

REMARKS OF SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
FIRST ANNUAL DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA DIVISION
AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY INSPIRATIONAL AWARD
WASHINGTON, D. C., APRIL 1, 1977

Well, dear friends, it is wonderful to have a friend like our Vice President. The real truth is that he's heard me speak so many times, he says, "I just can't take it once more." And he is a very busy man.

I scarcely know where to begin expressing appreciation here today. First, of course, to our Vice President. He is a very dear and personal friend. He does exaggerate though. But there is truth in what he had to say, because he was one of the first, if not the first, outside of my family, to come and visit me when I was in the hospital. And he always brings cheer. The two of us had quite a good time together.

I want to express my thanks to Mr. Sigmund and, of course, to the District of Columbia Division of the American Cancer Society. And I surely want to express my thanks to this marvelous artisan, this fine gentleman, yes, a supreme being, and thank him for bringing us today the healing of good humor and laughter. There really is no medicine that is better than that.

As I listened to Victor Borge today, I thought to myself -- if he had made Vice President and I had taken piano lessons-----. Mrs. Humphrey is a very good friend of Victor Borge. One time they played a duet together. I've never quite been able to put up with her since. But she is going to be very unhappy with me when I tell her about this luncheon. Quite honestly, I'm not very fair to her. I tell her that I've got to hurry up; I've got to get in and out of a luncheon. There's a lot of work in the Senate, and there is. But I shall bring her your greetings and tell her what a great program you had today.

I want to thank the Mayor. He always has been very dear to us and a good personal friend of mine.

I want to thank my sister, Frances. She shepherds me and she watches over me. Frances knows more people in the District of Columbia in one day than I'll know in five years. She's always there to help me. And I, of course, express thanks to everyone.

In the Senate when we wish to make a request we ask unanimous consent to amend or whatever we wish to do. And so I ask unanimous consent that this award also include Marvella Bayh and Tom Harper. When you talk about inspiration, these two people are really noteworthy. I've never known anyone that can give more inspiration to so many people in this great cause as you, Marvella. And, Tom, we want to commend you and to wish you the best. The Navy is a great service, and you're making it all the better. You're really showing the courage of the United States Navy.

Father Hartke, it's good to have you here. You just keep praying for me. Your connections are good. And, Reverend Donoher, you keep working for me, too. I need this extra help. And I can honestly tell you that I've had a great deal of that kind of help, so I'm humbly and prayerfully grateful for it.

Well, now, I understand that I'm the recipient of the first Inspirational Award. I've all kinds of awards, but this one is special. And it comes, of course, from a very special organization. I accept it with a true and deep sense of humility and commitment.

The sense of humility is a simple recognition that thousands of Americans every year are afflicted with this dangerous and threatening and dreadful disease. Many of them undergo, as you know all too well, great financial, emotional and physical hardship. But some of them succumb to the illness. But more and more every year recover. However,

every life, every single life, is so touched and profoundly altered -- not only the life of the victim, but the life of the family and loved ones.

Now, Senator, I keep calling him "Senator." But Vice President Mondale, my good friend, told you about my period of hospitalization with dramatic exaggeration. During my hospitalization I saw that each of my fellow patients had a unique story -- a fear of suffering, but also courage and endurance, optimism, good humor and spiritual growth.

I could tell you today at least a dozen stories that really would just touch your heart-- of people who were afraid to go into surgery that I had a chance to talk to. A little girl that was in the next room from me who had been in there for over a year and hadn't been able to take a step. Every day I told her, "Debbie, we have a date. You and I will walk up and down these corridors." Before I left there, she got up and walked. There are so many wonderful instances of courage and friendship that you're able to sense and to appreciate.

Human destiny, however, is never more than partly within our control. But there is a very large area for asserting our will and our values and deciding how to use and interpret our own experience. And there is, believe me, such a thing as the power of faith and of determination, especially when they work together.

Tom, I know what you mean about work. There were those days I can tell you quite frankly a couple of months ago when I looked in the mirror, and I'd say, "You just look like a bum." And you want to go and hide. I gave myself at least 15 seconds on the worst days of that kind of self-pity. Then I'd kick myself where one should be kicked and would say, "Let's get out of here. Let's go to work."

I believe in the therapy of work. I was brought up to believe in it. If you're working, you don't have time to think about your affliction. It does help. There isn't any doubt about it at all.

Now, I've been privileged to serve in public office for many years and to have many, many friends. But also I found out that I have many, many friends who I've never had the chance to meet. I received from them when I was hospitalized their expressions of friendship and affection by the thousands and thousands of letters and cards. Telephone calls that I obviously couldn't accept.

Flowers poured in so that they filled that hospital and were enjoyed by countless people. I'm happy to say that any of you that might have sent some flowers, wherever you may be, I loved them. And I shared them. It was a great joy to do it, for there were some people who never received flowers. Flowers have a meaning of life and happiness for me.

We've got a home in Minnesota and I lost three very good and dear friends -- just zip, zip, zip -- like that, one after the other, in a period of less than four months. So I called up one day to Muriel. And I said, "Listen, honey, I want you to call up the Buffalo Floral Shop and tell Mr. Pinski," -- that's our florist out there -- "to start bringing out the flowers and start planting them. I want to see them while I'm alive. I want to smell them while I can still sniff." And I said, "Tell anybody that wants to be nice to us to send flowers while I'm still kicking around."

We love our home. Its beautiful grounds are graced with all these lovely flowers that remind me of the friendship and affection of my friends. I know that with the help of Almighty God -- it is He that gives you a genuine feeling of being -- and with the extraordinary medical knowledge that we have today, with the loving support of others, I know that my energy and my vitality have been restored.

I was in New York last night. I was up bright and early this morning. I don't brag about it, because it's kind of nonsensical, but I put in a 12 to 14-hour day. I'll be damned if I see any reason not to. My father always told me that it isn't how many years you've

lived -- it's how many hours you're awake. And I've always believed that -- because you're really out when you're asleep. I look upon sleep as only that amount of time that is necessary to restore the vitality that I need to keep as many hours awake as humanly possible and still function. And I've enjoyed my living.

Now, I'm back on the job and enjoying that work here in the Senate as the Senator from the great state of Minnesota. And I hope, as a representative of my fellow Americans who might otherwise be voiceless.

Telling the story of one individual and his or her fight against a dangerous disease helps draw attention to all the untold stories -- some inspiring and some heartbreaking, all of them equally valid. I'm very, very grateful to have this opportunity to be of help -- and, of course, to me this citation is their citation.

In fact, it is both logical and memorable that my own struggle should give me increased understanding and concern for the other victims of cancer. You heard about Senator Matthew Neely. He was my seat mate for a number of years. He had lost most of his hand and all that was left was one finger. What a brave and good man he was. He led the fight back in the 1920's -- the first effort in the Congress of the United States to do something about research in this field. I received great inspiration from him. Now it's my turn to return it.

Most of all, my experience has steeled my determination to make the conquest of cancer a major national priority. I'm proud to share that commitment with all of you present today. I would like to hope that this award will help me find words to inspire our million dollar volunteers. One million dollars is the goal that is set by the American Cancer Society for its Washington fund raising drive. Two million dollars for the metropolitan area. To do less would be unworthy of us. That money is desperately needed.

Alexis de Tocqueville, that great French historian and political theorist, understood America like few Americans ever understood it. He said something like this, "The Americans are the most peculiar people. When they see something that needs to be done, what they do is go out and organize a committee and get it done."

That's what we mean by volunteer effort. We don't just want the government to do this job. We need you. We need the volunteers, and I'm going to show you why. Every year, those volunteers, you volunteers, surpass in number and in donations your previous success. The money that you raise supports vital research. There are many research projects going unfunded. Who knows who's going to make the breakthrough? You never know where it's going to come from. The money that you raise supports vital research and education. It also provides for services to take care of people.

And there is solid progress to report. You've made amazing progress. In the last decade there have been breakthroughs that we never dreamed possible twenty years ago. Now technologies for prevention, for diagnosis and treatment have lowered the recurrence rate of the major forms of cancer, and increased the survival of patients.

I want to see the American Cancer Society put more of its resources in what I call the prevention of the disease, not merely in the cure of the disease. We're beginning to find out many things. We need to improve what we call the science of immunology. We need to develop the immune system of the body. It's my judgment that the body has to cure cancer itself; the chemistry of the body, the will of the mind, the faith, the belief that you have. All the rest of it is auxiliary, supplementary.

We're going to have to do much more in the field of nutrition. Our medical profession is not skilled in nutrition because the medical schools have been derelict in teaching the whole subject matter of nutrition.

We're going to have to look upon the environment in which we live. We're going to have to remember that this society of ours is a chemically addicted society. It isn't just a chemical addiction of the drugs that we hear about, but the chemicals in all of our foods and our water and everything. And we're going to have to understand that this has some relationship to our basic body health.

We're constantly talking about the need for national health insurance. We spend most of our research money trying to cure the disease. Well, that's important, God only knows it's important, spending our money to alleviate pain and suffering. But, dear friends, the economics of medical care tells us that disease prevention and strengthening the normal body health are the answer that we need to have to conquer all diseases.

And you ought to be very happy out there in this room today. What is greater than to save a life? What is better than to save a life? Nothing. Absolutely no reward equals it. And indirectly and directly, you are saving lives.

Many of you here today have inspired the persons with whom you've talked to take the time and trouble to check their health. Some of you undoubtedly found people that didn't have cancer. And some of you, by alerting people, will have enabled them by early detection to win their battle and live out their lives. That knowledge must be most gratifying. It is much more rewarding than any praise that I could offer to the tradition of volunteer work and civil responsibility that brings you here. Just as success and achievement are the best reward, hope is the best inspiration to continued effort.

That hope lies in our belief that cancer is a soluble problem. There is an old proverb, "That he who has health has hope, and he who has hope has everything." There are many types of cancer, therefore, many solutions are required. Progress is painfully slow and no universal breakthrough can be anticipated. If we know that the war can be fought and won, then that war should inspire in us all the tenacity, patience and commitment to make the necessary effort.

I speak now as a member of Congress. Congress must provide the bulk of the funds to support a vigorous and intensive national fight against cancer. Congress and the American Cancer Society working side by side. As I said before, this partnership is a part of the tradition of America, because success will depend upon the commitment of the American public.

I wonder how many in this audience know what the figures are that Congress will be wrestling with in terms of a National Cancer Institute. I doubt we really know. But you ought to let the members of Congress know that you are interested -- because cancer in this country, unless we put an end to it, can become epidemic. Literally epidemic. This is a war that we ought to fight. And this is a war that we can win. This is an investment. It saves lives and relieves the anguish and the pain that afflict so many.

It's in this spirit, therefore, that I accept your award. It's been a great day -- fun, laughter, companionship, fellowship and inspiration. It's all here. And you out there, you're the finest of people. You're in the American tradition of helping your neighbor. Remember this -- in your work, the life that you save may very well be your own.

Thank you very much.

#

REMARKS OF SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
FIRST ANNUAL D.C. AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY
INSPIRATIONAL AWARD

Washington, D.C.

April 1, 1977

To receive this first inspirational award presented by the D.C. American Cancer Society gives me a great sense of humility and commitment.

The sense of humility is a simple recognition that thousands of Americans every year are afflicted with this dangerous and threatening disease. Many of them undergo great financial, emotional and physical hardship. Some of them succumb to the illness and some of them recover. But every life so touched is profoundly altered.

During my hospitalization, I saw that each of my fellow patients had a unique story of fear and suffering, but also of courage and endurance, of optimism, good humor and of spiritual growth.

Human destiny is never more than partly within our control. But there is a very large area for asserting our will and our values in deciding how to use and interpret our experience.

And there is such a thing as the power of faith and determination, especially when they work together.

I have been privileged to serve in public office, and to have made many, many friends, most of whom I have never met and never will meet, but who have sent me warm messages of hope and goodwill. To feel their prayers and affection has been a healing and inspiring experience.

With the help of God, medical knowledge and the loving support of others, my energy and vitality has returned. I am back on the job in the Senate as a representative of the great state of Minnesota and, I hope, as representative of many fellow Americans who might otherwise be voiceless.

If telling the story of one individual and his fight against a dangerous disease helps draw attention to all the untold stories -- some inspiring, some heartbreaking, all of them equally valid -- then I am very grateful to have this opportunity to be of help.

In fact, it is both logical and inevitable that my own struggle should give me increased understanding and concern for other victims of cancer. Most of all, it has steeled my determination to make the conquest of cancer a major national priority.

I am proud to share that commitment with all of you present today. I would like to hope that this award can help me find words to inspire the Society's million-dollar volunteers.

One million dollars is the goal set by the American Cancer Society for its Washington fundraising drive, and two million dollars for the metropolitan area.

Every year those volunteers surpass in number and in donations their previous success. The money they raise supports vital research, education and services.

There is solid progress to report from the increasing public and private investment. New technologies for prevention, diagnosis and treatment have lowered the recurrence rate of the major forms of cancer, and have increased the survival of patients.

Volunteers save lives, both directly and indirectly. Many of you here today have inspired the persons with whom you talked to take the time and trouble to check their health. Some of them undoubtedly found that they did have cancer. And some of them were enabled, by early detection, to win their battle and live out their lives.

That knowledge must be gratifying. It is much more rewarding than any praise that I might offer to the tradition of volunteer work and civic responsibility that brings you here.

Just as achievement is the best reward, hope is the best inspiration to continued effort.

That hope lies in our belief that cancer is a soluble problem. But because there are many distinct types of cancer, many solutions are required. Progress is painfully slow, and no early or universal breakthrough can be anticipated.

If we know that the war can be fought and won, then that hope should inspire in us all the tenacity, patience and commitment to make the necessary effort.

Congress must provide funds to support a vigorous and intensive national fight against cancer. But governmental support and funding are only a part of the picture. Success will depend on the commitment of the American public.

It is in this spirit that I accept your award: With a sense of humility for being singled out among a multitude; and with a sense of commitment that I am proud to share with the American Cancer Society and its public-spirited volunteers.

#

Father Hottle
Rev Thomas
Danaker

REMARKS OF SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

FIRST ANNUAL D.C. AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY

INSPIRATIONAL AWARD

WASHINGTON, D.C.

V.P. Mondelo ⊕ Mayor Washington
APRIL 1, 1977 ⊕ Francis Howard

Mr William Sigmond - President

Impugnatus Marvella Bayl - Tom Harper

Victor Borge

TO RECEIVE THIS FIRST INSPIRATIONAL AWARD PRESENTED
BY THE D.C. AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY GIVES ME A GREAT
SENSE OF HUMILITY AND COMMITMENT.

THE SENSE OF HUMILITY IS A SIMPLE RECOGNITION THAT
THOUSANDS OF AMERICANS EVERY YEAR ARE AFFLICTED WITH THIS
DANGEROUS AND THREATENING DISEASE. MANY OF THEM UNDERGO
GREAT FINANCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL HARDSHIP. SOME OF
THEM SUCCUMB TO THE ILLNESS AND SOME OF THEM RECOVER. BUT
EVERY LIFE SO TOUCHED IS PROFOUNDLY ALTERED.

DURING MY HOSPITALIZATION, I SAW THAT EACH OF MY FELLOW
PATIENTS HAD A UNIQUE STORY OF FEAR AND SUFFERING, BUT ALSO
OF COURAGE AND ENDURANCE, OF OPTIMISM, GOOD HUMOR AND
OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH.

h HUMAN DESTINY IS NEVER MORE THAN PARTLY WITHIN OUR
 CONTROL. ↳ BUT THERE IS A VERY LARGE AREA FOR ASSERTING OUR
WILL AND OUR VALUES IN DECIDING HOW TO USE AND INTERPERT
OUR EXPERIENCE.

h AND THERE IS SUCH A THING AS THE POWER OF FAITH AND
DETERMINATION, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY WORK TOGETHER.

*Work
 Tom
 Harper*

↳ I HAVE BEEN PRIVILEGED TO SERVE IN PUBLIC OFFICE, AND
 TO HAVE MADE MANY, MANY FRIENDS, MOST OF WHOM I HAVE NEVER

MET AND NEVER WILL MEET, BUT WHO HAVE SENT ME ^{their} ~~them~~ MESSAGES *of friends*

affection and

OF HOPE AND GOODWILL. ↳ TO FEEL THEIR PRAYERS AND AFFECTION

HAS BEEN A HEALING AND INSPIRING EXPERIENCE.

h WITH THE HELP OF ^{simplicity} GOD, MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE AND THE LOVING
 SUPPORT OF OTHERS, MY ENERGY AND VITALITY HAS RETURNED.

(maybe my hair on due time)

I AM BACK ON THE JOB IN THE SENATE AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
GREAT STATE OF MINNESOTA AND, I HOPE, AS REPRESENTATIVE OF
MANY FELLOW AMERICANS WHO MIGHT OTHERWISE BE VOICELESS.

L IF TELLING THE STORY OF ONE INDIVIDUAL AND HIS FIGHT
AGAINST A DANGEROUS DISEASE HELPS DRAW ATTENTION TO ALL THE
UNTOLD STORIES -- SOME INSPIRING, SOME HEARTBREAKING, ALL
OF THEM EQUALLY VALID -- THEN I AM VERY GRATEFUL TO HAVE
THIS OPPORTUNITY TO BE OF HELP.

L IN FACT, IT IS BOTH LOGICAL AND INEVITABLE THAT MY OWN
STRUGGLE SHOULD GIVE ME INCREASED UNDERSTANDING AND CONCERN
FOR OTHER VICTIMS OF CANCER. MOST OF ALL, IT HAS STEELED
MY DETERMINATION TO MAKE THE CONQUEST OF CANCER A MAJOR
NATIONAL PRIORITY.

I AM PROUD TO SHARE THAT COMMITMENT WITH ALL OF YOU
PRESENT TODAY. I WOULD LIKE TO HOPE THAT THIS AWARD CAN
HELP ME FIND WORDS TO INSPIRE THE SOCIETY'S "MILLION-DOLLAR
VOLUNTEERS.

ONE MILLION DOLLARS IS THE GOAL SET BY THE AMERICAN
CANCER SOCIETY FOR ITS WASHINGTON FUNDRAISING DRIVE, AND
TWO MILLION DOLLARS FOR THE METROPOLITAN AREA.

EVERY YEAR THOSE VOLUNTEERS SURPASS IN NUMBER AND IN
DONATIONS THEIR PREVIOUS SUCCESS. THE MONEY THEY RAISE
SUPPORTS VITAL RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND SERVICES.

and, THERE IS SOLID PROGRESS TO REPORT FROM THE
INCREASING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INVESTMENT.

↳ NEW TECHNOLOGIES FOR PREVENTION, DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

HAVE LOWERED THE RECURRENCE RATE OF THE MAJOR FORMS OF

CANCER, AND HAVE INCREASED THE SURVIVAL OF PATIENTS.

↳ VOLUNTEERS SAVE LIVES, BOTH DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY.

↳ MANY OF YOU HERE TODAY HAVE INSPIRED THE PERSONS WITH

WHOM YOU TALKED TO TAKE THE TIME AND TROUBLE TO CHECK

THEIR HEALTH. SOME OF THEM UNDOUBTEDLY FOUND THAT THEY

DID HAVE CANCER AND SOME OF THEM WERE ENABLED, BY EARLY

DETECTION, TO WIN THEIR BATTLE AND LIVE OUT THEIR LIVES.

↳ THAT KNOWLEDGE MUST BE ^{most} GRATIFYING. IT IS MUCH MORE

REWARDING THAN ANY PRAISE THAT I MIGHT OFFER TO THE

TRADITION OF VOLUNTEER WORK AND CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY THAT

BRINGS YOU HERE.

↳ JUST AS ACHIEVEMENT IS THE BEST REWARD, HOPE IS THE
BEST INSPIRATION TO CONTINUED EFFORT,

↳ THAT HOPE LIES IN OUR BELIEF THAT CANCER IS A SOLUBLE
PROBLEM. ↳ BUT BECAUSE THERE ARE MANY DISTINCT TYPES OF
CANCER, MANY SOLUTIONS ARE REQUIRED ↳ PROGRESS IS PAINFULLY

SLOW, AND NO EARLY OR UNIVERSAL BREAKTHROUGH CAN BE ANTICIPATED.

But IF WE KNOW THAT THE WAR CAN BE FOUGHT AND WON, THEN THAT
HOPE SHOULD INSPIRE IN US ALL THE TENACITY, PATIENCE AND
COMMITMENT TO MAKE THE NECESSARY EFFORT.

↳ CONGRESS MUST PROVIDE FUNDS TO SUPPORT A VIGOROUS AND
INTENSIVE NATIONAL FIGHT AGAINST CANCER ↳ BUT GOVERNMENTAL
SUPPORT AND FUNDING ARE ONLY A PART OF THE PICTURE ↳ SUCCESS
WILL DEPEND ON THE COMMITMENT OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC.

L IT IS IN THIS SPIRIT THAT I ACCEPT YOUR AWARD: WITH
A SENSE OF HUMILITY FOR BEING SINGLED OUT AMONG A MULTITUDE;
AND WITH A SENSE OF COMMITMENT THAT I AM PROUD TO SHARE WITH
THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY AND ITS PUBLIC-SPIRITED VOLUNTEERS.

#####



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