

RECEPTION FOR VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY

AT THE ROCHESTER CLUB: MAY 3, 1966

Sponsored by The New York State
President's Club

Co-Hosts: C. Peter McColough
James P. Wilmot, Sr.

Mr. McColough: First of all I'd like to thank all of you for coming tonight to be with us. I know in the room tonight we have many members of the President's Club who have been members for several years; and we have some new people that we hope this year will become members. Also, for all of us here in the room and speaking as co-host with Jimmy Wilmot, it's a great honor and a privilege to have with us the Vice President of the United States. This is only the second time, I think, that the Vice President has visited the City of Rochester... and I'm sure that the Vice President being a native and a long-time resident of Minnesota normally thinks that Rochester is in Minnesota. But as I look around and see some of the people who have been working on the President's Club financial drive this year... I think that after this is over, with the dinner at New York in June, that they may be thinking of Rochester, Minnesota also--for a rest and a cure at the Mayo Clinic. I would like to introduce some of the distinguished visitors that we have with us today... and first is the Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, Mr. John Bailey of Connecticut. And there is a very good friend of mine, the Executive Director and Acting Treasurer of the National Committee, Mr. Cliff Carter. We also have another man -- a very good friend of mine who wears two hats -- who happens to be president of a very successful motion picture company, United Artists. And he's also the Chairman of the National Democratic Finance Committee. I would like to have Mr. Arthur B. Krim come up and say a few words to us about the President's Club... its history and its objectives.

(More)

Reception at the Rochester Club/2

Mr. Krim: Thank you Peter, and Jim Wilmot, for arranging this wonderful gathering here today. Since we had four or five Presidential affairs over the past years, I'm happy to say that by now I have many friends in this room and I'm delighted to be able to greet you here again and to welcome so many new faces who I hope will join us in what we are trying to accomplish. I wonder if it wouldn't be a little more comfortable if some of you came up a little closer to make it a little easier for me and the Vice President to talk with you, informally. Let me tell you something about the need which brings us here. This is not a fund raising meeting. However, since this will be the only opportunity that I will have to be with you before the fund raising does begin, I want to tell you what our problem is. It's a need which is of first importance to our President and therefore I think it becomes of first importance to all of us here in this room. The President, as head of the political party, has several serious problems confronting him at the moment. One is that there's still a debt left over from the campaign of 1964. Another is that he has the obligation during his own administration and to prepare for future administrations to keep alive the machinery of the Democratic Party. A third is his need in this year 1966 for the wherewithal to help elect a Congress which will give him the same kind of support in the last two years of his first term as he had in the first two years. I think I can tell you without exaggeration that this is -- in the mind of the President -- one of the most important problems which confronts him.

(More)

Reception at the Rochester Club/3

The debt in 1964 was not incurred for himself personally, but in a very real sense for all of us. . . because in incurring it he not only did so for his own election but also to secure the election of a Congress which has permitted him to lead a legislative program unparalleled in our history that I'm sure we all here strongly support. And the same is true of the Congressional support program which is part of his need today. I'm not going to go into the details. But let me say that he has a need in the year 1966 for some 5 million dollars, if we are to eliminate from his list of problems this one with which he is so preoccupied. There are many plans that we have for raising funds around the country, but there is only one principal source of resolving this problem and that's the President's Club activity around the country. Now the President -- and all of us, I'm sure -- would be much happier if he did not have to devote time to this particular problem. But this millennium has not been reached. The President has agreed to make four appearances this year outside of Washington to help resolve this 5 million dollar problem. However, we have no real chance to solve the problem -- nor will we be making fullest use of the President's time and energies -- unless these appearances all are most successful events and achieve at least \$3 1/2 million out of the \$5 million that we're trying to procure for the President this year. We had the first meeting of the President's Club in Houston last week, and I'm happy to say that meeting, which was so successful, solved 1/5 of the problem; which is to say something over 1 million dollars was raised at Houston. I wish you had

(More)

Reception at the Rochester Club/4

all been there to hear the President's impassioned statement of what support in the President's Club means to him personally. And I hope that you will be at the event in New York on June 11th, which is another of the appearances that he will make where you will have an opportunity to hear him repeat that plea and statement. The President is also going to appear in Chicago and Los Angeles, but if we're going to achieve our target we must have 1,000 memberships in the President's Club here in New York State to make a success of the event on June 11th. We had a luncheon today that the Vice President addressed in New York. We've had other meetings and at this moment we already have commitments in excess of \$750,000 from downstate New York. Whether or not we go over the top is going to depend on the kind of support we can have here in upstate New York. I don't think I have to tell about half the people in this room what the President's Club has been and is striving to be. . . . But for the benefit of the other half let me say that the President has been aggressively partial to the idea that the President's Club should not be just a fund-raising club. The President's Club, to the President, is a means whereby the Administration can come to better know its supporters around the country, and vice versa. And opportunities are created through the President's Club in which many of you here have participated -- for meeting not only the President but the top members of his Administration, symbolized, I might say, by the presence of the Vice President here today. And I do hope that those of you who have not been a part of this effort will become a part of it and learn to know more about the people in whose hands your destiny is now entrusted

(More)

and have an opportunity for healthy exchanges of viewpoint with them. This is not the day or the time in which anybody is going to be asked to make an expression of support. But when that time comes I hope that all of you in the room will think seriously about joining in this effort. I should say that everything that is done through the President's Club is done for the President directly. As a result -- and because of the kind of Administration our President has led these past few years -- this is not just a Democratic Party organ. There are many members of the President's Club who have traditionally been Republican but who are supporters of the President. And, in fact, our chairman in New York downstate this year has been a life-long Republican: that's Robert Lehman. But he has been working assiduously for the President these past few months because he believes that he is indeed a President of all of the people. And of course today we have the opportunity to welcome the great Vice President, who is also a Vice President of all of the people. I do hope that in the few weeks which elapse between now and June 11th -- the date of our great ball in New York which will be attended by the President and the first lady-- that upstate New York will do its part. Thank you very much.

Mr. McColough: Thank you very much, Arthur. I think that we can promise you from upstate that we'll do our part as we have in the past. I'm not going to speak about details tonight but we will be following up over the next several weeks to try to encourage you to support this function in New York on June 11th.

Reception at the Rochester Club/6

And now, because I know you're anxious to hear the Vice President, I'm not going to say anything else. I think it would be a little more comfortable if you did move forward. It's my great privilege to welcome to Rochester -- and I know that you join me in this -- the Vice President of the United States.

Vice President
Humphrey:

Thank you very much Peter -- and my good friend Jim Wilmot -- and the distinguished Mayor of the City of Rochester, Frank Lamb, who was kind enough to present me with a sort of Knight of the Garter when I came here, a nice key to the city with an appropriate decoration. There are so many here that I want to acknowledge that I quickly jotted down some notes. I want my friend Arthur Krim to know that while he was bringing his very important message to you that Father Lavery and I were whispering to each other on occasion about a few matters of mutual concern. You know both political parties and churches need money, so we were actually doing something religious.

It's really a joy to be in your wonderful city of Rochester, New York, I know Peter said that I might get a little confused and think this is Rochester, Minnesota. But I can tell you that this city is every bit as lovely as Rochester, Minnesota. We like it here very much. There are so many people here that I do want to acknowledge.

(More)

Reception at the Rochester Club/7

First, I want to say how pleased we are that today our National Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, John Bailey, could be with us... and Cliff Carter, who is the strong right arm of the President... and Arthur Krim from New York City. We were in New York earlier today and really had a fine little philanthropic gathering there for the most worthy of charitable purposes. Then we journeyed here to Rochester to see how Xerox and Eastman are getting along. I'm happy to say to both Joe Wilson and Bill Vaughn that both of you are doing alright, as I see it thus far -- the cameras have been snapping and the Xerox machines are running. I'm also delighted to see my friend Howard Samuels and his young lady... and my good friend Sol Linowitz and that young lady he's going around with too -- we've been having our picture taken.

These are dear friends of mine and people who have meant a great deal in my personal as well as my public life.

I've been in Rochester on a number of occasions and each time I find it just about as happy an occasion as can be. I remember the last time in the campaign of 1964 when we were at Mrs. Sibley's home. I understand that she's out making almost as many speeches as I make. I guess that's why we sort of had *sympatica* -- the minute we got together we understood each other.

(More)

Reception at the Rochester Club/8

I've met her distinguished son today and his wife, and the younger Sibley, so it's been a wonderful afternoon for me. A young man by the name of Stephen Cottrell met me too. He was down in Washington -- one of your young boys here in the City of Rochester -- on a very important mission for the Hemophilia Foundation.

And I look over here to my left -- I know he's not going to like that -- Paul Miller. But Paul, this is the first time that you've been to my left, I want you to know that. I have a special debt that I have to pay to Paul. Your own Mr. Miller is the President of the Associated Press -- I think one of the truly great news organizations in the world. Its objectivity is respected. . . its coverage is beyond comparison. . . and Mr. Miller was kind enough to be with me in New York City when I overstayed my time. Today I won't do that Paul, I promise you. But I'm delighted to see you once again, and to be here with so many of you.

Now I have a few notes here and I hope you'll forgive me if I look at them -- I'm not going to pay much attention to them. I know that you have a great university here and, in fact, I'm well aware of it because I've been invited to your university on occasion. I may even go to the point where you'll have to listen to me over there sometime just to be good neighbors. But I want to say to Mr. Allen Wallis of the university, how much we appreciate the good work that's being done at that fine institution of higher learning. . . and I hope that you like what we've done under the Higher Education Act too. It's going to help a lot
(More)

Reception at the Rochester Club/9

of students and universities. And Billy McEwen is here tonight and I am delighted that I had a chance to see him.

I know there are a few folks here -- they told me quite a few -- of the Republican persuasion. . . and I want to tell you, as I used to say in Minnesota, the finest friends I had were those Humphrey Republicans. They were great -- they really went down the line. And I've met a good number of county chairmen from this area -- Democratic Party chairmen -- I'm delighted that we have this good cross-section of people from the different political persuasions. Our friend Abe Chatman is here from the Labor Movement, so we have I think a pretty good representation all the way across the board.

Now to Charles Maloy -- I wouldn't want to forget my friend Chuck. I want you to know how good it is to be back in your community once again. And in case you've got everything locked up here politically, and you think you could stand a carpthagger, I'll come back sometime in an election year.

Having said these words of introduction, let me just take a few minutes of your time to tell you what the ground rules are. I want to just cite to you what I think are some of the problems that confront your country and you -- not as Democrats; not as Republicans --but just citizens.

(More)

Reception at the Rochester Club/10

If these generalities provoke some inquiring mind I would really appreciate your speaking up like a friend and neighbor -- as if we were in your home sitting around the table, or in the parlor or out on the porch, or on the patio. Patios are very expensive. . . my wife is always enclosing them, I want you to know. . . they're very dangerous things, fellas -- don't ever get one. What I would like to do is talk it out -- let's ask some questions and I'll try to provide an answer or two.

I know you're all standing -- and my wife has told me a thousand times: "Daddy, I want you to remember women's shoes are not as comfortable as what you men wear; so don't keep the ladies standing all the time." So if you girls who are sitting want to ask a question or two, that'll be alright.

It's not easy these days to make what you would call the right decisions. Everybody in a nation like ours has observations that they can make on what's going on in our country. The great Swedish sociologist and scholar, Gunner Myrdal once was asked about his book "The American Dilemma" the question: "How did you get the information about America?" He studied here in America. He did his research here on his book. And he said, "All you ever really need to do is go up to any American and ask him a question and he'll tell you everything that's wrong about America."

(More)

Reception at the Rochester Club/11

Now that is a very good sign. As a matter of fact it's an indication of both political health and political stability. It's only the strong societies that can ever afford the luxury of frank self-analysis. The weaker the society, the more the braggadocio. The weaker the case, the more certain you are.

In your government, there are no easy decisions. As a matter of fact our society depends upon a great deal of discussion. Talk it up... talk out loud... think it out. The minute that people start to think quietly and don't talk about it, that's a sign of danger. That's a sign that they don't feel free to speak out.

Freedom of discussion -- freedom of speech, as Franklin Roosevelt put it in those four freedoms -- freedom of expression and freedom of speech is absolutely vital. It's essential to a strong nation. And freedom of worship is essential to human dignity and to the concept of liberty. Freedom and brotherhood and freedom from want and freedom from fear are freedoms that we live to accomplish.

In a great country like ours, people debate. As I came into this club this evening I noticed that people dissent, and rightly so: they have every right to do so. I wouldn't really feel at home if I didn't have a few people that dissented, and I really don't carry any animosity or or any feelings of personal reaction about that.

(More)

Reception at the Rochester Club/12

The right to dissent is a precious right in this country. But after you've gone through all that personal experience, then you must think of those who in your own business are elected to positions of leadership . . . or positions of responsibility in your own business or in your company. . . or positions of responsibility in your union. . . or positions of responsibility in your city -- wherever there is responsibility.

It is good and fitting and proper that there is debate and dissent. But some time, if you're in a position of responsibility, you also have to decide -- make a decision -- and you're never quite sure that the decision that you make is the one that is absolutely right. You're never even quite sure in your own family. Sometimes there's doubt. . . there's an honest argument.

The President many times has said, "It's not difficult for a President to do what is right, because after you've been President well there isn't much more in this secular life that you can do. "

So the proposition of doing what's right is not difficult. . . it's knowing what's right. And what interests me sometimes is how sure people are that they're right. I wish they could impart to me that unique quality which assures them their words and their expressions are always right. I'm not quite sure -- I used to be more sure when I was a little younger. In fact when I first came to the Senate there were an awful lot of people that were dead wrong. And then I learned a few years later that

(More)

Reception at the Rochester Club/13

there were not quite as many. It's like the story of the boy who was 14 who never met a man as stupid as his father. By the time he was 21, he said, "I never knew a man that learned as much in seven years as my dad." Well, public life is very much the same way. One is never quite sure... and then when he comes to the point when he has to make a decision he is less sure -- but he must decide. You can't have a country that just goes through this turbulent world without any sense of direction.

Your President has to make decisions. He makes decisions about your economy, but he doesn't make them alone. He makes decisions about your national security, but he doesn't make those alone. I sit on the National Security Council as a member of the President's Cabinet.

There was a time when the Vice President didn't even have that privilege. He just sort of presided over the Senate and most of the time they weren't even there. But today we have a number of advisors to our President.

Your President goes through a difficult decision-making process. He is your President, whatever your politics. He's "in charge." And I don't know of any office in the world that has more responsibility and authority than the office of President. But I know of no office that is more conditioned by what we call the organization of advise and consent.

(More)

Reception at the Rochester Club/14

I've sat in Cabinet meetings where we've decided what we were going to do about certain matters in our economy. Do you think it's easy? Do you think that these are "yes" men -- they're not! There are members of the Cabinet who are brilliant, able, dedicated men who study and work their hearts out. And they speak up to your President. And when you have a decision that relates to peace or war, every member of that Cabinet has a son or a daughter. Everyone thinks about his country and his family. . . . thinks about what he's supposed to think about -- the future, this world of ours and of our society. And the President, whoever he is, gets advice and counsel.

Now I tell you this because there's a lot of argument about what we're doing in Southeast Asia, for example. There are many people who are disagreeing about what we're doing in South America. We have problems in Western Europe with NATO. These are not easy problems. But we think that what we're doing is in the best interests of our country. And that's what we're elected to think about.

We think that what we're doing is in the best interest of our objective here in this world. What is that objective? The peace of the world. . . . to save us from nuclear catastrophe. . . . to permit us and our children to live a better life. And we think the decisions that we're making today are directed towards that objective.

(More)

Reception at the Rochester Club/15

Now we may be wrong -- and that's why we have elections... that's why we have a free press... that's why we have free speech. But we think that the policies that we're following today are designed not for conquest, not for luxury, but for justice and for peace. We're prepared, for example in Southeast Asia, to negotiate at any time an honorable peace... and no one has asked more for it than we. I've known of no one else that has asked for it on the other side.

We seek to go any place, at any time, to meet with anybody, anywhere -- to seek first a chance to talk about an honorable peace. But not a peace, if you please, that gives away the rights of others... not a peace that sacrifices the opportunities of others for our temporary benefit.

The price of leadership is duty and burden and responsibility. And if you want to be a leader, pay the price. If you don't want to be a leader, then admit it... and don't try to pretend.

We are leaders and we have no choice. And if we don't lead, somebody else will... and that somebody else will not be some little small country, that has neither the resources nor the vision to lead. But it will be powerful countries that have a different system, different objective, different goals. And they know how to lead. That's why the decisions are tough.

(More)

Reception at the Rochester Club/16

Now I give you these in broad generalities because I want you now to think through your questions. And possibly in the moments that we have here we can think out loud together and see if we can't find some answers... or at least arouse ourselves to a little more productive thought. Thank you very much. Now if you have any questions, I'm just rarin' to go.

Howard Samuels: Mr. Vice President, in addition to Viet Nam, we're all very concerned about the economy. Would you make some comments about the Administration's current concern with inflation.

Vice President
Humphrey:

Your question, Howard, gives me an opportunity to say a word about what I think is the keystone or base of our ability and capacity to lead. Number one: a nation must have a sense of vision. It must be able to see the kind of a world that it wants. And then it must have the will to seek that kind of vision.

But vision and will are not enough. Many people have vision and will but no resources. And what America must be sure of -- and mark this down right now -- what you must be sure of is that you have an economy that can bear the burden of leadership. That's really what it boils down to.

(More)

Reception at the Rochester Club/17

I hear many people get up and speak about "Oh, we must help the poor!" We must close or narrow the gap between the rich and the poor. As I said at Paul Miller's meeting of the Associated Press: "Indeed we must." But you can't help narrow the gap between the rich nations and the poor -- you cannot offer foreign aid. . . you can't help feed the hungry in India -- if you have an economy that is incapable of doing it.

Therefore, we must constantly keep in mind the building into the economy what I call the endurance factor. . . not that sprint economy that runs the 100 yd. dash, but one that can take that long, long marathon run without dropping the baton -- always keeping moving.

And I recall all the criticism that there's been over my lifetime about the American economy -- and Oh My Goodness. . . haven't we heard it? Of course some of you who are much younger than I didn't hear quite so much of it. But I am remembering the darker days of our economy when people thought that our system had had it. It was all through.

This is the most fabulous, the most unbelievable productive system -- economic and cyclical--the world has ever known. In fact I think that one thing that frightens the enemy more than anything else is not our bombs -- not our weapons, because they have them too. . . and don't

(More)

Reception at the Rochester Club/18

kid yourself, they've got good ones -- but economy: our agriculture, for example.

I think one of the margins of difference between the Soviet Union and the United States today -- or the United States and Soviet Union-Communist China group -- is the fact that we can feed our people; they can't. Also, the fact that we have tremendous resilience in our industrial economy which is due to the free enterprise system -- the motivations that we get from the profit system or by private initiative.

Now, how does this relate to the question asked about inflation? Inflation is sort of like a lost weekend. I'm speaking of this theoretically, I assure you...but it's sort of going on a binge. You've heard the kids say "Well, we have to goof off every so often." I have sons...I know of what I speak...and daddy knew about it before they ever heard about it. As I tell my boys, "Don't kid me...you can kid your mother but level with me -- I've been there." And so we get along pretty good in our family -- father and sons.

(More)

Reception at the Rochester Club/19

But inflation is a short-term jag for a long-term hangover. And we can't afford it. Therefore, we have to ask ourself: how do we exercise self-discipline and self-restraint. There are only two choices. You either exercise self-discipline and restraint or the Government imposes it upon you. Now in the government sector there are two ways of doing it -- direct control wage and price or monetary and fiscal policies. We put together a combination. We appeal to the business community, the federal establishment, the State and local governments. I met just this week with the local government officials and their representatives. We appeal with them to try to watch the economy and to make selective judgments as to the things they ought to do so as to not heat up this economy too much in terms of expenditures and investments. We appeal to the business community the same way. Then we try to exercise selective monetary and fiscal measures...to the Federal Reserve System...to tax systems and tax collections -- we think this is the better way.

We do not want to impose upon the American people -- with a limited conflict as we have now in Viet Nam; with an economy that has for 62 months been growing and growing and giving us more and more benefits -- we don't want to impose the bureaucracy of price controls and wage controls. And I don't think a single one of you in this room wants it.

(More)

Reception at the Rochester Club/20

But unless we can watch ourselves and preserve the value of our investments, the value of our dollar including problems we place in the balance of payments. . . unless we can do that, then we're going to have to do some other things. But we're depending upon the good nature, good sense and good will of the American people.

Question:

Mr. Vice President, I agree with everything you said, but I wonder sometimes as I think of what H. G. Wells said that the future of the world depends upon the outcome of the race between catastrophe and education, which of course is the basic thing our President has done. Don't you think that over and above and beyond this goes the whole matter of education? Would you speak of this for just a moment?

Vice President
Humphrey:

I'm delighted. You took one of my favorite quotations. I'm a refugee of a class room, and in a very real sense a drug store, I might add. Both of them have had their dark days. H. G. Wells did say that civilization is a race between education and catastrophe. Thomas Jefferson put it even more succinctly: "You cannot be both ignorant and free."

(More)

Reception at the Rochester Club/21

I think that's right to the core of it. That's why this government is making massive investments in what I would call enlightened human welfare... tremendous investments today. Now I read for example that we're not doing as much as we could, or as we should, and I want to be very candid with you. If I had my druthers... if everybody would leave us alone... if this was a peaceful and tranquil world... if there were no problems -- my goodness, what we could do with the resources we have! We could do so much more. We could take care of the problems of our cities and our states and our schools. We could do tremendous things because this economy is so massive -- believe me, it's fantastic -- in the amount it generates in capital which in turn turns into revenues for the government.

But we can't do everything we want to do. Therefore, we have to measure. I guess, I'm just a simple-minded man about these things. I'm a family man. I've never been able to do quite as much as I've wanted to do for my family or in our home. I've always had a mortgage. I've always got something I want to do. I've said to Mrs. Humphrey many times when we get out there to our summer home in Minnesota, we've argued about what shall we do here, and we've said maybe we ought to do two or three things... but we can't do two or three things this year. We'll do one!

(More)

Reception at the Rochester Club/22

Now, we can't do everything we want to do in education. We cannot do everything we want to do in water pollution and air pollution. We can't do everything we ought to do in our cities.

But we can make beginnings. And we're doing it. We're putting in substantial investments in what I call a better America.

We're beginning to move in this country on the basic problems that affect us -- transportation, communications, the ghettos of our cities, the slums, education. Three years ago we put 4 1/2 billion dollars of federal aid into education... this year: 10 billion, 200 million dollars. We doubled it... doubled it in three years!

And believe me, this is going to pay off. These are the investments that produce a better people... a more enlightened people. We think Rochester, Minnesota and Rochester, New York typify what I'm talking about. They are both prosperous communities. And why? Because they have seen fit to make valuable investments in public and private education... to see to it that these valuable educational establishments serve the needs of the people. That's the real investment -- that's the real power. Make no mistake about it.

(More)

Reception at the Rochester Club/23

Your government, by the way, has got a couple of ex-school teachers running it today. The President of the United States is a former teacher of a little one-room school house down in Southwestern Texas. And interestingly enough, the children that he taught were Mexican Americans. It's not so surprising that he received an ovation like no one has ever received when he went to Mexico. Also, the first check he received he gave to those children to buy books and playground equipment.

The Vice President of the United States is a former school teacher. The majority leader of the Senate is a former school teacher. The majority leader of the House of Representatives is a former school teacher. We teachers have sort of taken over...Gotta beware of us...we're in charge.

Mr. McColough: Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President. It is a great pleasure to have you with us.

-XXX-



Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



www.mnhs.org