

Speech Of
VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

Crystal Ballroom
Rice Hotel
Houston, Texas

September 10, 1968

Judge William Blanton Testimonial



Crystal Ballroom

1 MR. LLOYD M. BENTSEN, JR.: It is
2 nice to have partisan friends. We have so many
3 good men here tonight, but I would like to bring
4 to your attention some of them.

5 Ben Barnes is here with us tonight,
6 the distinguished Speaker of the House.

7 Our articulate and able Mayor, Louie
8 Welch.

9 Devoted Congressman, Bob Casey.

10 Our Congressman, Bob Eckhardt.

11 Distinguished Senator Barbara Jordan.

12 Able Senator Chet Brooks.

13 Our Houston and Galveston Senator
14 Babe Schwartz.

15 Vice Chairman of the State Demo-
16 cratic Executive Committee, Mrs. Seaborn Eastland.

17 One of my favorite, distinguished
18 citizens, Mrs. Lloyd Bentsen, Jr., Democratic
19 National Committeewoman.

20 We have the Chairman of the State
21 Democratic Executive Committee, Will Davis.

22 And so many more that, if you would
23 just hold up your hand, I will acknowledge you.

24 It is my distinct pleasure and
25 privilege to introduce to you now one of the

1 lovliest ladies I know, the wife of the Vice
2 President of the United States, Mrs. Hubert
3 Humphrey, Muriel Humphrey, and her son, Douglas.

4 And now it is my sincere privilege
5 to introduce to you one of America's most
6 distinguished citizens. I would ask him to say
7 something about Chicago, but he might still have
8 relatives back there. But this man, whom I have
9 had the pleasure of knowing for some time, brings
10 to mind what we see in American politics today.
11 We see those who are more comfortable in the
12 role of a critic and then we see those who are
13 builders, who want to see America grow and
14 progress, who believe the good and the best
15 about America, and we have that kind of a man
16 with us tonight, the distinguished, the able
17 Vice President of the United States, Hubert H.
18 Humphrey.

19 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Thank you
20 very much, Mr. Bentsen, and, of course, a special
21 note of fellowship and friendship to the gentle-
22 man whom you honored tonight, the one who has
23 carved out a record of civic service and of great
24 citizenship as a jurist, lawyer, Democrat. Gee,
25 what a combination!

1 I am so very pleased, having
2 mentioned that honored word Democrat, to see that
3 Congressman Casey is here and Congressman
4 Eckhardt and, of course, Will Davis is here and
5 Ben Barnes and all the others who have gathered
6 around the threshold tonight for this family
7 gathering, and I am particularly pleased that
8 Mrs. Humphrey and myself and our son, Douglas,
9 could be invited to this occasion.

10 When we planned our visit here we
11 heard that this wonderful party and reception
12 was being tendered your fellow citizen, Judge
13 Blanton, and I don't know how we were able to
14 finagle it around, but I have some good managers
15 somewhere around the land and they said the best
16 thing going now or any time to come is now at
17 this reception for Judge William Blanton.

18 I like what you had to say about our
19 good friend, Mr. Bentsen, because it is true that
20 he does have a lovely wife. I will tell you, if
21 you ever have any doubt why you ought to be a
22 Democrat, just look at her and you will join up
23 right away.

24 It was suggested that I might want
25 to say something about Chicago. The truth is,

1 any man that came to Houston and didn't talk
2 about Houston ought to be run out of town, and I
3 prefer to talk about Houston.

4 I do this despite the fact that on
5 the way in here I met several people who said,
6 "We are from Los Angeles." And I just left Los
7 Angeles and we had a wonderful day and it was a
8 full and very busy day at that great city of
9 Los Angeles. And despite what some of you good
10 Democrats may say, I think I ought to let you in
11 on the news early, because there is nothing, may
12 I say, that destroys your vitality more than a
13 day of worry.

14 As somebody once said, "A week of
15 work is less tiring than a day of worry." And I
16 don't want you to worry about this election at
17 all. I am not worried about it. I think the
18 people are going to do what is right and I think
19 they are going to do for me what the Governor
20 did for the Judge and they are going to put me
21 in a new job, like they have put this man in a
22 new job, and both of them, I approve of.

23 Somebody said, coming in here, "We
24 have to take the 'vice' out of that fellow."
25 I think there is some truth to that.

1 Enough about that. I want to say
2 how very pleased we are to share this hour with
3 you, this brief moment of fellowship. We have a
4 busy evening with you and tomorrow we have a
5 busy day. We go to Michigan, and then the next
6 day to the Eastern Seaboard. For some reason or
7 another, I have decided to travel around this
8 country a good deal, and we are seeing some good
9 people and what I see in this country, in the
10 main, I like. I see people in America that have
11 great faith in our country. I see hundreds of
12 thousands of people in this country that believe
13 that this country can do what it needs to do,
14 when it needs to be done.

15 I know that there are some very loud
16 and articulate voices that seem to be heard over
17 the quiet of reason and judgment, but I do not
18 believe that that raucous and harsh and, at times,
19 angry voice really represents the heart or the
20 conscience or the will of the American people.

21 I believe that whether you are
22 conservative or liberal, whether you are from
23 Minnesota or Texas, whether you are from
24 California or you are from Maine, I really
25 believe that most of the people in this country

1 would like to have a way to do what is right.

2 I really believe that most of our people are
3 willing to give the other fellow the benefit of
4 the doubt. I believe that the vast majority of
5 our people are not infected with bitterness and
6 hate, but would like to be inspired and motivated
7 by a sense of community and fellowship, by being
8 fair and just and by waging whatever effort they
9 can against any form of inequity or deprivation.

10 I know that the man that you honor
11 tonight is one whose life has been characterized
12 by service and, believe me, there is no higher
13 calling than to serve someone else, to be a man
14 of tolerance, to be a person of reason, to be
15 one who has patience, of understanding, not only
16 of the needs of others, but a need and under-
17 standing of his limitations, his own great
18 assets, and of his own service.

19 I have a feeling that if we can get
20 the American people to listen in this fateful
21 year of 1968, to listen and to think, to reason--
22 to reason, rather than to just be caught up in
23 the passions of the moment, that we are going to
24 come out all right.

25 I am not unmindful of the conflicts

1 and of the tensions and, in some places, the
2 bitterness that erupts into violence. But you
3 know and I know that none of that will provide
4 an answer to anything. There is no problem in
5 this nation that will be solved by uncontrolled
6 passion and emotion, by violence, either of the
7 mob or of an individual, by hate and bitterness.

8 Every problem we have will be solved,
9 if it is to be solved at all--and I think they
10 can, because there is a sense of prudence,
11 judgment, of restraint, of reason, of faith in
12 our institutions, confidence in our people, and
13 I believe the life of the man you honor tonight
14 exemplifies many of those characteristics.

15 Now, I didn't ask his wife, Elizabeth,
16 as to all of this biography, but I think that
17 she would agree with me that he has exemplified
18 these qualities.

19 Our judiciary is, in a sense, a
20 protector of our rights and those who serve on
21 it at the local, the county, state, or federal
22 level are worthy of our respect and, might I say,
23 that in the long perspective of history that
24 America is what it is today in terms of our
25 liberties, not only because of our Congressmen

1 Presidents, but more significantly because we
2 have invested in the fidelity of the Courts, who
3 have made it possible--the Courts and Judges who
4 have made it possible for this nation to live
5 in law, a government of laws, not of men, a
6 government of civil order and civil justice; the
7 one and inseparable fact of a free society and
8 a democratic society.

9 I didn't intend to be quite that
10 serious with you because this is a happy
11 occasion. But I believe, in these troubled
12 times, and even this moment of parties and
13 receptions, that it is good to think about what
14 it is that has made this country what it is.

15 What has made this country what it
16 is, is a great depth of consciousness about
17 people, consciousness that motivates men and
18 women throughout the many generations of our
19 history to do something just a little bit better
20 than was done before, and this nation is
21 characterized by leaders who came from the ranks
22 of people, not an elite born to ride herd on
23 others, but, rather, the people who raise up out
24 of their own ranks their own leaders, so that we
25 have government by the consent of the governed,

1 so that we have government of law, not government
2 of edict, so that we have government that is
3 compassionate, on the one hand, and firm in its
4 justice, on the other.

5 I think that is what we exemplify
6 by this meeting tonight. I think that is what
7 you come to pay your respects to, and am I ever
8 glad to be here. I always like to be where there
9 are good people. I go away feeling just a little
10 better.

11 Somebody asked me the other day if I
12 was leaning to the left or to the right or was I
13 in the center, and I said, "Really, it is hard
14 enough to walk these days without leaning."

15 I think those are old, hackneyed
16 expressions. We don't need people today that
17 lean to the Left or to the Right and we don't
18 even need people who try to find a comfortable
19 center, but we need people who tend to lift us
20 to high ground. And I come to Houston where the
21 great Space Center is and I can't help but think
22 that if we just lift our eyes a little from the
23 earth on which we walk, to the stars, and try
24 to get a broader and bigger horizon, to try to
25 get a glimpse of eternity and the affinity of

1 space, maybe we will be better and maybe we will
2 be able to lift this country out of its troubles,
3 because I don't think that its troubles are going
4 to be overcome by either the ditch of the Left or
5 the ditch of the Right, or in the center, because
6 I think it will be over by which you stand a
7 little higher, like you say in Texas.

8 And, if I may, I am going to ask you
9 to stand just a little taller and I am going to
10 ask you to lift your eyes to a new horizon and
11 ask you to pull down the shades on the midnight
12 of the past and then to walk to the door and open
13 it up and see the dawn of a new day, because I
14 think it is ours, if we but welcome it in.

15 MR. BENTSEN: We all want to thank
16 for this.

17 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: They tell
18 me I have another meeting to go to. I hope I am
19 going to see plenty of you there.

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