



Max M. Kampelman Papers

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**HUBERT H. HUMPHREY:
TEACHER, POLITICIAN, HUMANITARIAN
BY
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**THE HUBERT H. HUMPHREY INSTITUTE
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA**

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This weekend is a particularly special one for those of us who were blessed by having the opportunity to work with Hubert Humphrey. We thank Brian Atwood and the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute at the University of Minnesota for making it possible; and we particularly owe more than our appreciation to those of our colleagues who conceived the idea and helped execute this celebration -- a celebration of the life of one of our nation's great Americans.

It is appropriate that our celebration begin with "talk" because that was the brilliant instrument which Humphrey utilized to achieve and strengthen his dedication to democratic public service as a Mayor, Senator, Vice President, and national political leader.

I recall, early in our relationship, discussing with Humphrey the length of his speeches. His response: "You and I are both teachers. The essence of communication is to tell them what you're going to tell them; to tell them; and to tell them what you told them." This, incidentally, did not stop Muriel, who reportedly said to him: "Hubert, a speech need not be eternal to be immortal." This also justifies and explains the length of my presentation this evening.

A central event of our celebration will be a luncheon talk on Monday by Robert Caro, whose most recent book in a brilliant biographical series about Lyndon Johnson has justifiably won the Pulitzer Prize. His superb book on the Senate years portrays Hubert in the early years as an unusually gifted and effective national humanitarian champion and leader. We appreciate those profound truisms about our friend. Each of us, however, has more to say and to add than what appears in books and articles. Humphrey is, for many of us, an integral part of our lives and memories.

I met Hubert in 1946 at the home of political science professor Herbert McClosky and his wife, Mitzy. As new young instructors, George Demetriou and I were invited to be a part of the occasional social evenings organized by the political science faculty. Hubert, the newly elected young mayor of Minneapolis, considered himself and was accepted as part of the group. It might be 10:00 or 11:00 at night before he would bounce in, but the lively discussions, arguments, and political planning would last for hours.

There was to be a Democratic Farmer-Labor Party (DFL) state convention in St. Paul that year. I attended and watched the Party being captured by its left wing, including a number of unions later, after hearings, to be expelled from the CIO for being controlled by the Communist Party. All that Hubert and his associates could manage at that convention was an agreement to elect Orville Freeman as Secretary of the party. Humphrey, who had worked in 1944 to combine the Democratic and Farm Labor parties into one, so as to help Franklin Roosevelt win in Minnesota, pledged to defeat the left wing and did so at the DFL 1948 convention. Orville, of course, was later to become an outstanding Governor and then an innovative Secretary of Agriculture under President Kennedy.

Humphrey occasionally invited me to join him or Eugenie Anderson, or Barney Allen, on quick automobile trips to organize political allies across the state. These were eye openers for me. His oratory was special, his energy awesome, his friends -- old and new -- impressive. I recall being puzzled on one occasion in a small Norwegian community where the usual overwhelming applause after his speech was missing. What was the matter? The explanation came as I stood outside the church after the talk and heard: "Dat vas gut!" There were no Norwegian farmers in the Bronx where I grew up.

Many of you, particularly Arthur Naftalin, know the Mayoralty period better than I do, but all of us know that before Hubert was elected Mayor in 1945, Minneapolis had the reputation of being the capital of anti-Semitism in America. Minneapolis was also known as the center of crime in America when gangsters moved in from Chicago. When Humphrey left city hall for Washington, Minneapolis received The Brotherhood award from the National Conference of Christians and Jews; and the FBI awarded Humphrey a law enforcement medal. Minneapolis was, furthermore, the first government entity in the United States to create a fair employment practices commission.

By November 1948, my teaching career took me to Vermont. It was a great job, including an apartment for Maggie and me, and a two and a half month summer and a two and a half month winter vacation. Hubert telephoned me after his election and said that he was speaking at a League for Industrial Democracy dinner in New York; would Maggie and I spend a quick weekend with him and Muriel? The audience was mostly labor and liberal. Hubert's speech brought the audience to its feet. During my law school days before the war, I had attended

night classes and worked during the day. Much of that time, I worked in a sweater factory and then for the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union, many of whose leaders were at this dinner. For me, the dinner was a reunion of sorts, and for Hubert it was a way of meeting future allies.

During Christmas week in 1948, as Maggie and I were visiting her parents and I was preparing to complete my doctoral dissertation, Bill Shore telephoned me, followed in short order by Humphrey. Humphrey, inspired by the Protestant work ethic, said he would relieve me of my winter vacation and, thereby, save me from sin. Bill Simms would be in Washington dealing with Minnesota and constituent matters. Would I help organize his legislative work. I did, and in the process, hired myself in spite of my hesitation about working for a friend as an employer. I stayed for six and a half years, submitting my resignation on the night of Humphrey's 1954 election victory. I agreed to stay for the next Senate session, during which I found a replacement -- Tom Hughes of Mankato and Yale.

Caro sympathetically highlights Hubert's introduction to the Senate as a deeply painful one. It was. Hubert's civil rights victory at the Democratic National Convention, which led to the walk-out by many of the Southern Delegates, had labeled him as an "enemy" of the South, whose leaders controlled the Senate. He was to be punished. In addition, a *Time* magazine cover featured Hubert, pictured as a whirlwind blowing into Washington. No freshman Senator could be permitted to be so acclaimed.

The atmosphere and tensions were obviously not improved with Hubert's decision, early in his Senate days, to invite his young office assistant, Cyril King, a Virgin Islander studying at Howard University, to lunch with him at the private

Senate dining room. The gesture first frightened and then permanently endeared him to the restaurant staff, but the hostility from the powerful Southern Senators was deep. Cyril later become the elected governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Hubert felt ostracized, and was -- in a clearly cruel manner. This was not helped by his early decision to strike back in an ineffective manner, and that story has been well told by Caro. Hubert was isolated and badly hurt by the powers in the Senate, who were strongly allied to Senator Harry Byrd of Virginia and whom Hubert attacked.

How to respond? With Humphrey's clear popularity among liberals and trade unionists, he was asked and agreed to be the national chairman of Americans for Democratic Action (ADA). This produced speaking invitations from all over the country. We agreed that he would travel the country as widely as possible and organize support in as many states as he could reach. The impact would be felt by the Senators in those states. It took time, but it began to work. Northern and Western Democrats were, in time, faced with the choice of acquiescing to the powerful South or following the urging of constituents back home, particularly among liberals and trade union members.

There was additional ammunition available. We prepared and he delivered on the Senate floor detailed and persuasive explanations of legislative proposals that he was introducing or endorsing, *i.e.*, Taft-Hartley repeal; Missouri Valley Authority; national health; food for peace; school construction; and civil rights. There was obviously inadequate support for the proposals in the Senate. But the Government Printing Office, which published the Congressional Record daily, also printed excerpts from the Record if they were paid for. We persuaded the heads of

the leading unions to pay for reprints of Humphrey's talks on the Senate floor. We arranged for the printing of tens of thousands of those reprints, which were then widely distributed all over the country at union meetings and political dinners. These distributions proved to be quite effective in moving Hubert forward as the agreed-upon liberal leader who would not in time be ignored by the Senate elite.

It is here relevant to report on one decisive event in the Senate, which, I believe, broke the rigid dam that held Humphrey back from a leadership role in the Senate.

One of my friends in Washington was Joe Pechman, a Brookings Institute economist and tax expert. He educated me about the unfairness of tax "loopholes" under which a favored few gained unfair advantage. I suggested he help us in the Senate. He said the issue was too complicated for a non-economist or non-tax lawyer to deal with, but he assembled a few of his expert friends to meet with Humphrey. It was a fruitful discussion.

Since our four or five "teachers" all worked during the day, we set up a series of evening sessions in our offices, where we finally agreed on a specific set of loopholes to attack when the tax bill reached the floor. It is my recollection that we agreed on 11 items, each of which would be an amendment to be attached to the bill. The challenge was to master the substance and explain the unfairness of the provisions. This took quite a few sessions before Humphrey felt comfortable. Our teachers then challenged him in mock debate. By the time the Senate calendar reached the issue, our teachers were amazed and impressed with Hubert's mastery of the subject matter.

When the debate took place, I sat next to Hubert and our experts sat in the gallery. If the need arose, I was to signal them; we were then to talk in the hallway; and I would quickly return to my seat with the information we needed. Hubert's command of the material meant I rarely had to signal them. Opposing us were the Democratic and Republican leaders of the Senate Finance Committee, powerful elders of the Senate, Walter George of Georgia and Eugene Milliken of Colorado. The debate began with utter disdain on the part of the elders. At one point in the debate, the aging Herbert Lehman of New York, in an effort to be helpful, chimed in to support the elimination of mining depletion tax benefits. In doing so, he mispronounced a technical term, leading Senator and oilman Robert Kerr of Oklahoma to ridicule the misspoken word. Humphrey angrily wiped the floor with Kerr.

This disdain quickly dissipated as Hubert demonstrated that he knew what he was talking about. Senators began to attend and enjoy the debate, which was fascinating and impressive. It lasted, as I recall, a full week. At first, only Paul Douglas and Herbert Lehman sat near Hubert to provide moral support. That number steadily increased. As the debate ended, with the powerful opposition defeating every one of our amendments, the drama was highlighted as both Walter George and Eugene Milliken jointly walked to Hubert's place on the last row and embraced him as they shook hands in admiration. Let me here parenthetically add that Humphrey's Senate presentation became a virtual textbook, with many thousands of reprints distributed by our friends throughout the country.

It was not long thereafter that I was in the Senate Democratic cloakroom, sacred territory, making a phone call in a small alcove when I heard the booming

voice of Senator George: "You know, that young fella Humphrey really believes the civil rights business."

Humphrey also gained strength from his relationship with President Truman. The President had been unhappy over Humphrey's success with his civil rights proposal at the 1948 convention, because of concern that it would damage his re-election effort. He began to take note of Humphrey and his support of the Truman program in the Senate. They developed a good relationship. The President, for example, as the 1954 election drew near, enthusiastically accepted Hubert's suggestion that the popular Minnesota Republican governor, Luther Youngdahl, a potential Republican opponent in the imminent election, be appointed a Federal judge in Washington. Judge Youngdahl subsequently told me he was immensely relieved at the appointment.

Hubert was also very proud that President Truman accepted his recommendation and appointed the queenly Eugenie Anderson as our ambassador to Denmark, the first American woman ambassador ever. Hubert, years later, also was immensely pleased when President Carter appointed his good friend, our own Geri Joseph, as our ambassador to the Netherlands.

Caro correctly refers to Lyndon Johnson's successful efforts to "sell" Hubert to the South. That has a great deal of merit, but it is not the entire story.

As a post-script, let me add that in 1954, Walter George came to Hubert, acknowledging that he could not be helpful in Minnesota if he endorsed him, but he would be willing to write to the Minnesota bankers if that would be helpful.

Hubert enthusiastically accepted that offer of assistance and support as a sign of new friendship.

The role of the South also brings to mind 1956, a presidential election year, but a brief reference first to 1952. Early in the year, Hubert received an unexpected visit from Senator Brian McMahon of Connecticut and John Bailey, the boss of Connecticut politics and a respected national political leader. They did not want Adlai Stevenson to be Truman's successor in the White House and were prepared to support Hubert for the nomination. We were obviously surprised at the suggestion, but Hubert quickly responded that he was inclined toward Stevenson and had decided that his prime role at the 1952 convention was to make certain that its platform did not retreat from the 1948 civil rights platform. The visit, however, was obviously a significant indication of what was ahead.

In that connection, Hubert had been working with Senator John Sparkman of Alabama on how to achieve some harmony designed to avoid another Southern walkout from the convention. Sparkman said that FEPC, the Fair Employment Practices Commission, was the symbol of danger as far as the South was concerned. After some thought, Hubert suggested that we drop FEPC and replace it with an Equal Opportunity in Employment Commission. After some hesitation, Sparkman agreed; Stevenson was nominated; Sparkman was nominated for Vice President; and the Southerners did not walk out.

Now back to 1956.

At that time, I was moderator of the public television program *Washington Week in Review*. On one Thursday evening, the program's usual broadcast night,

the Senate Democratic Campaign Committee was holding a dinner at the Mayflower. Hubert was in the chair, and Adlai Stevenson was the speaker. I reached the hotel during the dinner's closing minutes, and Hubert signaled me to approach. He wanted me to join him at Stevenson's suite after the dinner. When we reached the suite, Stevenson was already in pajamas. Bill Blair, his friend, was there, as well as Jim Finnegan, the powerful Pennsylvania political leader.

Adlai, apparently comfortable about his nomination for the presidency, now wanted to talk about the vice-presidency. He mentioned Kefauver, Kennedy, Johnson, Symington, and Sparkman, as I recall, listing the defects of each. He then said that Humphrey was his choice, but he was concerned about the South. Could we arrange for some Southern leaders to tell him they would accept Humphrey? They agreed that Herb Waters and Bill Blair would keep in touch with each other. Herb usually found it difficult to reach Blair, but we received no sign of any change in plan, and Humphrey arranged for some Southern Senators to telephone Stevenson as per the arrangement. At the convention, Hubert learned from television reports that Stevenson's vice-presidential choice would be based on votes at the convention. Kennedy and Kefauver came equipped with a campaign at the convention; Hubert did not. I suspected a ploy to put Minnesota in the Stevenson camp.

The Lyndon Johnson-Humphrey relationship was a complicated one, as Caro notes. Both stood much to gain by a cooperative understanding. Both knew and idolized Franklin D. Roosevelt. Hubert's Master's thesis was on the New Deal. Johnson asserted his political career was stimulated and encouraged by Roosevelt. Both were serious legislators who gave more than full time to their jobs. Both

were ambitious and believed the presidency to be attainable for them. Both had down-to-earth serious wives, who liked each other.

Johnson and Humphrey needed each other, but their differences were profound. Humphrey was kind, thoughtful and compassionate, as well as a capable human being committed to a sense of religious values. Johnson had an ever-ready propensity toward cruelty, anger and brutality, but at the same time had the capacity to exhibit more civilized and humane behavior.

Humphrey asked me to keep in touch with Johnson's entourage. He said that Johnson respected me. I worked at times with Bobby Baker, Skeeter Johnson, Gerry Siegel, Walter Jenkins, and George Reedy -- who was a neighbor of mine and an old friend from his days as a reporter. I had helped organize the legislative assistants of the liberal Senators and we effectively created a caucus. Indeed, when Johnson sought the Democratic leadership of the Senate, he knew he could not receive the unanimous vote he yearned for without accommodating Humphrey's proposals on behalf of the liberal caucus. One of our proposals was that the seniority rule be modified, and that liberals be appointed to the key committees. I heard Johnson tell Humphrey that he would do so if he could obtain a unanimous vote in favor of his leadership. A compromise had the liberals nominate Jim Murray of Montana for the leadership, an elder statesman who could not be a serious candidate, and then have either Humphrey or Murray, before there was a vote, call for unanimous support for Johnson.

Humphrey and Johnson made a good team. Humphrey would frequently ask: "Do you want to be the Senator from Texas for the rest of your life?" knowing of Johnson's open aspirations for the presidency. This was Humphrey's method of

proposing a liberal piece of legislation for Johnson's approval. When discussing strategy, I could hear Lyndon saying: "Can you keep your bomb throwers in line?" and Hubert's response: "Don't worry about my good liberal friends. It's your fascist friends I worry about!"

Hubert and I frequently talked about Johnson. I did not like or trust him. Humphrey, who had known the Protestant theologian Reinhold Neibuhr, a fellow ADA member, was impressed by his book *Children of Light and Children of Darkness*. He believed that human beings had both impulses as a natural part of their makeup. Humphrey felt that his task was to bring out the good in Johnson and use those impressive talents in the liberal direction.

Johnson was extremely jealous of Hubert's popularity and public speaking skills. I was frequently on the Senate floor during Hubert's absences and would be the recipient of Johnson's face-to-face confrontation: "You tell Hubert that he should be here and not making those speeches -- this is what he is paid for." When my resignation from Hubert's staff took place at the end of the 1955 session, Bob Albright, the political reporter for *The Washington Post*, had a lead story asking what would happen to the Humphrey-Johnson alliance now that Kampelman was gone. It did well.

Hubert's absences were not rare, given his national responsibilities. On one occasion, he telephoned me at about noon from the Detroit airport. He was snowed in and had a 2:30 speaking engagement that day in Washington. Would I substitute for him? I never had time to be concerned about his speaking engagements, and he rarely had a text. I therefore approached June Hendrickson, his secretary, to look through the correspondence. As I suspected, there was no

text prepared for this engagement. Much to my shock, I learned that the day was not only Washington's birthday, it was also Ash Wednesday. In two hours, Hubert and Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts were scheduled to speak at the National Cathedral on "God, Man and The Hydrogen Bomb." What I said that afternoon has been blotted from my memory, but I recall apologizing to the audience, and acknowledging that I was not biologically, culturally or spiritually qualified to speak in that forum, from that sanctuary, on that subject. Hubert later informed me that Senator Lodge thought I did well.

Johnson reappeared in my life on the second day of his presidency. The Kennedy funeral services took place that day. Humphrey telephoned me that afternoon to ask if Maggie and I could join him and Muriel for dinner. When we arrived, Adlai Stevenson was there, but he left for the airport immediately after dinner. I then joined Hubert in the kitchen, where he was cleaning up and doing the dishes.

"I was with the President at the White House this afternoon," he said, "and he wants you to be his Counsel. He doesn't trust Sorenson or Feldman." Maggie overheard this exchange, and immediately exclaimed: "Hubert, you can't do this to Max!"

I quietly explained that Maggie's reaction was due to her friendship with our neighbor, Lil Reedy, George's wife. The picture we received of Johnson from Mrs. Reedy, consistent with my own observations, was that of a cold, conniving, demanding, cruel and mean person. I, of course, also knew that was not the whole picture. My own reasons for refusal were both personal and political. I could not and would not leave my law firm, where I was Chairman. It was also my intent to

begin a quiet campaign for Hubert to be Johnson's vice-presidential candidate in the 1964 November elections. I explained to Hubert that I could not do that if I were working for Johnson, and that even if I refrained from doing so, Johnson would not believe me.

Obviously, our campaign for the vice-presidency was successful, as I believed it would be. I knew that Johnson felt the need to have Humphrey around, and that he liked Hubert in spite of the tension that frequently existed between them. My certainty was reinforced when Jim Rowe, my neighbor and friend, and an intimate of Johnson's, agreed to join our quiet campaign. I knew he had to have cleared that decision with Johnson.

A few of us -- Jim Rowe, Al Barkan (labor), Richard McGuire (Kennedy and Democratic National Committee), and Bill Connell -- met every week or so at my home as we worked to make the choice of Humphrey inevitable. We enlisted political and labor leaders from all over the country. It was indeed inevitable and I believe Johnson understood that.

Immediately prior to the opening of the 1964 convention, Jim Rowe brought a message from Johnson that Humphrey's first test was to solve a serious black-white dispute in the Mississippi delegation. Hubert asked his friend "Fritz" Mondale to help him. Fritz proved to be very successful.

On the night of the election, the President telephoned Hubert in Minneapolis, and asked that he fly down to the ranch in Texas for a conference the next morning. Hubert asked me to accompany him. I did. After I informed Johnson that I was not available to return to Hubert's staff, an embarrassing moment since

others were present, I was given the assignment of finding a residence for the Vice President, with further instructions that I be given a White House pass. I did eventually find a suitable residence, after presenting the President with two alternatives. Johnson delayed in making the arrangements and Hubert never occupied the house. Fritz Mondale did live in that house, and Dick Cheney lives in it now.

On the flight home from Texas to Washington, Hubert quietly, seriously and privately informed me: "Lyndon says that he will not run for re-election in 1968 and wants me to prepare for it." This was a shocker. Johnson told Hubert that he might die in office during this term, and that if he were to run for re-election, he would certainly die in office during the next term. Heart problems ran in his family and his were inevitable, he said. Hubert and I discussed this development carefully. I noted that the President might well change his mind and that, knowing Johnson as I did, Hubert must not take anything for granted.

John Stewart, Norman Sherman and others here with us this weekend will discuss Hubert as Vice President. They are more familiar with that period than I am. Hubert and I would frequently have breakfast, particularly when Muriel thought the time was right and invited me. He and I would walk and talk for a while, then get picked up by the Secret Service. I knew that his relationship with Johnson was not an easy one, and that he felt one of Johnson's aides frequently soured the relationship. The frustrations, however, were obviously mixed with many satisfactions.

I opened these remarks with references to Hubert's father, a relationship that was at the root of his dedication to democracy and human rights. Together, they

read Jefferson's writings and that of other Founding Fathers. The essence of this early education was that the political process was a means of moving the "is" of America closer to the "ought" of America. So let me end with a reference to Hubert's father. Hubert and I were returning by train late one evening from a Philadelphia meeting. We were tired and reminiscing. I said I knew how important his father was to his life, and that his father was a strong barrier to Hubert's deviating from his conscience and commitments. His father, indeed, soon after Hubert became Mayor, had picked up the phone and called him from South Dakota after reading in the *Minneapolis Tribune* that Hubert had dinner with the Minneapolis Bankers Association. He warned Hubert about trusting bankers. His father was now dead, I noted. "What effect has this had on your behavior?" I asked. Hubert looked at me and said: "He's up there, still watching over me."

My friends, Hubert is up there, still guiding us and urging us to go forward with his dedication to democracy and human rights.