of news struck me as somewhat odd and rather sad.

The death and usually entertaining sports commentator was considered to be more newsworthy than the passing of the man who had earned (notice that I said earned) the nickname “conscience of the Senate.”

It saddens me that this country seems to affix more importance to the life of a television sportscaster than it does to the life of a man who served the U.S. Senate, indeed this State and the entire Nation, with dignity, honesty and competence for more than 40 years.

Of course, that news program did originate in New York City. The people who really matter, the people who live in places with names like DeKalb, Okolona, Aberdeen and Columbus, know differently. If that news story had come out of one of those places, it would have been ordered differently. The death of Howard Cosell, not the Senator, would have appeared in the “oh, by the way” category.

On only two occasions did my path cross that of the man who was chosen by his peers to chair the first Senate Ethics Committee.

The first was perhaps 15 years ago at a Mississippi State football game. It was homecoming and in those days the Senator always returned to his alma mater to crown the homecoming queen. This particular year, he happened to have seats just below where I was sitting.

A young boy of perhaps 10 or 12 sat down next to the great man and proceeded to question him at length about the workings of the national government. For 15 or 20 minutes Senator STENNIS patiently answered the boy’s questions while older men, men old enough to vote for him, waited impatiently for their turn to speak to the Senator.

It obviously did not matter. The questions from the earnest young man were as important to the Senator as were the comments of the older people waiting. It takes a truly tall man to lower himself to the level of a child. Senator STENNIS was a truly tall man.

Our paths crossed again in 1988 when I had the pleasure of attending the Stennis Retirement Dinner in Washington, DC.

I happened to sit beside the military doctor who had been assigned to treat Senator STENNIS after he was wounded in a robbery attempt. It was during the Watergate era and the doctor said that he had to follow STENNIS all over Washington because the Senator refused to say hospitalized while his wounds healed. He had to be about the business of government and could not afford the luxury of time to recuperate.

The speaker at the affair, honoring the retiring Democrat, was Republican President Ronald Reagan. The room was full of Republicans and Democrats, Mississippians and Washingtonians, blacks and whites, men and women, the rich and powerful and ordinary folks like me. All there to pay tribute to the Conscience of the Senate.

That dinner epitomizes the type of man that was JOHN C. STENNIS. Equally comfortable with the powerful and the ordinary, black or white, Democrat or Republican.

In this age when the word “crooked” all too often precedes the word “politician,” Senator STENNIS stood out like a tall oak tree in a field of weeds.

I still have the program that was printed for that retirement dinner. Upon hearing of STENNIS’ death, I dug it out. It was titled simply and appropriately “JOHN C. STENNIS—Celebration of a Legend”.

The flyleaf contained the following quote written in 1947 during his initial race for the U.S. Senate: "I want to plow a straight furrow down to the end of the row. This is my political religion, and I have lived by it too long to abandon it now. I base my appeal to you on this simple creed, and with it I shall rise or fall."

Senator STENNIS, you did plow a straight furrow row until you reached the end of the row. You will be missed.



[Lagniappe, NASA Aeronautics and Space Administration, May 25, 1995]

U.S. SENATOR JOHN C. STENNIS: HE WAS A GIANT IN EVERY WAY

(By Mack Herring, Stennis Space Center Historian)

U.S. Senator JOHN C. STENNIS, an American statesman who spent most of his extraordinary life in devoted service to his God, his country, and his fellowman, came to "the end of his row" April 23 when he quietly died in a Jackson Mississippi hospital at the age of 93.

The namesake of this NASA space center, STENNIS left such a mark on the history and direction of the Nation that his presence will be felt for many generations to come. He was a national leader who served with eight Presidents and earned the respect of admiring colleagues in the Senate during 41 years of dedicated service.

Because of his steadfast commitment to honesty and virtue in government, STENNIS became known as the "conscience of the U.S. Senate." He was referred to as "Mr. Integrity, the embodiment of honor and fairness," by the Washington Star and served as chairman of the Senate Ethics Committee. At the time of his retirement, STENNIS was chairman of the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee. The Senator was honored by his colleagues in the 100th Congress when they unanimously elected him President Pro Tempore of the Senate, an office that placed him third in succession to the Presidency.

Before leaving Washington, STENNIS left an indelible mark of his attention to duty when he cast his 11,595th vote in the U.S. Senate. No other Senator had cast that number of votes in the history of that body.

His achievements spanned over 60 years of service in public office, beginning when he was first elected to the Mississippi House of Representatives in 1928. This record of continuous service stands as a national record. The people's approval of this service is evidenced by the fact that STENNIS never lost an election.

Stennis Space Center Director Roy Estess, who worked closely with the Senator and his staff, captured the essence of STENNIS' lasting influence on the country and this center when he said, "It is impossible for me to adequately express my respect for and gratitude to STENNIS. He was a giant in every way who only wanted to serve people. While serving, he shaped the course of history and touched all of our lives. Stennis Space Center is but one manifestation of his great vision."

Employees of Stennis Space Center can look with pride at their association with this installation named for the courtly gentleman from Kemper County, MS. STENNIS' commitment to hard work, excellence and morality was best summed up in the words of a simple folk poem that he adopted as his political creed in his first bid for the U.S. Senate in 1947. He said: "I want to plow a straight furrow right down to the end of the row. This

is my political religion, and I have lived by it too long to abandon it now. I base my appeal to you on this simple creed, and with it I shall rise or fall.”

Indeed, the mark of his work in support of America’s preeminence in space and his commitment to a strong national defense is engraved throughout Stennis Space Center. STENNIS’ involvement with America’s space program and this center can be traced to the installation’s genesis.

He was deeply troubled in 1957 when the Soviets became first in space with the launch of their Sputnik satellite, and STENNIS worked tirelessly with then-U.S. Senator Lyndon Johnson and others to strengthen military programs. He also helped in the formation of NASA, as a federal agency in 1958.

Because of STENNIS’ influence in the Congress and the respect that he commanded from both political parties, President John Kennedy personally called on the Senator to support the Apollo lunar landing program and the Nation’s bid to gain preeminence in space. STENNIS believed the advancement of the space program was a centerpiece in America’s Cold War against the Soviet Union, and he never wavered in his support.

When NASA announced in 1961 that it would build a test facility for the giant Saturn V rockets in Hancock County, Mississippi, STENNIS was called on to explain the reasons for the massive undertaking to the people who had to give up their land for the project. In a historic speech at Logtown on All Saints Day in 1961, STENNIS eloquently expressed the overriding national need.

“There is always the thorn before the rose . . . you have got to make some sacrifices, but you will be taking part in greatness,” he said. One lady in the outdoor audience asked, “Senator STENNIS, why must we go to the moon?” In a serious and somber voice, the Senator answered, “For international prestige.”

Years later, after witnessing a static firing at SSC, STENNIS observed, “This fine facility has worked out far beyond our expectations, and certainly it will have a future in our formidable space program. No one can know what the future will be, but it is unthinkable that we will abandon the space program after proving our mastery of space. We can no more neglect space than we can air, land or the sea. If we did, we would soon be a second-rate nation.”

The late Dr. James C. Fletcher, who twice served as NASA administrator, acknowledged that STENNIS was the most influential and significant supporter of the national space program. Fletcher pointed to STENNIS’ staunch support of the Space Shuttle and said that the Senator’s work as chairman of the Appropriations Committee, just before he retired, “saved” the Space Station.

On May 20, 1988, President Ronald Reagan honored STENNIS by issuing an executive order designating the South Mississippi installation in his name. The President’s executive order read, “Senator JOHN C. STENNIS has served his country for over 40 years and has steadfastly supported the Nation’s space program since its inception. He has demonstrated visionary leadership and has consistently worked to assure United States world leadership and preeminence in space.”

Likewise, as chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee (1969–1980), STENNIS stood firm for U.S. military superiority. He fought and won many battles on the floor of the Senate on behalf of American military men and women. A strong Navy, second to none in the world, was always at the top of STENNIS’ agenda. He was frequently referred to as the “Father of America’s Modern Navy.”

Reagan depended on STENNIS to be his “stalwart” for establishing a strong national defense in the waning years of the Cold War. At a testimonial dinner honoring STENNIS, Reagan announced that nuclear aircraft carrier CVN-74 would bear his name. In the announcement, Reagan compared the Senator to a “great ship of the line, possessed of a high sense of purpose.”

The great carrier was christened November 11, 1983, and is scheduled to be launched late this year. STENNIS retired from the Senate in 1988 and returned to teach at Mississippi State University, his alma mater. Those close to him said he continued to apply his principles of hard work to the new task, spending hours preparing his lectures.

More than 500 friends and admirers gathered at Pinecrest Cemetery in the Senator’s hometown of DeKalb, MS, where he was buried near his family, next to his wife Coy, who died in 1983. More than 20 of his former colleagues in the Senate were in the number. Many of them paid tribute to the Senator from Mississippi, but none more eloquently than one of his neighbors, Jane McWilliams, who operated a country store. She said, “He never forgot where he came from. Never. I think that is important.

The John C. Stennis CVN-74 aircraft carrier seal implies peace through strength, just as STENNIS was referred to as an “unwavering advocate of peace through strength” by President Ronald Reagan when naming the ship in June 1988.

The characteristics of the seal are significant in many ways: The four gold bands (on the outside of the seal) and eight ties denote STENNIS’ four decades in the Senate and the eight Presidents with whom he served; the seven stars in the border represent his seven terms in the Senate and characterize the USS John C. Stennis as the seventh NIMITZ class aircraft carrier; the 20 stars represent Mississippi, the twentieth state; the eagle and shield represent those overlooking the Old Senate Chamber; and the three arrows in the eagle’s talons symbolize the three decades he served on the Senate Armed Services and Appropriations committees.

The carrier, cutting her powerful swathe through the sea, exemplifies STENNIS’ philosophy of “look ahead” and his pledge to “plow a straight furrow down to the end of the row.” Embodied in the ship are the principles STENNIS upheld in his service to America—honor, courage and commitment. The seal was approved in February 1995 by his daughter, Margaret Stennis Womble, and his daughter-in-law, Mrs. John Hampton Stennis.

