

DEDICATION OF THE BRUMIDI BUST

APRIL 30, 1968

*The Capitol  
Washington, D.C.*

I am proud to accept in behalf of the Senate of the United States a bust honoring a great American -- Constantino Brumidi. *Brumide*

Brumidi's art testifies to his belief in the greatness of America and her people.

*ambasciata  
Ortona  
Italy*

*ambasciata  
Palamas  
Greece*

*Mr Speaker  
Sen Hayden  
~~Sen D...~~*

*Calvano  
Miss Mason  
Sculptures*

-2-

Brumidi's hope was to finish his paintings here in the Capitol. As he put it, "My one ambition and my daily prayer is that I may live long enough to make beautiful the Capitol of the one country on earth in which there is liberty."

Brumidi's art is preserved forever in the Capitol he dearly loved. It is up to us -- and to future generations -- to preserve the concepts of liberty and freedom which he celebrated.

# # #

Speech of the Vice President - Brumidi Dedication - April 30, 1968

May I humbly and sincerely thank you for your warm and generous welcome. There are many here today I should acknowledge, but I do want to pay my respects to Ambassador Ortona of Italy and Ambassador Palamas of Greece, to the many members of Congress who have honored this occasion by their presence, and particularly to Congressman Annunzio and the dean of the Italo-American Congressmen, Peter Rodino.

I miss the presence here today of our friend, Senator John O. Pastore, co-chairman of this dedication committee.

As I rose to the podium, I reached back to congratulate Miss Mason, the sculptress, who has literally breathed life into this piece of marble. We are reminded of the living Constantino Brumidi, and Miss Mason, of all your many fine and wonderful works, I don't know of any more meaningful and truly more magnificent than the one just unveiled.

This is a very touching occasion. I don't know how you feel when you come into the Rotunda of the Capitol, but I get goose pimples every time I come in here. I love it. This is the hall of "We the People" as Congressman Fred Schwengel would say.

I think that's what Constantino Brumidi meant when he said he wanted to be remembered as just "C. Brumidi, artist and citizen of the United States."

There is no greater honor, none whatsoever, that can be bestowed upon any person on God's earth than the title of citizen of the United States of America. And today we have been privileged to hear a great scholar, a wonderful public servant and a truly brave patriot, my old and good friend, Senator Paul Douglas, remind us of this man, his human quality, his artistry, his dedication, even his political qualities.

Paul Douglas is a great teacher and all of us will better remember this occasion because of what Paul Douglas has told us about Italian art, Italian sculpture, Italian architecture, and Constantino Brumidi.

When I listened to Congressman Pete Rodino in his welcoming address, I could sense that feeling of pride that this good man has in his heritage, his Capitol, and his country. I had that same feeling as Congressman Annunzio presented his remarks and told us again of the meaning of this patriot.

This hall is the hall of "We the People." Literally millions of people come through these portals. There is a simplicity about it that adds to its beauty. Every one of these great paintings tells us of the history of our land, but above all the majesty of this magnificent dome and the paintings of Constantino Brumidi set one on fire.

How many times I've walked through here, watched people with their heads back, gazing up at that magnificent painting in the dome and wondering how it could ever be done.

And how well I remember when I first came to the Congress. There was a part of this fresco not complete. Senator Francis Green of Rhode Island and many Italian-Americans sponsored the resolution to complete this great panoramic view of the history of the American people, and we had another ceremony here to commemorate the completion of that work.

Whenever you come to this Capitol, you feel you've been lifted, you feel a sense of tingling inspiration. You simply have to feel a new breath of life when you come here. It symbolizes everything about this

country -- its strength, its grandeur, its simplicity, its honor, its history, and its people. How almost providential it was that a man by the name of Brumidi, artist and citizen of the United States, should have been the one who glorified it with his brush and with his God given talent as a painter, as an artist.

I am very happy I can share in this occasion today. On behalf of a grateful people, on behalf of a grateful government of the people, and on behalf of we the people I accept this bust of a fine American, immigrant, patriot, artist, and citizen. He loved liberty and once said, "My one ambition and my daily prayer is that I may live long enough to make beautiful the Capitol of the one country on earth in which there is liberty."

Ladies and gentlemen, there is no beauty without liberty, and I think Brumidi knew it. There can be splendor, and there can be all kinds of handsome designs. But real beauty comes in the free spirit. And what is beautiful about America is not just its lakes and its mountains, its cities and its streams. What is beautiful about America is what Constantino Brumidi understood and grasped -- the spirit of America, that spirit of liberty which he enshrined in every one of the paintings to be found in this Capitol.

We have the responsibility now to preserve the art in this Capitol that Brumidi dearly loved. It is up to us and the future generations to preserve the concepts of liberty and freedom which he celebrated not only by his words but by his life. Not only by his thoughts but by his very brush and his God given gift of artistry.



# 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](http://www.mnhs.org)