

THE FINEST GIFT

Edwin Meese III, former attorney general, notes that Mr. Reagan's legacy to America continues to this day. "Many are calling the congressional leadership's agenda the Second Reagan Revolution," he says. "More importantly, Mr. Reagan continues to inspire Americans of all ages to value the patriotism and leadership which he so splendidly demonstrated."

Longtime Reagan aide Lyn Nofziger concurs, adding: "History will surely record that the finest birthday gift already given to Mr. Reagan by Americans is a Republican House and Senate that are determined to carry on the Reagan Revolution."

Yet Mr. Reagan says that the best birthday gift for him this year would be that scientists receive the support they need to find a treatment and a cure for Alzheimer's so that others will be spared the anguish that the illness causes.

Ever the altruist, Ronald Reagan—even for his birthday wish—places the welfare of others above his own. It is a characteristic that has served him faithfully until now, and is one that will sustain him on his "journey into the sunset" of his life.

THE BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, a lot of folks do not have the slightest idea about the enormity of the Federal debt. Every so often, I ask groups of friends, how many millions of dollars are there in a trillion? They think about it, voice some estimates, most of them wrong.

One thing they do know is that it was the U.S. Congress that ran up the enormous Federal debt that is now about \$13 billion shy of \$5 trillion. To be exact, as of the close of business yesterday, February 5, the total Federal debt—down to the penny—stood at \$4,987,400,986,833.50. Another sad statistic is that on a per capita basis, every man, woman, and child in America owes \$18,930.61.

So, Mr. President, how many million are there in a trillion? There are a million million in a trillion, which means that the Federal Government will shortly owe 5 million million dollars.

Sort of boggles the mind, doesn't it?

MEDICARE: A CALL FOR REFORM

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I rise today because I cannot in good conscience remain silent. As we all know, for many years, the Medicare board of trustees has warned of the impending bankruptcy of the Medicare trust funds. Many in Congress and in the administration dismiss these annual warnings, preferring to spend blindly, counting on a wish and a prayer for our children and grandchildren. They say they do not believe that Medicare will really go bankrupt. They continue to say this, despite all evidence to the contrary. They have accused those of us who want to save Medicare of destroying one of the most popular programs in American history. But this time, Mr. President, history and the hard data, prove them wrong.

The front page of yesterday's New York Times proclaimed: "Shortfall

Posted by Medicare Fund Two Years Early". What that means is that—for the first time in its history—Medicare spent more money than it took in through payroll taxes. Mr. President, those of us who have been telling the truth about Medicare knew the situation was serious. But, this article tells us that it is even worse than we knew. Experts had predicted in good faith that the Medicare trust fund would grow, but despite their best efforts, they were off by nearly \$5 billion. And we know for certain that once the trust fund begins to lose money, it is on a rapid path to depletion. Richard Foster, the Health Care Financing Administration's chief actuary, is quoted as saying, "Obviously, you can't continue very long with a situation in which the expenditures of the program are significantly greater than the income. * * * Once the assets of the trust fund are depleted, there is no way to pay all the benefits that are due." Within less than six years, Mr. President, there will be no money to pay for any hospital services, for any senior citizen in this country. This is not expected to occur in the distant future. Again, this will happen within the next 6 years, perhaps even before the end of my Senate term.

There are no signs of improvement in the near future. Mr. Foster, points out the causes of the shortfall: First, income to the trust fund through dedicated payroll taxes was less than expected; second, hospital admissions increased; third, patients were sicker; and fourth, hospitals filed claims more quickly. Projections are never going to be perfect, but the important thing is that most of the prediction error was that Medicare spending grew faster than was projected. Without fundamental restructuring of the Medicare Program, bankruptcy is certain, and increasingly swift.

The reaction of the Health Care Financing Administration in the past has been to analyze and attempt to figure out the problem. Once again, that has been HCFA's response to the latest reports. Historically, the Federal Government is far slower than the private sector to respond with action to such problems. We must learn from the private sector about the value of prudent and decisive action. The 1996 trustees report is due out in less than 2 months. We cannot wait around for another report that promises bankruptcy, meanwhile wringing our hands. Medicare must be restructured to build on the experience of the private sector. Proposals to reform the Medicare Program have been proposed in Congress for more than a decade. The key fundamental change was to allow Medicare beneficiaries a limited choice of private health plans—restricted to federally qualified health maintenance organizations [HMOs]—thus by definition, omitting the many plans available today. Yet, where available, these plans are delivering more health care benefits and greater out of pocket pro-

tection to seniors and the disabled than are available from the current Medicare Program.

I urge my colleagues and the American public to call for bipartisan action to preserve, protect and strengthen Medicare. Saving Medicare in the short term—the next 10 years—should be the easy part. We must revisit the issue as we prepare for the future and the enrollment of the baby boomer generation. Changes must be made now to protect our seniors and the disabled. If we fail to act now, a much higher price will eventually be paid by our children and grandchildren.

The irresponsible approach is to think of Medicare as a non-evolving program. It must keep pace with the times. It must be cost-effective and deliver quality care to our seniors and our disabled. Only fundamental restructuring of the Medicare Program offers stability for the future. We must not fall back on the traditional approach of raising payroll taxes and ratcheting down provider fees. We must reintroduce the private sector principles into this public program. Restructuring does not result in a fundamental dismantling of the program. Rather, it offers beneficiaries the same choice of high quality health care available to younger Americans. It offers greater out-of-pocket protection, more choice of benefits and services and greater continuity of care. It brings Medicare from a pretty good program based on the 1965 health care market to a great program ready to meet the needs of the next century.

A CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE OF ERNIE BOYER

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, on Sunday, January 21, 1996, over 500 people from across the country and world, gathered at the Princeton University Chapel in New Jersey to share their memories of one of the giants of American education, Ernie Boyer, who died on December 8, 1995.

Ernie was a great friend to me, and many others in Congress, and a great champion of education. Millions of people have better lives today because of Ernie. I believe that the tributes given at the memorial service will be of interest to all of us in Congress, and I ask unanimous consent that the following remarks be printed in the RECORD.

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

REMARKS BY SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY

Ernie once said that "knowledge has, without question, become our most precious resource." He believed so strongly in the value and importance of knowledge that he devoted his life to searching for it, sharing it with others, and summoning—and sometimes even shaming—the nation to guarantee that more Americans have the opportunity to achieve it.

Ernie began to quench his thirst of knowledge before most children can drink from a glass. On his first day of school, he walked

hand-in-hand with his mother. When they reached the school, he asked, "Will I learn to read today?"

"No," his mother said, "You won't learn to read today, but you will before the year is out."

But Ernie was vindicated a few moments later—because on that first day of school, his teacher greeted her students by saying, "Good morning class, today we learn to read."

Before he ever stepped into a classroom, Ernie understood the urgency of obtaining an education. He mastered the art of learning and embarked on a journey that has literally changed the lives of millions of Americans.

He encouraged even the greatest centers of learning to remember that teaching is important too—as important as research. He counseled Congress about how to improve schools, and he reminded us all to value good teaching. His contributions to the art and science of the effective transmission of learning were unsurpassed.

But he did not stop there. He wrestled with how best to help all children come to school ready to learn. He never forgot the difference it made to him that he arrived for his first day of school ready to learn. And he tried to make America see that difference too. If Ernie had his way, everyone would have a good breakfast and a warm hand to hold on their way to school.

More than anyone of his time, he taught us that it is children, not just the schools, that should be the focus of our concern—that education is a community-wide effort which begins with the birth of a child—that supporting education is, more than any other challenge, not an expenditure, but an investment—that failure to act now will surely later mean higher costs, wasted lives, promises unfulfilled.

If Paul Simon and Dick Riley and I and many others see farther on these issues today, it is because we stand on the shoulders of giants like Ernie Boyer.

Ernie believed that the knowledge he gained and continued to gain himself was a call to the service of others. As he once said, "there's reason for optimism—if we can get the right kind of leadership to help clarify and energize what is still a huge public commitment to education."

Ernie kept Congress on its toes. He was a constant counselor and a dear friend to many of us. Long ago, those of us who care about education wore out the tab in our address books under "B".

Ernie's greatest gift to the nation was his unwavering commitment to education and to keeping all children at the heart of the nation's agenda. And when Ernie said all children, he meant all children, so that none would be left out or left behind.

Any time we planned a hearing on education in the Committee on Labor and Human Resources and Ernie testified, he brought a series of new ideas to improve schools and reach out to children. He was the formative thinker behind the modern movement for school reform.

He felt the most important thing we could do for very young children was to create television shows that prepare them for school. Ernie had the idea, and it was one of his best. We turned it into legislation, and now there is strong support for improved children's television.

He brought an endless fountain of creativity to American life. His breadth of knowledge and depth of commitment to education inspired awe, respect, and humility. In Ernie's presence, we were learning from the master.

Ernie believed the pursuit of knowledge was a lifelong journey of profound impor-

tance to the nation. As he once wrote, "commitment to education will help all students to be involved in the civic future of the nation—to vote in elections to serve on juries, to be concerned about the health of their communities—to ensure that democracy will, with vitality, succeed."

Kay once told me that Ernie wished he could live to be 200, because he had so many projects to complete. But he accomplished more for the nation's students, parents, and teachers, in his 67 years than anyone else could have done in 200 years. They may not know his name, but millions of Americans, young and old, in every city, town, and village in the nation have better lives today because of Ernie Boyer. To all of us who know him and love him, he was the North, South, East, and West of education. And now, education has lost its best friend.

There is an old New England saying that all men are dust, but some are dust of gold. That's the way I felt about Ernie Boyer.

As the poet Stephen Spender wrote:
I think continually of those who were truly great . . .

The names of those who in their lives fought for life,

Who wore at their hearts the fire's centre.

Born of the sun, they travelled a short while towards the sun,

And left the vivid air signed with their honour.

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REMARKS OF RICHARD W. RILEY, U.S.
SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

On behalf of President and Mrs. Clinton and the American people, I want to extend to Kay Boyer, her children and grandchildren the many thanks of this nation for giving us Dr. Ernest L. Boyer—and my personal thanks for the honor of speaking at this memorial service.

You family members knew and loved Ernie as a husband, father and grandfather. We came to know, love and admire him as a teacher, reformer and friend, a wonderful and cheerful advocate of children and of the advancement of American education.

Ernie was, in many ways, education's best friend. He had an intellectual rigor about him and a wonderful capacity to speak plain English. He moved people to act. He was unwilling to accept mediocrity and his body of policy recommendations—which span the waterfront—remain to this day the sturdy foundation for our continuing efforts to improve American education.

Ernie did many things for education.

He urged and prodded higher education to return teaching to its primacy of place at the core of the college experience, and he never let us forget the importance of service to the learning experience.

He reminded us, with the wonderful support of his wife Kay, that an unhealthy child could not be much of a learner.

Above all, he captured the imagination of countless parents and teachers because he gave hope to the real possibility that we could educate all of America's children.

Ernie was education's own "Mr. Fix It." For Ernie believed in solutions—believed that with hard work, a sense of optimism and unlimited energy—all problems could be solved if we stayed focused on the children.

Ernie once wrote that, "America is losing sight of its children." This must have been a difficult sentence for Ernie to write because he never lost sight of the children. And, that was one of his unique gifts—his tenacious capacity to stay focused, to inspire everyone he came in contact with to keep at it even when the task seemed daunting.

For Ernie, you see, believed in excellence and knew that excellence and equity went hand in hand. He did not suggest to you that

the connection was easy to sustain. But he was not daunted.

He told us to start early, to strengthen the connection between parent and child. He urged us to fit our schools to the needs of our children instead of the other way around. And, then he went on to give us the blueprints for basic schools of excellence and how to improve teaching—and how to infuse the arts into education.

Ernie, with his energy, wisdom and passion, conveyed to us the possibility that we could get the job done—that we could raise standards and make America's schools, colleges and universities bastions of hope, creativity and learning.

Ernie's mind, you see, never rested and he had an idea for just about everything. Good ideas—solid ideas—forward thinking ideas—positive solutions that made a difference. Until his very last breath, Ernie was a worker. In a few short weeks we will see the wisdom of another one of his good ideas—how to reform the American high school.

His work on this plan defines for me not only his talent and foresight but, more than anything else, his quiet integrity. He could have produced, as so many have before, one more scathing report about America's high schools—a headline grabber, to be sure, but a report that would not have helped anyone.

Instead, Doctor Boyer encouraged and supported the work of this nation's high school principals and teachers in their effort to find concrete examples of what is working and what is not. He looked for solutions that challenged the very best in each of us.

It seems fitting, then, to ask all of us what we will do to carry on Ernie's legacy. This is not easy. For we are in troubled times. Too often the debate about education is distorted and driven to the limits of ideological certitude. What seems missing is Ernie's capacity to listen and learn, his spirit of generosity, and his enduring efforts to build consensus around achievable goals rooted in the basic principles of good education.

In many ways, the future of public education is at stake. For there are some who would have us believe that public education, as an institution, has outlived its usefulness. They do not believe in its value, see no point in reforming it, and quite literally seek to abolish it as an institution.

I am deeply troubled by this growing intellectual retreat from the democratic spirit that has always defined American public education at its best. And, I am sure that Ernie would have none of it. For Ernie's life work was about building up public education, not tearing it down. He was a leader by example, positively engaging Americans to come together for the good of the children. Today, we could use a lot more Ernie Boyer's to help us move into our knowledge-based future with confidence.

So I ask you to celebrate the good work of our friend Ernie Boyer. We all have wonderful stories to share. Stories that celebrate the joy of education and the generosity of Ernie's spirit.

But when you go home, I urge each and everyone of you to roll up your sleeves—to fight as Ernie would fight for better public education—to stay focused on the essentials of effective teaching and learning—to be high-minded, positive, and even enthusiastic—but to get on with the job of making Ernie's positive vision of education a reality for future generations of children.

Thank you.

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STATING THE OBVIOUS

(By Ernest Boyer, Jr.)

It must be among the most elusive of all accomplishments—public acclaim joined with private fulfillment, the respect and esteem of colleagues and associates balanced

with the equally rich love and admiration of family and friends. This is what my father achieved. Measured in terms of years, his life seems all too short. But measured according to what he managed to accomplish in those years not even ten lifetimes seems sufficient to account for it at all. More significant, though, to those of us who knew him as husband, father, father-in-law, grandfather, brother, or uncle was his extraordinary capacity for love. My mother likes to say that he had been given an extra gift of love. It seemed so true. This was not a love that called attention to itself or in anyway placed expectations on those it sheltered. And it certainly never sought to control or to direct, or to tell others what was best. It was, rather, a love that could be so unobtrusive, so quiet—and yet so intense—that it became simply impossible to separate that love from the man who give it. His was, then, a rare double talent—extraordinary public accomplishments coupled with the even more extraordinary personal qualities of a gentle but very warm humanity, an unhesitating kindness, and an unqualified love.

It is, however, not on his accomplishments nor even on his love which I wish to focus—not on his accomplishments because there are so many others far more qualified than I to speak of those, and not on his love because in the end there is so little that can be said of it. It was in many ways so much a part of his presence that for anyone who ever met him no further explanation is necessary, and for those who never had a chance to meet him, no explanation is really possible.

Instead, I would like to examine the one among his qualities which, it seems to me, most fully links those accomplishments together with that love. This was his wisdom. Among the many things my father's life was for me, it became eventually also a study of wisdom. Wisdom is not merely an uncommon virtue. It is also a rather peculiar one. Contrary to popular opinion wisdom has very little to do with intelligence, for example. And although my father had a brilliant mind, it was not from his intellect that his wisdom came. Intelligence revels in complexity and in subtlety, both of which can occasionally be helpful, but which just as often can obscure and even confuse solutions. Complexity for its own sake held no interest for my father. He preferred simplicity, clarity.

No, this wisdom came from another place entirely, and as I watched over the years I have come to more fully appreciate the nature of wisdom itself. Wisdom, I have decided, is nothing more and nothing less than the ability to state the obvious.

Describing it this way may at first seem to cheapen it, to dismiss it, or possibly to degrade it into something rather ordinary. It does none of these. The fact is, the ability to state the obvious is remarkably rare. It is rare in part, because to do so requires its own manager of courage. It is rare, too, because, strangely enough, the obvious is not obvious to very many.

The courage that is required is the sort needed in the face of the widespread belief that stating the obvious makes a person appear uninformed, or naive, or even foolish. My father was none of these, and so to state the obvious with the consistency with which he did so demanded not only a profound self-confidence but an even more profound conviction that how he himself appeared was in the long run incidental to the main task to be done, which was to make the world a better place. One of the things he was fond of saying was, "First decide what is the right thing to do. Then figure out how you are going to do it." He was convinced that this process should never be reversed. You should never let what you think you can do try to convince you what you ought to do. Start

with what is right and work from there. And for my father, to say that you should start with what is right was to state the obvious.

There were many other things similar. It was also obvious to him, for example, that there is far, far more that unifies all of us as human beings than that separates us. There are differences, of course, but there are no differences so significant that they cancel out the far more basic needs and infinitely more important hopes that all people share simply by the fact of being human. Nearly every problem we have, he was convinced, is the result of forgetting how much each of us has in common with everyone else on this planet just as nearly every solution must start with the reaffirmation of that fact. Thus it was that his strongest impulse, an impulse that formed a cord that tied together his entire career, was always to make connections. He took it as his daily task to form bridges, bridges between ideas, bridges between institutions, and most important of all, bridges between people. He was persuaded that there could be no greater responsibility for schools, for parents, or for anyone else concerned with the future of the human race than to teach children how much we all have in common and how much depends on the recognition that we are all in this together. For him, to say this was to state the obvious.

And simply because we all share so much, and because we are all in this together, it was also obvious to him that no voice should ever be ignored, and it was those least heard that he was most inclined to notice. This was especially true of children. All his life my father was preoccupied with children. He was fully persuaded that children, simply as children, had so much to offer the world. It was for him a point of unwavering conviction that their voices, at least as much as any one else's, had to be included as part of the human solution. To him, it just seemed so obvious that this should be so.

Finally, it was for him obvious too that everything we do must contribute to a greater purpose. This meant in part working on a day-to-day basis to make the world a better, more just place, but it also meant for him quite a bit more than that. Central to who my father was was his faith that no matter what any of us do in the course of our lives, it can only ever be but a tiny part of who we are and what we are to become. Some weeks before he died my father said to me, "I've always known how important what we do here can be, but recently I've come to see so plainly all the ways in which what we do here can also become what I can only describe as holy." He told me this as something that he regarded with renewed appreciation but not with surprise. On one level this, too, had always been obvious to him.

The thing is, though, that not all of this that was so obvious to my father is equally obvious to everyone else.

In a 1978 interview my father said: "It takes constant awareness to see yourself in relation to others, to see this moment in relation to a day or week or a century, to see this planet in the universe, and to keep rediscovering how important each moment is and, in a sense, how fleeting and almost inconsequential in the broad sweep of human history and divine plan."

My only quarrel would be with the word "inconsequential." A life such as my father's shows just how consequential one person's time on earth can be. We all lose when a voice such as his is silenced. Wisdom such as he offered has grown all too rare. It has even sometimes seemed to me that when my father died wisdom itself died with him, since the only thing obvious to me now is how much I miss him. And yet he himself would have been the first to protest such a thought.

He would have pointed out that really nothing has changed: It is still true that people have more uniting them than dividing them, that no voice, least of all that of any child, can ever be ignored, and, most especially, that all that we do is towards a larger purpose.

These remain as obvious as they ever were, and obvious especially to us now even if they are still not obvious to all, because we had him to point them out to us.

ERNIE BOYER: A SELF-EFFACING LEADER

Mr. SIMON. Mr. President, several weeks ago I attended a memorial service for Dr. Ernie Boyer, a man who had dedicated most of his life to improving education and educational opportunities for all Americans. The memorial service was more of a celebration of who Ernie was and how many lives he touched than a farewell. Speakers included his son Ernest Boyer, Jr., Secretary of Education Riley, Senator EDWARD KENNEDY and the principal of a San Antonio elementary school Ernie nurtured along. None of us said it better than a fifth grader who had gotten to know Ernie Boyer, "You say you don't know who Dr. Boyer was? You never got to know him? Too Bad! You would have loved him."

I am submitting the remarks made by several of us at the service and hope my colleagues will take the time to read what Ernie Boyer meant to a lot of very different people.

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

REMARKS BY SENATOR PAUL SIMON

William Butler Yeats, the Irish poet and later an Irish Senator, in the mid 1920s wrote in a poem: "The best lack conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity." It sounds as if he is writing about today. But Yeats did not know Ernie Boyer.

His quiet demeanor, his ready smile and marvelous laughter, his soft response to a hostile question were not indications that he lacked solid conviction. He had backbone and vision and an understanding of humanity that combined to make him superbly effective. The Albany Times Union editorial tribute concluded with this accurate assessment: "He touched millions of ordinary lives and made them better."

The last time I talked to him by telephone, he spoke from a hospital bed, only I did not know it until after I read the story of his death. He was that kind of self-effacing human being.

While we knew each other for a period casually, I first got to really know him when President Carter appointed the Commission on Foreign Languages and International Education, headed by Jim Perkins of this city. Most of us on the Commission did not know each other. Ernie suggested a few names, and the White House added some. It turned out to be one of those rare commissions where everyone worked, and worked together with a common purpose, on a small budget with limited time, and the end result changed the educational climate in our nation—slightly. But slight changes, like one or two votes in the Senate, can ultimately make a huge difference. Ernie Boyer played a key role in the work of that Commission.

His work as Chancellor of the State University of New York earned him what I am