

TRIBUTE TO MR. JUSTICE DOUGLAS

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 1974

Present: MR. CHIEF JUSTICE BURGER, MR. JUSTICE DOUGLAS, MR. JUSTICE BRENNAN, MR. JUSTICE STEWART, MR. JUSTICE WHITE, MR. JUSTICE MARSHALL, MR. JUSTICE BLACKMUN, MR. JUSTICE POWELL, and MR. JUSTICE REHNQUIST.

THE CHIEF JUSTICE said:

Before we proceed with the arguments that we interrupted at the close of the session yesterday, I would like to make a very brief statement.

Today marks an event in the history of this Court that has never occurred before and may never occur again.

It is also a milestone in the unique judicial career of MR. JUSTICE DOUGLAS, who, on October 29, 1973, established a record of the longest service of any one of the 100 Justices who have served on this Court in the 184 years since the Court first sat on February 2, 1790.

It was precisely 35 years ago today that MR. JUSTICE DOUGLAS took his seat on this Court.

A great many people exceed the Biblical three-score-and-ten and go on to the eighties and the nineties and even beyond that, but few of them do so with the remarkable vigor and the full zest for life that MR. JUSTICE DOUGLAS exhibits. His curiosity and concern about the world we live in and all that is in it and his search to satisfy that curiosity seem to increase with each passing year.

This week he publishes his 17th book, an account of his early years in Minnesota, in the State of Washington, then back east to New York, and later at New Haven, and then in Washington, where he came to spend four or five months and has remained 40 years.

Anyone who thinks MR. JUSTICE DOUGLAS is nearing the end of his career overlooks the reality of his life and his temperament. There are many more mountains to climb, mountains of the law, mountains of life and of nature, and that will always be his pursuit.

On October 29 last year, when MR. JUSTICE DOUGLAS surpassed all the prior records of service, he made a statement that ought to be placed in the permanent records of this Court, and I will take this occasion to do so.

He said this:

"I think the heart of America is sound. I think the conscience of America is bright. I think the future of America is great. The thing that holds us all together is not the wording of the Constitution, but the mucilage of good will, and that is what we need at all times."

I know, MR. JUSTICE DOUGLAS—our Brother DOUGLAS—that I speak for all the Members of the Court as well as for our retired Brethren, Mr. Chief Justice Warren, Justices Reed and Clark, and former Members of the Court with whom you sat, when I say that we salute you on this occasion, and wish you good health and the continued vigor that has been your trademark for all these years.