



ASFSA Honors Senator Humphrey

Amidst a roomful of ardent admirers, Senator Hubert H. Humphrey accepted ASFSA accolades and honors at the Association's first annual award dinner, held in Washington, D.C., March 14, 1977. Congressman Carl Perkins (D-Ky.) and noted nutritionist Jean Mayer, president of Tufts University, both praised Senator Humphrey as the best friend Americans have in common. As Dr. Mayer stated, the success and scope of child feeding programs in the United States today are "due to the inspiration of a man who more than any other has been and continues to be the embodiment of the spirit of justice and charity we hope is one of the characteristics of our country. Senator Humphrey has been concerned throughout his career not completely with American children, but hungry children the world over."

After accepting various gifts, including an honorary membership in ASFSA, Senator Humphrey spoke to those assembled to pay tribute to him.



Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D-Minn.) accepts honorary ASFSA membership from Association President Josephine Martin at a special award dinner during ASFSA fifth annual Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C.

"I want to review the achievements we've made as a sort of summary for this evening. Whatever achievements we've made in this program of nutrition in school lunch, breakfast, child feeding, and senior citizen feeding—all that we've done—has been the result of a team of people who work together. It takes a tremendous amount of effort not only by people in Congress, but outside the Congress as well.

"I said to someone earlier, 'you know, I just felt so good when I came in this room.' And I have been to more dinners than most of you are months old. Weeks old! I've been going to dinners for 35 years of my life, and most of them away from home. When you come to a meeting like this, you feel that sense of goodness because you're doing good things. You're not asking for something for yourself. You're in here saying, 'It is better to administer than to be administered unto.' You're really helping others.

"I'm a sentimental fellow and I don't mind saying so. I think it's so important. You know, I hear people say many times in Washington, 'Oh, there's all those soft-hearted fellows,' and I hear once in a while from one of my friends in the media who will say, 'Oh, there's Humphrey with a tear running down his face.' Well, I'd rather have a tear than a sneer—any time. Then I hear somebody say, 'Well, I don't think he's tough enough.' Well, let me tell you something. There are enough toughies in this world already. What we need in this world are people of some compassion and good heart and good mind.

"I just think it's so important that we keep in mind what our goals are and what our standards need to be. Now we've had people help us, as I've said. You've been out there on the firing line. You have carried the torch, but we've had others such as people on the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs.

"You know, most of us in Congress have to have good people with us. We are the ones that put our names on the legislation. We are the ones that are out in front, so to speak. But it takes people behind us and around us to get the job done. I just want to thank all the staff people who are here from the House and the Senate committees that have made our progress in child nutrition possible.

"There also have been loyal and devoted people in the Department of Agriculture over the years. Most of them unheard, most of them not identified by the general public, although known by you because of your interest in the program. Dr. Mayer told me the other day that the Department of Agriculture deserves everlasting credit for the work that it has done in the field of nutrition, and I agree with him. That's where this program belongs—in the Department of Agriculture.

"We have a new secretary of agriculture. I know him and know him well. I know what's in his heart and I know a little bit about that keen mind of his. He's had legislative experience. He's been with us in these battles for the school lunch program and all the other feeding programs.

"There are others who deserve credit here, too. George McGovern has been a magnificent force for this program and he deserves your everlasting thanks and credit. We've had our little political differences on occasion, but I'll tell you something. I think he's a giant of a man. He's a good man. And our chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, Senator Talmadge, has been so receptive.

"Child nutrition is not a Democratic Party program only. We have had help from our Republican friends—a lot of them—we want to commend them for what they've done. This program goes beyond politics; it goes beyond administration. It goes to people.

"We now have to take our message to the President of the United States and when he gets a chance he wants to talk with people. He says he wants an open administration. Okay, talk to him every chance you get. Don't hesitate. If you feel strongly you say, 'I want to see you, Mr. President,' and I'll tell you, you'll be surprised. You'll get to see him.

"You're going to see Mr. Bergland, secretary of agriculture. You're going to have to see the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Whenever we get right down to all these things, I've always found out for some reason or another there's somebody over in that OMB who always stands in the way!

"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. I'll tell you that eternal vigilance is the price of our program. Never forget it. It's taken a lot of us to get where we've gotten in child feeding programs. I've been here a long

time and I intend to stick around a lot longer. I saw some reporter about a month ago who said he thought Humphrey had slowed down a little bit, lost a little of his vitality. I called him and said, 'Listen, that may be true, but I'm still 10 percent ahead of the rest of them.' Well, I quit trying to look good and just decided I wanted to do good and I think that's better.

"We've had a great time together. We've worked together and we're going to do some more. I just noted down a few things that have happened here and you're probably familiar with them. But you know, I've learned as an old educator to get people to remember, you have to do one of two things. You have either to steep them in it, which is the process of osmosis, or just repeat, repeat, repeat.

"I'd rather have a tear than a sneer anytime."

"The lunch program is now available to 90 percent of the children in school. In a number of states the figure is almost 100 percent. That's a long way away from where we started.

"Getting people sensitive to nutrition and what it means to their health, their happiness is important. We don't need to get everything all at once. As they say, just get the camel's nose under the tent. Just get it in there. One of the great mistakes that we make sometimes is trying to do too much, too fast, too soon without having tooled ourselves up to do the job. One of the things that colleges need is to train people in the field of nutrition and in how to run school lunch programs. We need that professional; this is a professional job.

"I think that generally the news in this town and all over is what goes wrong. I haven't seen any headline here that really tells us what you've done. But don't let that bother you because I'll tell you something. Folks out home know what you've done. The parents that have those children in school know. And not only that, you know what you've done. Many times you've saved a life. There is no greater honor that can befall anybody than to know that you've contributed to somebody's life or saved a life. That's the greatest thing.

"The school breakfast program has its roots and it's spreading. Eligibility for federal assistance has been extended to virtually any type of nonprofit school or child care institution. In effect, we have universal coverage from the standpoint of eligibility. But I want to say again that our schools have to become community nutrition centers. There is no reason that they shouldn't be. The schools belong to the people. They can be used 12 months a year. They can be used morning, noon, and night. They are not just for children. They can be for senior citizens. They can be for any kind of person.

"We've made some other progress now that state matching of federal funds is required. State legislative bodies are becoming aware of our program. And that's important. Let me just tell you this. It can't all be here in Washington. Most of our programs today have got to have their base right out there where they're close to the people. And it's important for you to lobby legislators in your respective states just as surely as you'd come down here to see your congressman or your senator. State legislatures have to figure out some priorities, too. Once you get those state legislators with you and the governors with you, you start to get the constituency with you because

there are no better campaigners in the world than those state legislators.

"What are we now? Up to around ten million? A little better than that? The level of federal money for these programs has been guaranteed in specific amounts adjusted semi-annually to fight increased costs. So, you see we've done well. Those are just a few things that you've done, we've done together. But I think that the future has some other challenges for us. First, we must increase our efforts to improve the quality and the acceptability of the food that is offered to children. We need to do that.

"We need to study the market. We need to take a leaf out of the book of the private entrepreneur. As I told somebody in a nutrition committee meeting one day, 'Look I believe in you; you have the right intent, but will you make that nutritious food look good?'

"Of course, much of this depends on the training of the child. It all starts there at the beginning. That's why these programs for women, infants, and children, that's why these preschool programs, these programs for the little ones, for the nursery schooler and the kindergartner are vital. They're vital not only because it's good for you to be healthy, but also because these programs develop the taste, develop the attitude that young people acquire toward food.

"We've got to increase the quality and acceptability of food offered. Cafeteria facilities need to be modernized in many places. Quite frankly, the setting for the foodservice needs to be enjoyable, with no rush. These, I grant you, are almost luxuries, but it is something we need to look ahead to. We've got to work to simplify program regulations. I tell you it's got to be done.

"We've put so much on everybody today in terms of record keeping. I don't know how we can do it better, but it surely is something that we have an obligation to do. You can be very helpful in this. You run the programs. You can show and should show the Congress how to simplify these regulations.

"Now I know that there are going to be some people who will steal a little food, that some people won't have on hand what they ought to have on hand. I know that there is going to be some overstock some place and there's going to be some of the food that will waste. And what's new about that? I don't want to get into a family fight, but I've seen a little of that at home. And I've been in a lot of other homes and have seen it. And I tell you something, there isn't a merchandiser in America that doesn't occasionally have more shirts than he can sell, or pants that he can't sell, etc.

"The Department of Agriculture deserves everlasting credit for the work it has done in the field of nutrition. That's where this program belongs."

"Inventory control is a problem for General Motors and American Motors. They built too many little cars. They've got rebates and re-re-rebates. I ran a drugstore for a long time and I'd like to tell you that the biggest problem we had was inventory, and another big problem was a little stealing. Mismanagement is here. We're people. We live in a society. This isn't heaven. That's coming later. Right after free lunches.

"Another thing is that after 30 some years we do not have a uniform nutrition education program in our schools with the

principles of good nutrition taught in the classroom and the practical application in the school lunchroom. The media is giving more attention to the subject of good nutrition. The time is here; the iron is hot. It's ready for us now to do our job.

"Most of the medical schools in this country have ignored nutrition. There's one doctor in 100 who really knows anything about nutrition except what little he's picked up along the way. It's not his fault. It just wasn't the subject. We've been treating disease rather than trying to protect health. And as I said so many times when we discussed health insurance, we've never had any health insurance. We've got sickness insurance. You've got to get sick. What we need is preventive medicine. What we need is nutrition designed for health. What we need is early diagnosis.

"While I'm no professional in this field, I know that most of the disabilities that afflict people, whether they are emotional or physical, are more subject to remedy in the pliable, early years of life than in the calcification, arterial sclerosis years of life. So we need to get at it early.

"In February both Carl Perkins and I introduced our respective bills on nutrition education information. We want you to get out now and help us. I think we can pass it. If we get it out of committee and on the Senate calendar, I'll guarantee that we'll pass it. The cost is really very modest, very, very little. The next step down the road, of course, is a universal nutrition and feeding program for all of our children. And I know right away that people say 'Oh, but the cost.' That's what they said about school books. That's what they said about gymnasiums at one time. That's what they said about music programs in schools. Always the cost. Of course, it costs.

"But let me tell you what costs—an operation. Let me tell you what costs—chemotherapy. Let me tell you what costs—medicine. That's what costs. Let me tell you what costs—getting laid off. The cost of sickness in this country has never been told. We spend \$120 billion on health care, they say, but that doesn't include what we lose in income and it doesn't say anything about the suffering, the anguish, and the worry and the family problems that come from it. Let me tell you, there's no way you can measure the costs of sickness. We know today that better food, that better nutrition, will help us stay well, strong, mentally alert.

"I've tried to say to you what's in my heart. I told somebody not long ago that I'm totally an emancipated man. It's wonderful to get away from wondering if I say this or if I say that what it's going to do to me. Couldn't care less. What I want to do is say what I've learned through my life. I can't say it's always right, but at least I like to be heard. You don't need to be taken seriously, but you have a right to be heard. What I've learned from my life is what I've been telling you tonight. First of all, you have to take inspiration from your achievements as well as challenge from your limitations. But you can't just go around thinking about what we didn't do. You've got to think about what we did do. Remember how far we've come. And yet how far we have to go and have our own standards.

"That's why we're talking as we did tonight. You've got to have lots of enthusiasm. The whole purpose of life is action, not just meditation. Action. And you've been action people. And I guess that's what you think I've been or you wouldn't have given me all of this tonight. I want to thank you, thank you very, very much."

REMARKS OF SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
AMERICAN SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE ASSOCIATION
DINNER HONORING SENATOR HUMPHREY

Washington, D.C.

Capitol Hill Hilton

March 14, 1977

Thank you very much, Mrs. White, for your very kind and gracious introduction.

I am delighted to see President Martin, Dr. Jean Mayer, Congressman Perkins and other distinguished guests in attendance. I have worked with the School Food Service people for many years, and I truly feel that I am among good friends.

This occasion touches me deeply. But I should point out that I am only one of an army of dedicated individuals who have worked for many years to build and improve our child nutrition programs. It is clear that our strength has been growing, as well as support for our programs.

As you are aware, I have an undeserved reputation for never being at a loss for words. Regardless of this obviously fallacious reputation, I simply do not have the words to express my appreciation and gratitude for your generosity and the warmth of your friendship.

Therefore, let me quote just two lines from Shakespeare:

"I can no other answer make but thanks, and thanks and ever thanks."

I understand that this is the fifth annual ASFSA legislative action conference. You are to be congratulated for sponsoring and organizing such a large meeting with attendance from nearly every state.

Your leadership has developed a comprehensive agenda of all work and no play. I am pleased that a full day has been set aside to meet your congressional representatives on Capitol Hill.

As you meet with these members of Congress, don't be reticent about telling them about the accomplishments and problems you face in developing a better program.

And you have no need to be on the defensive about your work. There is no more noble profession than that of providing food to our children for the full development of body and mind.

Now let's look briefly at the past accomplishments in building the child nutrition programs and then try to take a glimpse at the future. We can be justly proud of our many accomplishments, but the job is not finished.

Many changes have occurred since the school lunch program's inception in 1946, and especially in the last six or seven years.

-- The school lunch program is now available to 90 percent of the children enrolled in elementary and secondary schools. In a number of states this figure approaches 100 percent.

-- A successful and growing breakfast program has been established.

-- Eligibility for federal assistance has been extended to virtually any type of non-profit school or child care institution. In effect, we have universal coverage from the standpoint of eligibility.

-- State matching of federal funds is now required. Moreover, state legislative bodies, especially in the larger states, are responding by the enactment of landmark legislation in support of these programs. I know many of you have been the prime movers in the passage of this legislation.

-- The service of free and reduced-priced lunches for needy children has been mandated by federal legislation. This program has been remarkably successful. In the late sixties, only about 2.5 million needy children were being reached, but this number now exceeds 10 million.

-- The level of federal funding for these programs has been guaranteed in specific amounts, adjusted semi-annually to reflect increased costs. This has contributed greatly to facilitating financial planning for state and local governments.

As to the future, I would hope that we would direct our efforts and energies in several areas:

-- First, we must increase our efforts to improve the quality and acceptability of the food offered to children. Cafeteria facilities in many situations must be made more attractive, and children must be given sufficient time to enjoy their food in a social and friendly atmosphere. Moreover, the sale of other food items in the schools must be controlled to avoid interfering with the nutritional objectives of the program.

-- Second, we must work to simplify program regulations, procedures and record keeping requirements which have become increasingly difficult for local school officials to understand and administer.

-- Third, after some 31 years, we still do not have a uniform nutrition education program in our schools to blend the principles of good nutrition in the classroom with the practical application in the school cafeteria. The media is giving more attention to the importance of good nutrition, and greater recognition is being given to this subject in the school curriculum.

But this is not enough. We must build a bridge of communication and exchange of information between school employees in the cafeteria and the teaching and administrative staffs. If this can be done, a nutrition education program can be meaningful, understandable and effective.

Last month, I introduced a bill in the Senate designed to achieve these purposes. This bill was co-sponsored by six other Senators, and an additional five Senators have since joined in sponsoring it.

In dollars, my bill is very modest. It would make no spectacular overnight changes. But it could well be the beginning step that often results in major progress over a period of time. I commend it to your attention, and I would appreciate your comments and suggestions.

Lastly, I want to talk with you about a universal nutrition program for all children.

In the near future I again will introduce a bill embracing the principle that all children in schools and child care institutions should be offered good nutrition on an equal basis.

I will do this because I believe that it is very important to get the Congress, the Executive Branch and the American public to focus their attention on this vitally important principle. Personally, I am convinced that this approach ultimately will be adopted because it makes sense and is in the best interest of the nation's children.

I have never heard any objection to the universal nutrition approach except that it would cost more money. But when you examine a program, you must consider the cost issue from two angles: First, what will it cost on an immediate basis? Second, what will be the cost to taxpayers, both in terms of money and human suffering, if the program is not adopted.

I believe that we must begin to measure the true cost of a program on the basis of the second perspective.

We ought to be demanding answers to three questions:

-- The poor child entering kindergarten or first grade perhaps does not understand or care that he has been singled out to receive a free lunch. As he grows older, he does understand and he is resentful. How many disciplinary, attendance and juvenile delinquency problems are caused by this misunderstanding?

-- Second, to what extent does a lack of nutrition education in the schools lead to poor diets, malnutrition and reduced performance? As a result, how many children leave school unable to earn a living, thereby becoming a financial burden to society?

-- Finally, how closely are poor nutrition and poor dietary habits related to the need for dental and health care in later life? We are all aware of the billions of dollars it costs to meet these needs, and there is a mountain of evidence that many kinds of illnesses are nutrition related.

I am reminded of the TV ad where the mechanic has just done a costly engine overhaul because the oil filter was not replaced regularly. The mechanic says "You can pay now," -- for a simple oil filter -- "or you can pay me later."

If we neglect our nation's health we will continue to pay later in terms of ever increasing medical bills. Unfortunately, we don't know the specific answers to these questions. But I do believe the answers can be found.

For this reason, I plan to ask the Secretary of Agriculture to assemble a group of experts to make a comprehensive study of the feasibility of a universal nutrition program for children, its costs, and its impact on other cost areas. Such a study also would be concerned with the cost savings that would accrue through simplifying and streamlining program administration.

Your organization should lend its talent and experience to assist in this undertaking.

This has been a happy and joyous occasion for me. I wish you well. And, I shall continue to work with you to help improve the health and nutrition of all children.

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