

REMARKS OF  
VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY

*Michigan Democratic Party  
Century Fund*

As given at the Sheraton Cadillac Hotel,  
Detroit, Michigan, on Tuesday, May 14, 1968.

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VICE PRES. HUMPHREY: Ladies and gentlemen, I have not had such wonderful attention for a long time. When I came into the room here there was a gentleman by the name of Joe Levin who met me. I said there are Levins all over the place here; and now I am introduced by the party Chairman, Sandy Levin, and I am so very privileged and honored to once again be in his state under his guidance and his direction here.

I want to thank all of you before we get too old, because I understand this is the Century Club, according to what Patti Knox told me; that means that you are not one hundred years old but that you did make a rather substantial down payment on the matters around here.

We want to thank you. I do this for Mr. Hertzberg, Sandy Levin and Patti Knox and all of the party officials. I will take just a very, very few brief moments of your time. I am sure you know that this visit of mine to

Detroit has both public and private purposes. The public purpose, starting this morning, was an address to the Michigan Legislature in joint meeting or joint session. Then later on this afternoon to the African Episcopalian Zion Church Conference, representing forty-one states, and a little earlier, just a little earlier, with some of our friends from the labor movement. And all of that was just sort of a warm-up for what I am doing now.

I know that in this room are the party leaders. I know that here are the people that have made it possible for the Democratic Party in Michigan to be a powerful, effective force for the social progress in this State, and for political victory in most elections. We have lost a few and we won a few, and I say "we" because I have had the same experience; and I just want to remind you, in case any of you have forgotten, that it is much sweeter to win than to lose.

(Applause)

Now, let me say a word about my private and public purposes again. In case the word has not reached you, I am at this particular hour and from these moments on seeking the nomination of the Democratic Party for the office of President.

(Applause)

I would not want you to let this message get out of this room. If you just keep it a secret it will get around.

I believe I can tell you that I had, really, no such plans as these. My plans were a little bit different. I recall one evening when my wife Muriel told the President that he, the President, had more or less changed our lives, and she put it this way, - She said, "You know, you were sort of my Linus; engulfed in a security blanket, we kind of depended upon you, Mr. President, to be the nominee of the party, and hopefully Hubert would continue to be the Vice Presidential nominee, and hopefully we would win, and if we did not, why, then hopefully we would have a pleasant type of private life." Now, that could still happen, I realize, under certain circumstances, but after the President's declaration, I had to make up my mind as to whether or not this was the time for me to declare myself as a candidate or be available for the nomination or seeking the nomination.

To be very frank with you, I had some very serious doubts as to whether this is what I ought to do, and yet, deep in my own heart and soul, I knew that as a public man, one in public life, twenty some years, that this was what I would do. And after straightening my thinking out a bit as to how I wanted to conduct myself and the kind of effort

I wanted to make, and also trying to reconcile my responsibilities as Vice President,- and I still have that responsibility,- with my opportunities and responsibilities as a candidate, we made a declaration which some of you saw on television or some of you attended in person. The response has been excellent. We are trying to conduct a campaign on the positive. We are not ignoring the hard realities that face our country, the difficulties that beset us at home and abroad. I am familiar with those difficulties. I have had to live with them, both as a legislator, a senator, majority whip and Vice President. I am totally aware, fully aware of every one of them.

What I seek to find are some of the answers, and I would be less than honest with you if I told you that the answers come easily, but I know the answers won't come at all unless we believe we can find them, and unless you are willing to go out and search for the kind of talent, the kind of advice, the counsel that makes possible the formulation of answers which result in solutions.

I have had some people say to me, "We don't want your generalities, Mr. Vice President," and neither do I, but I do not think you want not only my generalities, but I doubt that you would want any quick and easy answers to

difficult and complex problems.

Some of the people in this room have worked with me and I have worked with them for a long time. We have been in the battle for American liberalism for twenty-five or more years. We have helped build political parties in Minnesota and in Michigan and in neighboring states. We have grown up together. We have not grown old together. We have grown up together. There is a great deal of difference.

(Applause)

Somewhere I read that age is not a time of life, it is an attitude of mind, and I think that is true. I have seen some young people that were really ready for Geritol and Social Security at age twenty. I had some of them occasionally as students, and I have seen some of the older people that were quite frisky. The old story they tell of Justice Brandeis, as he was walking down the street with his old friend, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Brandeis in his eighties and Holmes in his late seventies; Brandeis saw a beautiful young thing walking by in mid-afternoon in Washington; Brandeis whispered over to his old friend Oliver Wendell Holmes, he said, "Boy, what I would give to be seventy again."

Which leads me to say that you are as old as your doubts, and you are as young as your confidence, and you are as old as your fears and you are as young as your faith, and you are as old as your despair and as young as your ideals.

I think that this party of ours, and those of us that seek to give it some leadership, qualify on the basis of ideals and confidence and faith.

I intend to go to the American people in this campaign citing the strengths of this country as well as its weaknesses. I intend to ask the American people to do something about the social ills that confront us. I happen to think that in the next few years we are going to be making the most decisive decisions of our lifetime, decisions abroad and at home. We are going to go through a very turbulent period now, one that can turn into repression, at least for a time, or one that can turn into a wonderful opportunity for millions and millions of our fellow Americans. I think you know what my heart is. A man's philosophy is more than his words. As a man thinketh, so is he. I do not need to outline my philosophy to the people that have known us and the people with whom we have worked. I just happen to believe that this business of democracy is a wonderfully changing, exciting business, and I happen to

believe that democracy, like a person, grows or withers, and we have to make up our mind what we are going to do with it, and we are going to have it grow. I call it our new democracy of new participation, of new motivation, of new involvement. That is what we are going to do.

I want your help. I have come to that point.

(Applause)

I want your help every day. This is my first opportunity to get to you, and we might just as well be open and above-board about it.

I have no unkind words to say about any fellow Democrats that seek this nomination. Both of them are good men. I do not believe that in order to build myself up I have to ear them down.

(Applause)

And I would hope that every person who supports me would act in that philosophy. I think it will be very helpful, because when we are through with the convention in August we are going to nominate a Democrat and he is going to be a liberal Democrat, he is going to be a progressive Democrat, he is going to be a forward-looking Democrat; we

do not have to worry; that is going to happen; and I hope that when we are through with the struggle for the nomination that we can join hands together and go on out and win against the common opposition.

I know one thing, that if I am given that chance, that you are going to have a campaign that you will not forget for a long time, and you are going to have one this coming election.

(Applause)

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