

Dirksen entered Walter Reed Hospital on Sunday, August 31, to ready himself for the operation two days later. He took with him a briefcase loaded with work, the contents of which were transferred to The Dirksen Congressional Center several years after his death. These documents show the amazing breadth of his interests and the substantial burden of his office.

The briefcase contained notes for upcoming speeches, including one in his own handwriting entitled, "God, Country, and Grandchildren: Soliloquy with Grandchildren" in which he mused about the legacy his generation would leave and harkened back to the lives his parents had led in Pekin. He made notes concerning the congressional session about to end. Dirksen reviewed letters from constituents, information about pending legislation, requests for appearances, a plea from Illinois Governor Richard B. Ogilvie to revise the federal revenue-sharing calculation, letters about federal jobs, an early draft of what was called the "Everett McKinley Dirksen Library Project," and much, much more.

On Tuesday morning, September 2, at 8:45 a.m., Colonel Alan R. Hopeman and a team of Army surgeons began to operate. The spot on Dirksen's lung could not be readily examined without surgery, but, in surgical terms, it was in an almost ideal position, close to the periphery of his chest, so that surgeons could remove it with only a small incision. They did so without difficulty. The tumor, which had grown to an inch in diameter, proved to be malignant.

As they had planned on this eventuality, the surgeons took the next step of removing the entire upper lobe of Dirksen's right lung. What had begun as a relatively simple operation became major surgery consuming three hours. The doctors found no evidence the cancer had spread, however.

Dirksen's strong constitution and vigor brought him through the procedure with flying colors, and his recuperation was rapid. Mrs. Dirksen and their daughter, Joy, and son-in-law, Tennessee Senator Howard H. Baker, Jr., found him alert and cheerful when they were first allowed to see him on Wednesday, September 3. The next day, however, Dirksen complained of pain and became confused and restless, perhaps the result of a minor stroke, insufficient oxygen, or even withdrawal symptoms from cigarettes (Dirksen complained to his doctors and his son-in-law about not being able to smoke). A second procedure became necessary to replace the tube draining his lung.

Senator Dirksen suffered a crisis that evening, and it wasn't until 8:00 Saturday morning, September 6, that his doctors stabilized him. This episode probably caused the bronchopneumonia that soon developed. He rallied, though, even sitting up in bed to eat his meals. He spent a restful night and ate a good breakfast with Louella. He appeared to be past the immediate crisis of a post-operation heart failure and was already making plans to resume a work schedule. He even took a few minutes to go over the papers in his briefcase. For example, a Seattle radio station had requested a tape about the marigold to which Dirksen replied with this hand-written note:

Dear Day—Just now I'm languishing in a hospital as a result of surgery. An op'g [operating] room no match for my marigold gardens. Guess the tape must wait. Sorry.

The doctors assured Senator Baker that Dirksen was well on the road to recovery and that Baker could travel to California to join President Richard Nixon. The optimism proved premature.

Abruptly at 2:51 that afternoon, Sunday, September 7, Dirksen collapsed and stopped breathing. His heart, which had enlarged

over the years to twice-normal size as the result of emphysema, just quit. The desk sergeant at the Forest Glen section of the hospital, Roger Brooks, received an urgent call from the main hospital summoning a surgeon. Brooks took a police cruiser to pick up a Col. Blake for the trip to Dirksen's room. Army doctors were already at his side, massaging his chest, trying to restart his heart. They gave him sodium bicarbonate, calcium, and other medicines. They used a defibrillator to try to shock his heart into action. The doctors worked so vigorously that they cracked five of his ribs. But Dirksen did not respond. At 4:52 p.m., the doctors pronounced him dead at age 73. Louella and Joy were with him at the end. Fifty years ago.

Mourning for the Senator was national and of a personal quality, particularly among his colleagues in Congress and his friends in Pekin. His body lay in state under the great dome of the Capitol, an honor accorded to only three members of the Senate before him.

In his eulogy to the fallen leader, President Nixon recalled remarks Daniel Webster had made more than a century before in testimony to a political opponent: "Our great men are the common property of the country." That described Dirksen well. His public service spanned an era of enormous change, and he played a vital part in that change. Through six presidencies, as Nixon put it, "Everett Dirksen has had a hand in shaping almost every important law that affects our lives," and while he never became president, "his impact and influence on the Nation was greater than that of most Presidents in our history."

Air Force One brought Dirksen home on Thursday, September 11. Pekin deserves much of the credit for Dirksen's influence on the national stage. The senator knew that, and he said so on a return visit to his hometown in 1961:

After long absences enforced by the duties of office in Washington, there always comes back to me some lines from that poem which I learned long ago, "Breathes there a man with soul so dead, who never to himself has said, this is my own, my native land." This is my own, my native land, my native city, where the family taproot went deep many generations ago, and it will ever be so, no matter what tasks life may assign me. All the major decisions in my life have been made here . . .

The inspiration which I received here from a saintly mother, a devoted family, steadfast friends, the constant faith of teachers who taught me, the inspiration I found here in church, and the atmosphere of a quiet and will ordered community were the forces which helped to fashion those decisions, and for these I shall be always and eternally grateful . . .

An estimated 80,000 people watched the funeral procession proceed the 15 miles from the Peoria airport, south on Route 24, through Pekin on Route 9, to the Glendale Memorial Gardens on the east side of town where more than 6,000 stood in waiting. Among the dignitaries accompanying the procession were Vice President Spiro Agnew, five members of President Nixon's cabinet, 42 U.S. senators, and 27 U.S. representatives. Dozens of state officials joined them, as did over 200 members of the press.

The 1:00 p.m. ceremony itself was brief, lasting only 15 minutes. Six pallbearers, representing the armed forces, carried the casket to the gravesite. The Rev. Edward L.R. Elson, chaplain of the Senate and pastor of the National Presbyterian Church in Washington DC, conducted the service. The Rev. Ralph Cordes, pastor of Pekin's Second Reformed Church, and the Rev. Charles

Rechard, pastor of Woodland Presbyterian Church in New Orleans and a friend of the Baker family, also delivered prayers. Members of the Pekin American Legion post color guard participated in the ceremony, too, along with the honor guard and the Chanute Air Force band. Lt. Gen. Vernon P. Mock, commanding general of the Fifth Army, presented the American flag, which had been draped over the casket, to Mrs. Dirksen.

When the ceremony ended, mourners passed by the casket. One of the first was Senator Margaret Chase Smith of Maine, who placed a spray of marigolds, Dirksen's favorite flower, on the casket. The two of them had enjoyed a friendly rivalry over the years to name the national floral emblem—she a proponent of the rose.

The Rev. Elson had ended his eulogy fittingly with these words, "The last march has ended. A mighty man of God has answered his last roll call. His battles are all fought, his victories all won."

#### IN HONOR OF DISTINGUISHED WWII VETERAN JOHN GATTI

**HON. LIZ CHENEY**

OF WYOMING

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 6, 2019*

Ms. CHENEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and honor Rock Springs resident, and distinguished WWII veteran, John Gatti on his 100th birthday.

Born August 29, 1919, John has served his country with honor in WWII as a member of the 325th Glider Infantry, 101st Airborne Division. When he returned to Wyoming after the war, he worked as miner for Union Pacific Coal, and then went on to work for Mountain Fuel Supply Company for twenty-eight years. As he prepares to turn 100, John is still the avid hunter and fisherman he has been his whole life. Loved by his family, and revered by his community, John represents the very best that our country has to offer.

Again, Madam Speaker, I extend my congratulations to John Gatti on celebrating his 100th birthday and a heartfelt thank you for his service to our country.

#### CONGRATULATING THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF JO DAVIESS COUNTY FOR WINNING THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY'S WATER QUALITY CHALLENGE

**HON. CHERI BUSTOS**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 6, 2019*

Mrs. BUSTOS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the League of Women Voters of Jo Daviess County for winning the Water Quality Challenge put on by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. The League of Women Voters won this challenge by showing how an edge-of-field sensor system could support farmers in reducing nitrogen loss from their fields.

The League of Women Voters worked to combat one of the most challenging water quality problems in our nation. In doing so, they identified creative ways to use low-cost

tools to understand our resources and better advise nutrient management decisions. The installed sensors provide real-time data to best inform and guide farm-scale management decisions. They showed innovation, passion, and a drive to help our environment. Participation in this challenge strengthened the connections between scientists, advocates, and farmers in Jo Daviess County and Northwest Illinois. The prize will be used to continue to build a model of cooperative problem-solving and improve water quality in the Driftless Area of Northwest Illinois.

It is because of community leaders such as the League of Women Voters of Illinois that I am especially proud to serve Illinois' 17th Congressional District. Madam Speaker, I would like to again formally congratulate the Illinois Leagues of Women Voters on their initiative in the Water Quality Challenge put on by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

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RECOGNIZING DOROTHY LOUISE  
STRONG JOHNSON

**HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON**

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 6, 2019*

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask the House of Representatives to join me in recognizing the life and work of Dorothy Louise Strong Johnson on the occasion of her 100th birthday.

Dorothy Louise Strong Johnson, daughter of Willie M. Strong and Mary Lucilla Smith

Strong, moved to the District of Columbia from North Carolina on July 15, 1937. Her parents put her on a Seaboard Air Line Railroad coach bound for Union Station to live with her Aunt, Nora Roxanne, on 32 K Street NW.

Mrs. Johnson was born in Newport News, Virginia but spent her childhood in Hamlet, North Carolina. In school, she was known as an inquisitive student and an active member of the girls' basketball team. During her last year of high school, Mrs. Johnson was unable to return to school until November. Instead, she picked cotton and did other jobs so that she could save money. Not only did she pick cotton in the Hamlet area, she picked cotton as far away as Bennettsville and McColl in South Carolina.

After moving to D.C., Mrs. Johnson worked for the United States Bureau of Printing and Engraving from 1942 until 1974. She retired as an assistant supervisor printing money for the Department of the Treasury. During her tenure, she also served as an acting supervisor.

Mrs. Johnson married Ivory Johnson, and they had eight children (Dorothy, Gwendolyn, Reginald, Wanda, William, Dora, Wesley and Sheldon). She raised them mostly as a single parent. All of her children finished high school, some attended and completed college, three served in the United States Army and all were employed in civil service occupations. During Mrs. Johnson's residency in D.C., she maintained homes in Northwest, Northeast and Southeast. She is still the owner of two of these homes.

When Mrs. Johnson arrived in D.C., her aunt introduced her to the members of the 10th Street Missionary Baptist Church. After worshipping with this congregation, Mrs. Johnson joined and became an active member. Her activism includes being a member of the Prayer Band, serving as a Sunday School teacher, engaging with others in Bible study at her home and serving as an outreach evangelist. She engaged with others in the North Carolina Club, and in later years, was named a Mother of the Church. Upon the death of the church's pastor, she served as the vice chairman of the search committee, which invited the Reverend A. Michael Charles Durant to the pulpit as its present leader. Mrs. Johnson is highly respected for her Christian walk and passion. She remains supportive of the ministries at the 10th Street Missionary Baptist Church.

For many decades, Mrs. Johnson volunteered at the Washington, DC VA Medical Center every Monday. As a mother of three veterans, she was fully aware of the needs of these men and women. When she was not serving coffee, she could be found engaged in conversation. In her words, "They just needed someone to talk with and know that someone cared."

Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life and work of Dorothy Louise Strong Johnson on the occasion of her 100th birthday. We recognize her for the profound impact her life has had on others and for the love and affection she generously shares.