

copy, that was one that also was requested by historian George Bancroft, and that has “that this Nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom.”

And then the last copy, the Bliss copy that is most often used, is considered to be the most authoritative copy of what was said at Gettysburg, because this is the only copy that Abraham Lincoln signed. He didn’t sign any of the others. He signed this one. And it went to Colonel Bliss, who was going to use it to auction and use the money to help wounded warriors.

This is a Nation under God. It had a new birth of freedom. And I hope and pray that God will give us wisdom to avoid destroying that freedom.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1345

JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY: HE SPEAKS TO US STILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAMALFA). Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Our topic today is a solemn one and yet a hopeful one. It is about the 35th President of the United States, John Fitzgerald Kennedy. He speaks to us still.

In November 1983, I submitted an op-ed piece to our local paper, the East Hartford Gazette, on President Kennedy. It is hard to believe that 30 years have passed since I submitted that document.

Most, including myself, and especially the Kennedy family, would rather not dwell on the events that transpired on November 22 and that ensuing weekend, but rather on the President’s birth, and celebrate his heroic service. Indeed, May 29 should be a national day of remembrance.

I am proud to say that the entire New England delegation has dropped in a resolution today calling upon Congress to recognize May 29, the birthday of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, as a day of remembrance.

President Kennedy, if we were alive, would be 96 years old. It is hard to imagine, even today, because of the image of that youthful, vigorous, witty, energetic man who we still see in TV clips and who speaks to us still. That beautiful man was taken from us in the summer of his years.

For my parents’ generation, December 7, 1941, as President Roosevelt appropriately put it, would be a day that would live in infamy. For my children and so many of this current generation, myself included, September 11, 2001, will be recalled as another day of infamy. For my generation, however, it remains November 22, 1963, the day the Nation stood still in shock and disbelief.

As a New Englander, the shot heard round the world on that day was not

the one fired at Lexington and Concord, but in Dallas, Texas. That shot cut down the 35th President of the United States, ended dreams of Camelot, and cut short the life of an American hero.

Almost everyone can recall where he or she was and what they were doing when they first heard the news of the assassination of John Kennedy. Fifty years after his death, the country still gropes for answers and searches to fill the void created by his departure.

It was sixth period in Mr. Desmond’s French class when Mrs. Bray’s voice, noticeably shaken, announced over the loud speaker at East Hartford High School that the President had been shot. An unsettling silence that was laden with anxiety fell over a perplexed and unbelieving class. Attempts to calm the class were fumbled by a visibly stunned teacher as he sought answers to a host of questions. Such an irrational act. It just couldn’t be.

In what seemed to be within minutes, Mrs. Bray’s tearful voice announced that the President of the United States had died. Hollow disillusionment and deep sadness engulfed not only the classroom, but the entire Nation. Despair was replaced by speculation concerning the perpetrator of such an act.

Walking home from school, conjecture of this heinous crime centered on the KGB and Castro as likely culprits, but even conjuring up these villains brought no resolve.

When I reached home, my mother, with Kleenex in hand, sat motionless next to the TV. She was glassy-eyed, shaken, and unable to comprehend the events of the day that saw the first President born in this century—and the first Catholic—struck down.

The family gathered around the TV and waited for Dad to come home. Surely, he could explain. When my father arrived, everything from the Russians to the Texans were mulled over, as he revealed various theories discussed in the shop at Pratt & Whitney Aircraft, but all with the same anguish and perplexity.

Thus began a family vigil with Walter Cronkite. But even he, the most trusted man in America, couldn’t explain to the viewing public the way it was on November 22, 1963.

It was a numbing experience for our family and the rest of the country as we sat in shock, traumatized, as the first real-time media account of the sixties unfolded in our living room. In a weekend that never seemed to end, we witnessed a Nation in mourning, the apprehension and then murder of Lee Harvey Oswald, and the subsequent arrest of crime figure Jack Ruby, all unveiling and unfolding themselves on TV. The plot only seemed to become more complicated.

The complexities of American society and the very fabric of our way of life in this Nation hit home like never before.

What I most recall, and what I believe most Americans recall, from that

weekend are the vivid scenes and images of that ordeal:

The distressed widow in a blood-stained pink suit, with all the dignity and strength and nobility that she could muster, being met at Andrews Air Force Base by Robert Kennedy; the long lines passing through the Rotunda to pay their last respects, including James Michael Fitzgerald from our hometown in East Hartford; the veiled face of Jacqueline Kennedy as she kneeled over the coffin, clutching the hand of her daughter, Caroline; the Kennedy brothers in silhouetted support of the First Lady and the family; those boots placed backwards in the stirrups of Black Jack, the horse following the caisson; the procession of world leaders en route to Arlington; a weekend of images culminating in John-John’s final salute to his dad.

I will never forget that weekend of tragedy, wrought with emotion and dream-crushing reality. Its impact and the impact of other events in that decade perhaps won’t be fully understood, though we are fixated on this.

Before I yield to our leader, to put it in perspective, I would say this. As William Manchester noted:

In November of 1963, among the living were Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., and 58,209 young men who would die in Vietnam over the next 9 years.

I yield to our leader, noting that, as we said at the outset, we prefer not to dwell on the events of the day but on the heroic nature of this President and what he meant to so many people—and continues to do so. He continues to speak to us, as does our leader, NANCY PELOSI, who knew him personally.

Ms. PELOSI. I thank the gentleman for calling this Special Order. Congress has adjourned for the Thanksgiving holiday, but I thank you for staying so that we can acknowledge and observe the 50th anniversary of a great loss for our country.

My colleague, Mr. LARSON, spoke so beautifully about what happened on November 22, 50 years ago, and how your mother reacted. You could have been speaking for every family in America.

Certainly, we took special ownership of President Kennedy, as the first Catholic President, but everyone who enjoys firsts understands that that pioneer action, that courage, that success that he had was not just about him being the first Catholic President, but embracing the people of our country more fully.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago, tragedy struck the heart of a Nation in Dallas, Texas. Fifty years ago, President Kennedy was taken from us, suddenly and unexpectedly, and the entire Nation was shaken and mourned.

As you said, we don’t want to dwell on that sad day. We want to spring from it and talk about what went before and what has come from the legacy of President John F. Kennedy.

Today, 50 years later, we rise on the floor of the House to pay tribute to

him as a leader on the anniversary of a tragedy, with a focus on many victories.

Here, in this Chamber, President Kennedy served. Can you imagine? I take great pride in the fact—all of us who serve here do—that President Kennedy began his Federal service in office in the House of Representatives. His grandfather, Honey Fitz, also served in the House. His grandnephews served in the House. So it has been a Kennedy family tradition to serve in the House of Representatives. He did so as a proud member of the Massachusetts delegation.

I rise to honor the life, legacy, inspiration, and achievements. I rise to salute an extraordinary leader for our country and the world.

I feel emotional about it, listening to Mr. LARSON describe the events of the day and the weekend that followed. The beautiful family dignity that Mrs. Kennedy and the children demonstrated have made a mark on our hearts. We are so pleased that, as the President said last night, as we are here, Caroline is drawing crowds in Tokyo.

As a student, I had the privilege of being there when President Kennedy was inaugurated. I had the privilege of meeting him as a student in high school in Baltimore, Maryland, when my father was mayor. I spent an evening with him because my mother couldn't attend a dinner. She said she couldn't attend, but it enabled me to attend in her place as the First Lady of Baltimore. So I had the privilege to be sitting with President Kennedy and to be dazzled by his presentation to the United Nations Association of Maryland Dinner honoring Jacob Blaustein, a leader in our community. My father was mayor, and I was very lucky.

□ 1400

So on other occasions during the course of his campaign, I had the privilege of being in service to that campaign in terms of, one time, we had a show called "Senator Kennedy Answers Your Questions." I was in college at the time, and I was one of the people answering the phone and hearing the questions. All of the questions were about seniors and health at the time. This was before Medicare, and it was an important issue for the President.

In any event, on that happy day on January 20, 1961, I had the privilege of being there in the freezing cold to hear the President's inaugural address. His stirring address still echoes in the hearts of those who were there and in all others who heard his call to serve. He appealed to the energy, the faith and the devotion that will light our country and all who serve it, and the glow from that fire can truly light the world.

What inspiring words. Perhaps the most significant of all, he ushered in a new era with a simple, yet powerful, call to start anew, declaring, "Let us begin."

So we began to answer the call to carry forward the torch to ask what we could do for our country. We began to get America moving again, and we began an era that would recast America's future, that would set us on course to address so many of the challenges facing us 50 years ago and still confronting our Nation today.

As I reference his "ask not what you can do for your country," everybody knows that that was an important part of the President's call to action in that day:

Citizens of America, ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.

It is memorized by students all over the world—when he delivered it, it was so stirring—but what I remember is the very next sentence.

In the very next sentence, he says:

To the citizens of the world, ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for mankind.

It was just so beautiful. No wonder one of his first actions would be to establish the Peace Corps, a renewed beginning in witnessing the creation of the Peace Corps—a group of Americans serving as ambassadors of goodwill worldwide. It was then started under the leadership of Sergeant Shriver's brother-in-law. To this day, each Peace Corps volunteer is a tribute to President Kennedy.

A few weeks ago, I had the privilege of being in Massachusetts under the auspices of the Kennedy Library, where we had observed the 50th anniversary of the President's signing of the Equal Pay Act into law—legislation he called a first step to ending the unconscionable practice of unequal pay, this agenda the President had imagined of equal pay for equal work for women in the workplace. He also established a commission on the status of women, headed by Eleanor Roosevelt. Its recommendations were: raise the minimum wage; equal pay for equal work; child care as an initiative, both public and with tax credits.

So forward thinking. So much of it is still left to be done 50 years later, but it is part of the vision. Again, with great women like Eleanor Roosevelt and Esther Peterson and others, they were with him as he signed the bill. Today, as I mentioned, that battle continues. If President Kennedy were here, he would certainly beckon us to do more to take the next step, which we have done.

When women succeed, America succeeds—with legislation to have respect for women's work in the workplace and to raise the minimum wage, as 62 percent of the people who get minimum wage are women. There is equal pay for equal work. There is paid sick leave and child care, which is an important part of President Obama's agenda.

As for the fight for equality even in the workplace, President Kennedy became the first President to call civil rights, above all, a moral issue, Mr. Speaker, he said, to remind us it was

long time past to keep the promise of freedom. So he put forward a civil rights bill to right the wrongs of history. In his name and in the wake of his death in the years that followed, under the leadership of President Lyndon Johnson, the Congress passed the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act. Yet, still today, the march to civil rights is not finished completely; and in the time of the present, it remains our moral obligation to preserve, expand, and strengthen voting rights. That is our challenge now in the House—equality. So let us begin.

There are so many other things that we witnessed. It is hard for people to imagine now how impossible it sounded when the President said: a new beginning and bold action and exploration and of the commitment and the promise to be the first to honor. He said, if we are to honor the vows of our Founders, we must be first, and therefore we intend to be first. It was a commitment and a promise to invest in science and innovation. When he said, in 10 years, we would send a man to the Moon and be back safely, it seemed impossible; but it happened even in a shorter period of time. He laid out his vision to do what was hard and unthinkable; but by the close of the 1960s, as we know, two American men walked on the Moon and returned safely home. So many other people were part of that success.

Our beginning ignited the fires of all kinds of innovation that our country has benefited from. Even though he wasn't there to see all of the legislation through, he had his vision; and he was an inspiration for others to get the job done.

So many times we all quote President Kennedy because he was so quotable and because he was so wise, and what he said resonates and is timeless. So, when I had the privilege of speaking at the groundbreaking of the Institute of Peace, I quoted what President Kennedy said at the American University in 1963.

He said:

The United States, as the world knows, will never start a war. We do not want a war. We do not now expect a war. This generation of Americans has already more than enough of war and hate and oppression.

He went on to say:

We shall be prepared if others wish it; we shall be alert to try to stop it; but we shall also do our part to build a world of peace where the weak are safe and the strong are just.

So remarkable.

Again, it would take hours for us to truly mention all of the accomplishments—the Moon shot and all the things about the Test Ban Treaty. The list goes on and on.

The fact is that a person came into the life of America from a family—and it is hard to imagine any other family in America that has had or who has made as great a contribution to the well-being of our country as the Kennedy Family, starting even with Rose Kennedy's father, Honey Fitz, but then

coming through to even now the service in the Congress of JOE KENNEDY, a grandnephew of the President. We also had the privilege here of serving with Patrick Kennedy.

So I will end where I began, in taking pride in the fact of President Kennedy's association with this House of Representatives, of this people's House, and to say that I am so happy that I had the opportunity to see him so many times. I will just close with one thought.

We were at the convention in Los Angeles. I was with my parents. We went to a restaurant after the President's speech at the stadium. It was the first time a President had accepted the nomination at a stadium. There were tens of thousands of people there. The speech was fabulous and great, and we went to this restaurant called Romanoff's because I said to my father and mother that I wanted to go to a Los Angeles-type restaurant. It turned out to be a Los Angeles-type in that it was very expensive. It was more expensive for shrimp cocktail than it would have been in Baltimore, Maryland, where we were from.

So my father said, How did you find this place? This is the most expensive restaurant I have ever been in.

I said, That is probably true, but it is an experience.

It costs so much more for a shrimp cocktail here than in Baltimore, Maryland; and he goes on and on.

In another few minutes, the doors of the restaurant open, and in comes President Kennedy from the speech. He came right over to the table.

To my father, Thomas D'Alessandro, he asked, Tommy, how did you like my speech?

Of course, my father told him, and then he asked me how I liked his speech. Imagine that. Then he went on with his entourage to have his celebratory dinner.

After that, price was no object as to the cost of the restaurant. The prices kept coming down in my father's view.

Again, I was lucky many different times to have the opportunity to have some conversation with the President. So, when that horrible thing happened that day for our country, everybody took it very personally.

Perhaps part of his legacy is the sacrifice that he made for our country—the inspiration that was intensified by that sacrifice. May we always, always remember it; and may we always remember what he said, that the glow from that fire can truly light the world.

May God bless the memory of President John F. Kennedy and his family. May we draw strength from his legacy and his vision. May God always bless the country he loved and led—the United States of America—and all who serve it.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. LARSON again for calling this Special Order. I am honored to be here with him and with our distinguished whip, Mr. HOYER.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. I thank the leader.

I would point out, in history there are often iconic pictures. One has to wonder in looking at the pictures that grace museums across this country: That man who set a torch to be passed to another generation, could he have known when he was shaking Bill Clinton's hand that he would be a future President of the United States? Could he have known when he met with Tommy D'Alessandro's daughter that she would be the first woman Speaker of the House?

That was the inspiration of Kennedy, who touched so many people, and our leaders NANCY PELOSI and STENY HOYER typify a generation drawn into public service not only because of the inspiration but because of the calling of President Kennedy to public service. The minority whip, STENY HOYER.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman from Connecticut not only for taking this Special Order but for the speech that he gave as we led into this Special Order about that wrenching day in November, the 22nd of November 1963, as to where he was and the memory he had.

Now, I thank the leader who has recalled so well what John Kennedy meant to our generation.

In my view, every generation of Americans has had a figure to whom it looked for guidance, for inspiration. However, few generations have had such a compelling figure as John Fitzgerald Kennedy was to my generation.

John Kennedy was the first President for whom I voted. I turned 21 in 1960, and I had the opportunity to vote for him in November. It was a controversial vote for some who thought that a young Catholic or, frankly, an old Catholic, should not be President of the United States for, after all, he would have to answer to the Pope. John Kennedy made it clear that he would answer to the American people and to his conscience, and that is what he did.

□ 1415

Mr. Speaker, all of us have memories, and I will refer to at least two.

I was a student at the University of Maryland in 1959. It was the spring of 1959, and there was to be a convocation, as there was every spring, with a major speaker being invited to give an address. It was to be given at Cole Field House, which was then the athletic field house for the University of Maryland. It still exists, but we now have another basketball center called Comcast Center.

Classes got out at 10:50 that morning, and I left class with no intention, frankly, of going to hear the speaker. I went to walk up the hill leading both to the student union and to Cole Field House. I was going to go to the student union, have lunch, talk to my friends, and then resume classes at 1:00.

But as I was walking up, there was a car driving up relatively slowly, there

was some traffic, and I saw a 1958 Pontiac convertible. Mr. LARSON will recall that was a cool car. That caught my attention. But as I looked at the car, I then saw the person riding in that car. It was a warm day, the top was down, and I recognized the individual in that car as the speaker who was going to address us in the convocation. I said, that's really neat. Now, remember, I am 19 years of age. I said, I'm going to go hear him speak, and so I did go hear him speak.

He talked that day, as I am sure he did hundreds of other days in thousands of campuses throughout not only this country, but around the world before his death. He talked about young people getting involved in politics, not necessarily running for office, but getting involved in the politics of their community, in making a difference in their community, in taking their talents, and as Leader PELOSI has said, and as he enunciated in his inaugural address, bring their energy, faith, and devotion to the endeavor of making their democracy and their country better.

I listened to that speech. I walked out of the Cole Field House and the next week I changed my major from a business major to a political science major, decided I would go to law school and run for office.

It was in many ways a Damascus Road experience for me, a life-changing experience for me. Seven years after I heard Kennedy encourage young people, not just STENY HOYER—he never knew who STENY HOYER was—but encouraged people to get involved, 7 years later, 5 months out of Georgetown Law School, I was honored by some of the people of Prince George's County to be elected to the Maryland State Senate.

After, of course, I heard him speak on the campus of the University of Maryland in 1959, I worked in his campaign, never saw him, shook his hand once when he was at Ritchie Coliseum coming out of the coliseum.

I have heard two more inspirational speeches in my lifetime. One was, of course, the speech that is quoted so often, as Leader PELOSI said, the inaugural address, delivered on a very cold, snowy January day in 1961, in which he observed that the torch had been passed to a new generation born in this century—meaning the last—and saying that they had been tested by hard and bitter peace, but that that generation was proud of their ancient heritage and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this Nation has always been committed and to which he said we were committed today here and around the world.

What a proud observation that was of America's role in the world, then and now, a Nation willing to expend its treasure and its commitment of life and liberty to the defense of both here and around the world.

John Kennedy was an inspiration to my generation, but John Kennedy was

an inspiration to all generations in America. John Kennedy called us to service. John Kennedy observed that although the challenges in front of us were hard, that America could meet them, overcome them, and be a greater country.

I would suggest to all of us that we need that same kind of inspiration today. America is faced with challenges today. America is faced with division today. This body is faced with division today.

It is easy to forget, as we remember John Fitzgerald Kennedy, how close an election it was between Richard Nixon and John Fitzgerald Kennedy. Less, I believe, as I recall, than 200,000 votes separated them after millions of votes were cast. John Kennedy was declared the President of the United States, and our Nation remained divided.

That was the generation of the civil rights movement. That was the generation of Martin Luther King, of Rosa Parks, of so many other heroes of the civil rights movement, and our colleague JOHN LEWIS, the boy from Troy.

As we remember the assassination of John Kennedy, and in remembering that, like JOHN LARSON of Connecticut, I remember where I was. I had just delivered some papers to the United States Senator from Maryland for whom I was working while going to Georgetown Law School. And, JOHN, I came out the door leading from the Chamber and was walking down the steps and a Capitol Policeman said, did you hear? I said, did I hear what? The President has been shot. The President was my hero, and he had been shot.

Like almost every American, I walked down those steps in somewhat of a daze, walked over to the Russell Senate Office Building and sat down, as almost every American was doing that very moment, and watched the television reporting on the status of our President. It did not take long for them to report that we had lost him, that he had died, that the shot fired had been fatal.

I don't know how many people—I presume there are certainly some—who have cried for 96 hours. I did that; America did that. America had lost some degree, perhaps, of its innocence. America had been rendered vulnerable. America had lost its hero.

Edward Kennedy, the Senator, after Robert Kennedy was shot, spoke at his funeral and he said:

My brother need not be idealized in death, or enlarged in death beyond that which he was in life.

But it is extraordinarily difficult not to idealize John Fitzgerald Kennedy as we remember him, as we remember the extraordinary trauma we experienced as he was killed.

His inaugural address addressed not only the American people, but freedom-loving people throughout the world, people seeking opportunity, people seeking liberty, people seeking justice. And the world responded.

When he went to Berlin, those in Berlin, then behind the Iron Curtain, knew

that they had a kindred soul in John Fitzgerald Kennedy. When he said: "Ich bin ein Berliner," they believed him. They believed that he was committed to their freedom as much as he was committed to the freedom of those he served in America.

John Kennedy made an extraordinary difference. His term was cut short by the assassin's bullet. The promise that was John Kennedy was not realized; but John Kennedy's impact on America, on young people, was profound.

I remember, JOHN—and I think you were here—when we served with Jack Kemp, a Republican, who would repeatedly in committee and on this floor cite John Kennedy as an inspiration. His legacy has not only been in terms of what he did and what he said, but his legacy remains in those he inspired to serve, in those who repaired to the high ideals that he put before us, this Congress, this country, and the world.

John Kennedy made a difference. We remember, we remember that he died tragically. But what we really remember is the contribution he made while he lived, however short that life was.

I thank the gentleman for allowing us to remember this day the loss we sustained on November 22, 1963.

SPECIAL ORDER ON JFK ANNIVERSARY

Mr. Speaker, the first time I saw John Fitzgerald Kennedy, I was an undergraduate student at the University of Maryland.

He was a striking young senator making an improbable run for the Presidency, but what caught my eye was the stylish car carrying him through College Park.

I was young, and my journey into public service had not yet had its first steps.

I was impressed by that car, and I thought to myself—I better see what this man is all about.

So I followed it and listened to Senator Kennedy speak at a convocation speech on campus—a speech that changed the course of my life.

John F. Kennedy was a President who changed the course of our Nation.

He inspired so many young people like me to step up and pursue public service through civic engagement and programs like the Peace Corps.

He made a firm stand for freedom in the face of Soviet Communism and the terror it had imposed on so many nations.

At the same time, he espoused the enduring causes of peace, understanding, and disarmament.

At home he called on our people to view American citizenship not as a right but as a responsibility we have to one another.

And he opened our eyes to a new frontier ready to be conquered—a frontier of science and discovery. His legacy is now our history.

And although it was not easily achieved, President Kennedy would have been the first to remind us that nothing great comes without a measure of constructive hardship.

I will never forget that moment on campus when I followed his car as it led me on the first steps in my journey of service.

And, like most Americans who were alive on November 22, 1963, I will never forget the moment when President Kennedy's life of service came to a sudden and tragic end.

Tomorrow, we mark the fiftieth anniversary of that sad day in Dallas.

But let us remember John F. Kennedy for how he lived, not how he died.

Let us remember his heroism in the Pacific in World War II, saving the lives of those with whom he served so courageously in war.

Let us remember his ability to promote political courage not only by writing about it but by living it.

Let us remember his devotion to his family—a great family that continues to serve our Nation in so many ways, including in this House.

And let us remember the love of country and public service he instilled in his children from a young age—which we saw embodied just days ago as his daughter, Caroline, presented her credentials as our new Ambassador to Japan.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. I thank our leader, and I thank him for his poignancy. I know how much it means to people listening to have a glimpse into history as it unfolded, and also the real-life experience of our great leader and President.

David Brinkley described that moment. He said that the assassination was beyond understanding:

The events of those days don't fit, you can't place them anywhere, they don't go in the intellectual luggage of the time. It was too big, too sudden, too overwhelming, and it meant too much. It has to be separate and apart.

But we want to, as both our leaders have said, remember this President in the way that we viewed him in his heroic importance to this country and to generations then and now. Jacqueline Kennedy—as Ralph Martin, her biographer, said—talked about a person who had written to her about the President, and she said someone who had loved the President, but had never known him, wrote to me this past winter that:

The hero comes when he is needed. When our belief gets pale and weak, there comes a man out of that need who is shining—and everyone living reflects a little of that light—and stores up some against the time when he is gone.

"So now he is a legend," Mrs. Kennedy would conclude, "when he would have preferred to be a man."

And so it has been—Steinbeck said of Kennedy:

This man who was the best of his people and who by his life and death, gave back the best of them for their own.

□ 1430

Arthur O'Shaughnessy, the great Irish poet, said:

For each age there is a dream that is dying and one that is coming to birth.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy embodied dreams that were coming to birth and, through his Presidency, ushered in the future dreams of this century and the next.

Heroes. Heroes are those people we admire for their accomplishments, their character, and their ability to inspire. They are often an extension of what we would like to be. If John Kennedy had never been President of the

United States, he would still have been a bona fide hero. His war record alone was heroic, his Pulitzer Prize admirable, and when you combine that with his personality, wit, and intelligence, you have a man to emulate and respect.

It is as President, however, that we remember John Kennedy. And in that capacity, his greatness came from being the cog, the catalyst, the spark that ignited the tremendous latent strength of our great Nation. Summoning the Nation like no other President before him, Kennedy established goals for excellence and raised the consciousness of the American people to a level of dignity benefiting a Nation embarking on building a positive future not just for the Nation, but for mankind.

Some would say John Kennedy was a tragic hero, much like the tragic heroes of Greek literature and Shakespearean plays. Kennedy was neither Achilles nor Hamlet. He was a man who, through sheer force of personality and conviction, motivated and excited people. He moved a Nation. What he shares with ancient heroes was the great promise of youth, cut short by death before that promise could be fulfilled.

James Reston wrote:

The tragedy of John Fitzgerald Kennedy was greater than the accomplishment, but in the end tragedy enhances the accomplishment and revives hope.

What died in Dallas on November 22 was promise, the hallmark of both the Kennedy administration and the man.

"It's sad to see what happened in this country," Ted Sorenson has commented.

It's as if people don't want to believe in anything today. Sometimes they even turn against John Kennedy because perhaps he was the last man they believed in.

Sorenson's remarks are well taken. I share his sadness and tire of cynics who seek only to tear down, discredit, destroy, and, in general, believe in nothing. I do not share, and I am sure most don't, an untainted or distorted view of John Kennedy. For whatever his human foibles and shortcomings may have been, his rhetoric of purpose, his goals for this Nation, are still worth believing in and aspiring towards.

Others will say that Kennedy had a superficial charisma, hyped by his ability to manipulate the media. Ralph Martin, a biographer of Kennedy, notes:

John Kennedy had more than charisma. Sports figures have charisma. He had more than the magnetic attraction of a movie star. What Kennedy had was real. Magic.

He clearly was charismatic. He clearly was magnetic. He was poetic. But above all else, the magic that he had was real. John Kennedy's appeal was not limited to this country, it was worldwide, as STENY HOYER pointed out. Throngs gathered throughout the world not to chant anti-American slogans or to protest. They came to touch,

to hear, to see the man who represented the hope of the free world. One has only to recall the vivid scenes in Berlin to realize there was a special magic about John Kennedy. The excitement was real.

John Kennedy struck a chord in all of us. Republican Senator Hugh Scott's wife asked:

Why are you crying? You didn't have that much admiration for him.

To which he said:

I am not crying for him. I am crying for the American people.

What John Kennedy meant to America is lodged deeply in our hearts and minds. He opened the door through his challenge and beckoned the people to a greater future, a new frontier. He was our voice. History will probably bear out that a thousand days was too short a time to judge the greatness of Kennedy as a President, but it will also bear out what Robert Kennedy said of his brother's legacy:

The essence of the Kennedy legacy is a willingness to try and to dare and to change, to hope for the uncertain and risk the unknown.

It is in that context that the civil rights movement, the Bay of Pigs, the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, the Cuban missile crisis, the space race, and other actions of his administration will be judged, with the constant footnote to that ancient thief—time.

"It was all too brief," Ted Kennedy said of his brother's era.

Those thousand days are like an evening gone. But they are not forgotten. You can recall those years of grace, that time of hope. The spark still glows. The journey never ends. This dream shall never die.

It is the end of the story of Camelot that takes on significance, and that Jacqueline Kennedy would speak so fondly of when she would talk of her husband. It was the point when King Arthur tells of his legends to a young boy, so they would still remember them even if he were killed in battle.

Fifty years have passed and the life and death of John Fitzgerald Kennedy still holds us captive. It is the topic of every magazine, of every news story, on every television show. But we always need to make sure that we separate the myth from the man. John Kennedy was not a myth. He was a real man with hopes and fears and doubts, and the same human frailties and many disabilities that we never even knew about. His time in office was too short to objectively evaluate his long-term objectives and goals, but we can never forget him or let him go.

Chris Matthews, in his recent book, talks about a conversation that he had with Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and he recalled that Moynihan said to him, "We've never gotten over it." And looking at Matthews, he said, as Chris points out with generous appreciation, "You've never gotten over it."

Matthews said:

I saw it as a kind of benediction, an acceptance into something warm and Irish and splendid, a knighthood of the soulful.

We have never gotten over it.

John Kennedy is a hero because of the message he brought, the hope and the dreams he inspired. He set a standard by which all successive Presidents are measured. He united the country on the great issues of the day, guided the Nation through crisis by calling on the American people to uplift their expectations, their goals, and their fellow man. It wasn't hollow rhetoric or dazzling showmanship; it was sincere and compelling belief in the purpose of this country and its people.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy is a hero for all time and for those who believe in the promise of America because he elevated what it means to serve in government on behalf of the people. He made public service, whether it be elective office, serving as a House clerk, or in the Peace Corps noble and honorable pursuits. He made poetry, literature, and the arts in general a part of the fabric of our everyday life, and he did it all with the ease, grace, wit, humor, and understated elegance that exuded the confidence of the Nation he led and further ennobled his countrymen.

For those who listen, he speaks to us still.

This Thanksgiving as we pause, let us remember and be grateful for the great gift he gave us for that one bright, shining moment that there came the hero. And let us use that light to enlighten not only this Chamber but the world. And as President Kennedy would say so often, then let us go forward to lead the land we love, asking God's blessing, but knowing here on Earth His work is our own.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO BOARD OF VISITORS TO UNITED STATES MERCHANT MARINE ACADEMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to 46 U.S.C. 51312(b), and the order of the House of January 3, 2013, of the following Member on the part of the House to the Board of Visitors to the United States Merchant Marine Academy:

Mr. KING, New York

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO NATIONAL HISTORICAL PUBLICATION AND RECORDS COMMISSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to 44 U.S.C. 2501, and the order of the House of January 3, 2013, of the following Member on the part of the House to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission:

Mr. BARR, Kentucky

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to: