

from people in every corner of our Nation and from around the world just how much he meant to all of us. His fight has given us the opportunity we were denied when his brothers John and Robert were taken from us: the blessing of time to say thank you and goodbye.

The outpouring of love, gratitude, and fond memories to which we've all borne witness is a testament to the way this singular figure in American history touched so many lives. His ideas and ideals are stamped on scores of laws and reflected in millions of lives: in seniors who know new dignity, in families that know new opportunity, in children who know education's promise, and in all who can pursue their dream in an America that is more equal and more just, including myself.

The Kennedy name is synonymous with the Democratic Party. And at times, Ted was the target of partisan campaign attacks. But in the United States Senate, I can think of no one who engendered greater respect or affection from members of both sides of the aisle. His seriousness of purpose was perpetually matched by humility, warmth, and good cheer. He could pas-

sionately battle others and do so peerlessly on the Senate floor for the causes that he held dear, and yet still maintain warm friendships across party lines.

And that's one reason he became not only one of the greatest Senators of our time but one of the most accomplished Americans ever to serve our democracy. His extraordinary life on this Earth has come to an end. And the extraordinary good that he did lives on. For his family, he was a guardian. For America, he was the defender of a dream.

I spoke earlier this morning to Senator Kennedy's beloved wife Vicki, who was to the end such a wonderful source of encouragement and strength. Our thoughts and prayers are with her, his children Kara, Edward, and Patrick, his stepchildren Curran and Caroline, the entire Kennedy family, decades' worth of his staff, the people of Massachusetts, and all Americans who, like us, loved Ted Kennedy.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:57 a.m. at Blue Heron Farm.

## Statement on the Death of Senator Edward M. Kennedy

*August 26, 2009*

Michelle and I were heartbroken to learn this morning of the death of our dear friend Senator Ted Kennedy.

For five decades, virtually every major piece of legislation to advance the civil rights, health, and economic well being of the American people bore his name and resulted from his efforts.

I valued his wise counsel in the Senate, where, regardless of the swirl of events, he always had time for a new colleague. I cherished his confidence and momentous support in my race for the Presidency. And even as he waged a valiant struggle with a mortal illness, I've profit-

ed as President from his encouragement and wisdom.

An important chapter in our history has come to an end. Our country has lost a great leader, who picked up the torch of his fallen brothers and became the greatest United States Senator of our time. And the Kennedy family has lost their patriarch, a tower of strength and support through good times and bad. Our hearts and prayers go out to them today, to his wonderful wife Vicki, his children Ted, Jr., Patrick, and Kara, his grandchildren, and his extended family.

## The President's Weekly Address

*August 29, 2009*

This weekend marks the fourth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina's devastation of the Gulf Coast. As we remember all that was lost, we

must take stock of the work being done on recovery, while preparing for future disasters.

And that's what I want to speak with you about today.

None of us can forget how we felt when those winds battered the shore, the floodwaters began to rise, and Americans were stranded on rooftops and in stadiums. Over a thousand people would lose their lives. Over a million people were displaced. Whole neighborhoods of a great American city were left in ruins. Communities across the Gulf Coast were forever changed, and many Americans questioned whether government could fulfill its responsibilities to respond in a crisis or contribute to a recovery that covered parts of four States.

Since taking office in January, my administration has focused on helping citizens finish the work of rebuilding their lives and communities, while taking steps to prevent similar catastrophes going forward. Our approach is simple: Government must keep its responsibility to the people so that Americans have the opportunity to take responsibility for their own future.

That's the work that we're doing. To date, 11 members of my Cabinet have visited the Gulf Coast, and I'm looking forward to going to New Orleans later this year. To complete a complex recovery that addresses nearly every sector of society, we have prioritized coordination among different Federal agencies and with State and local governments. No more turf wars; all of us need to move forward together, because there's much more work to be done.

I've also made it clear that we will not tolerate the redtape that stands in the way of progress or the waste that can drive up the bill. Government must be a partner, not an opponent, in getting things done. And that's why we've put in place innovative review and dispute-resolution programs to expedite recovery efforts and have freed up hundreds of millions of dollars of Federal assistance that had not been distributed. This is also allowing us to move forward with stalled projects across the Gulf Coast building and improving schools, investing in public health and safety, and repairing broken roads, bridges, and homes. And this effort has been dramatically amplified by

the Recovery Act, which has put thousands of Gulf Coast residents to work.

As we complete this effort, we see countless stories of citizens holding up their end of the bargain. In New Orleans, hundreds of kids just started the school year at Langston Hughes Elementary, the first school built from scratch since Katrina. The St. Bernard Project has drawn together volunteers to rebuild hundreds of homes, where people can live with dignity and security. To cite just one hopeful indicator, New Orleans is the fastest growing city in America, as many who've been displaced are now coming home.

As we rebuild and recover, we must also learn the lessons of Katrina so that our Nation is more protected and resilient in the face of disaster. That means continuing to rebuild hundreds of miles of levees and floodwalls around New Orleans and working to strengthen the wetlands and barrier islands that are the Gulf Coast's first line of defense. In Washington, that means a focus on competence and accountability, and I'm proud that my FEMA Administrator has 25 years of experience in disaster management in Florida, a State that has known its share of hurricanes. And across the country, that means improving coordination among different agencies, modernizing our emergency communications, and helping families plan for a crisis.

On this anniversary, we are focused on the threat from hurricanes. But we must also be prepared for a broad range of dangers, from wildfires to earthquakes to terrorist attacks and pandemic disease. In particular, my administration is working aggressively with State and local governments, and with partners around the world, to prepare for the risk posed by the H1N1 virus. To learn more about the simple steps that you can take to keep you and your family safe from all these dangers, please visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov).

So on this day, we commemorate a tragedy that befell our people, but we also remember that with every tragedy comes the chance of renewal. It's a quintessentially American notion that adversity can give birth to hope and that the lessons of the past hold the key to a better future. From the streets of New

Orleans to the Mississippi coast, folks are beginning the next chapter in their American stories. And together, we can ensure that the legacy of a terrible storm is a country that is safer and more prepared for the challenges that may come. Thank you.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 11:30 a.m. on August 20 in the Roosevelt

Room at the White House for broadcast on August 29. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 28, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on August 29. In the address, the President referred to W. Craig Fugate, Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency.

## Eulogy at the Funeral Service for Senator Edward M. Kennedy in Boston, Massachusetts *August 29, 2009*

Your Eminence, Vicki, Kara, Edward, Patrick, Curran, Caroline, members of the Kennedy family, distinguished guests, and fellow citizens: Today we say goodbye to the youngest child of Rose and Joseph Kennedy. The world will long remember their son Edward as the heir to a weighty legacy, a champion for those who had none, the soul of the Democratic Party, and the lion of the United States Senate, a man who graces nearly 1,000 laws and who penned more than 300 laws himself.

But those of us who loved him and ache with his passing know Ted Kennedy by the other titles he held: father; brother; husband; grandfather; Uncle Teddy, or as he was often known to his younger nieces and nephews, “the Grand Fromage,” or “the Big Cheese.” I, like so many others in the city where he worked for nearly half a century, knew him as a colleague, a mentor, and above all, as a friend.

Ted Kennedy was the baby of the family who became its patriarch, the restless dreamer who became its rock. He was the sunny, joyful child who bore the brunt of his brothers’ teasing but learned quickly how to brush it off. When they tossed him off a boat because he didn’t know what a jib was, 6-year-old Teddy got back in and learned to sail. When a photographer asked the newly elected Bobby to step back at a press conference because he was casting a shadow on his younger brother, Teddy quipped, “It’ll be the same in Washington.”

That spirit of resilience and good humor would see Teddy through more pain and tragedy than most of us will ever know. He lost two siblings by the age of 16. He saw two more tak-

en violently from a country that loved them. He said goodbye to his beloved sister, Eunice, in the final days of his life. He narrowly survived a plane crash, watched two children struggle with cancer, buried three nephews, and experienced personal failings and setbacks in the most public way possible.

It’s a string of events that would have broken a lesser man. And it would have been easy for Ted to let himself become bitter and hardened, to surrender to self-pity and regret, to retreat from public life and live out his years in peaceful quiet. No one would have blamed him for that.

But that was not Ted Kennedy. As he told us: “[I]ndividual faults and frailties are no excuse to give in and no exemption from the common obligation to give of ourselves.” Indeed, Ted was the “Happy Warrior” that the poet Wordsworth spoke of when he wrote:

As tempted more; more able to endure,  
As more exposed to suffering and distress;  
Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.

Through his own suffering, Ted Kennedy became more alive to the plight and the suffering of others: the sick child who could not see a doctor; the young soldier denied her rights because of what she looks like or who she loves or where she comes from. The landmark laws that he championed—the Civil Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, immigration reform, children’s health insurance, the Family and Medical Leave Act—all have a running thread: that’s Kennedy’s life work was not to champion the causes of those with wealth or power or special connections; it was to give a