

## Statement on the Death of Former Deputy White House Counsel Cassandra Q. Butts

*May 27, 2016*

To know Cassandra Butts was to know someone who made you want to be better. And Michelle and I were fortunate enough to count her as a friend for most of our adult lives.

Cassandra and I met as law students, and we quickly discovered a shared passion for jazz—and for public service. It was a passion she'd chase for the rest of her life: on Capitol Hill, at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, at the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and as an adviser of mine, but above all, as a citizen, always pushing, always doing her part to advance the causes of opportunity, civil rights, development, and democracy. Cassandra was someone who put her hands squarely

on that “arc of the moral universe” and never stopped doing whatever she could to bend it towards justice.

We lost her this week, at far too young an age. But along with all her friends and family, we find comfort in the knowledge that all the good she did for so many lives on. She made America better. She made so many lives better, including ours. We admired her so much. And we will miss her deeply.

NOTE: The statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary as a statement by the President and the First Lady.

## The President's Weekly Address

*May 28, 2016*

Hi, everybody. Right now there are American troops serving in harm's way and standing sentry around the world. There are veterans who have served honorably in times of war and peace and often came home bearing the invisible and visible wounds of war. They may not speak the loudest about their patriotism; they let their actions do that. And the right time to think of these men and women, and thank them for their service and sacrifice, is every day of the year.

Memorial Day, which we'll observe Monday, is different. It's the day we remember those who never made it home, those who never had the chance to take off the uniform and be honored as a veteran. It's the day we stop to reflect with gratitude on the sacrifice of generations who made us more prosperous and free and to think of the loved ones they left behind. Remembering them—searing their stories and their contributions into our collective memory—that's an awesome responsibility. It's one that all of us share as citizens.

As Commander in Chief, I have no more solemn obligation than leading our men and

women in uniform: making sure they have what they need to succeed, making sure we only send them into harm's way when it's absolutely necessary. And if they make the ultimate sacrifice—if they give their very lives—we have to do more than honor their memory.

We have to be there for their families. Over the years, Michelle and I have spent quiet moments with the families of the fallen: husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, sons and daughters. They've shared their pain, but also their pride in the sacrifices their loved ones made under our proud flag.

It's up to the rest of us to live our lives in a way that's worthy of these sacrifices. The idea to set aside a Memorial Day each year didn't come from our Government, it came from ordinary citizens who acknowledged that while we can't build monuments to every heroic act of every warrior we lost in battle, we can keep their memories alive by taking one day out of the year to decorate the places where they're buried.

That's something that so many of our fellow Americans are doing this weekend: remembering.

Remembering the soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and coastguardsmen who died in our defense. Remembering those who remain missing. Remembering that they were our fellow citizens and churchgoers, classmates and children, and more often than not, the best of us.

So this Memorial weekend, I hope you'll join me in acts of remembrance. Lay a flower or plant a flag at a fallen hero's final resting place. Reach out to a Gold Star family in your community and listen to the story they have to tell. Send a care package to our troops overseas, volunteer to make a wounded warrior's day a little easier, or hire a veteran who is ready and willing to serve at home just as they did abroad. Or just pause, take a moment, and offer a silent word of prayer or a public word of thanks.

The debt we owe our fallen heroes is one we can never truly repay. But our responsibility to remember is something we can live up to every day of the year.

Thanks. May God watch over our fallen heroes and their families, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:20 p.m. on May 19 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on May 28. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 27, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on May 28. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Remarks at a Memorial Day Ceremony in Arlington, Virginia May 30, 2016

*The President.* Good morning.

*Audience members.* Good morning.

*The President.* Secretary Carter, General Dunford, Mr. Hallinan, Major General Becker, members of our Armed Forces, veterans, and most of all, our Gold Star families: I'm honored to be with you once again as we pay our respects, as Americans, to those who gave their lives for us all.

Here at Arlington, the deafening sounds of combat have given way to the silence of these sacred hills. The chaos and confusion of battle has yielded to perfect, precise rows of peace. The Americans who rest here and their families—the best of us, those from whom we asked everything—ask of us today only one thing in return: that we remember them.

If you look closely at the white markers that grace these hills, one thing you'll notice is that so many of the years—dates of birth and dates of death—are so close together. They belong to young Americans, those who never lived to be honored as veterans for their service: men who battled their own brothers in Civil War, those who fought as a band of brothers an ocean away, and men and women who redefine heroism for a new generation. There are

generals buried beside privates they led. Americans known as dad or mom, some only known to God. As Mr. Hallinan, a marine who then watched over these grounds, has said, "Everyone here is someone's hero."

Those who rest beneath this silence—not only here at Arlington, but at veterans' cemeteries across our country and around the world and all who still remain missing—they didn't speak the loudest about their patriotism. They let their actions do that. Whether they stood up in times of war, signed up in times of peace, or were called up by a draft board, they embodied the best of America.

As Commander in Chief, I have no greater responsibility than leading our men and women in uniform; I have no more solemn obligation sending them into harm's way. I think about this every time I approve an operation as President; every time, as a husband and father, that I sign a condolence letter; every time Michelle and I sit at the bedside of a wounded warrior or grieve and hug members of a Gold Star Family.

Less than 1 percent of our Nation wears the uniform, and so few Americans see this patriotism with their own eyes or know someone who