

**MEMORIAL TRIBUTES IN THE U.S. CONGRESS
ON THE LIFE AND CONTRIBUTIONS
OF SENATOR WAYNE MORSE
July 22, 1974**

SEN. ALAN CRANSTON (D - California)

Wayne Morse will probably be best remembered for his early and farsighted opposition to the Vietnam war. During one of the darkest periods in our history he let the world know that the conscience of America was not dead.

But I also will remember Wayne Morse as a man who believed in making people free; free from the bonds of prejudice, ignorance and social disadvantage...

He was one of the ablest labor negotiators this country has ever seen. And he never broke faith with the rights of working people seeking to improve their lot through democratic action.

Senator Morse was a fighter for better education ... And he knew that there can never be equality of opportunity as long as boys and girls in different communities are burdened with unequal education. The first comprehensive Federal aid to education package will be one of his lasting monuments.

Wayne Morse belongs to a proud tradition of western lawmakers who instinctively move to the side of the underdog. I remember the water rights battles over the California water plan in the 1950's and 1960's. There were few in high office to plead the case for the family farmer and small landowners. But Wayne Morse was there, with all the fire and eloquence of his 19th century Populist forebears.

He was there in the cause of small businessmen too, (making) sure business people of modest means got a fair shake from their government in procurement policies and the sale of Federal lands.

He recognized poor health as a barrier to full human development and worked tirelessly for medicare and veterans hospitals ...

His philosophy of public service was simple and abiding. He believed that people will come to the right conclusion if only given all the facts. When the people err, he reasoned, it is because they have not had the benefit of the full truth. To Wayne Morse, the U.S. Senate was a crucible of ideas where the truth is hammered out in debate and delivered to the people.

He was dedicated to serving his constituents, his country and his conscience. And he knew where loyalty to one left off and duty to the next began.

SEN. TED KENNEDY (D - Massachusetts)

Senator Morse (was) daily proof in the Halls of Congress that an individual can make a difference, that a single voice of integrity, insight, understanding and compassion can change America and alter the flow of history.

Perhaps most of all, to those who were honored to serve here with him, we shall recall his speeches on the Senate floor, the addresses that became the hallmark of the Senate at the close of daily business. In his brilliant, eloquent, and forceful manner, he ranged across the whole range of foreign and domestic policy. He was at his best on these occasions, teaching the Senate wisdom.

With his death the country has lost one of its most energetic and enlightened voices, and the country is the poorer.

SEN MARK HATFIELD (R - Oregon)

Throughout the full and rich life of Senator Morse, he felt a commitment to the truth. His early life was highlighted by brilliant scholarship and inspirational teaching. His middle career was one of mediating differences between management and labor. In yet another career within the United States Senate, Wayne Morse called on all of these skillful characteristics and meshed them by alternating the roles of the scholar and the teacher.

But we would do his memory an injustice if we did not recognize the dogged determination of a fighter for principle who takes on the mightiest of the world at the drop of a scruple, and who would chase the money changers from the temple, the marketplace, or the White House with a fury of fierce ferocity.

... The fire and brimstone were brought forth with a style that evoked fear and trembling – a Morse quake, if you will – and he delighted in watching his colleagues, friends and foes, as the Morse barrage of facts, legal precedents and constitutional quotes poured forth. Also, he never shrank from an issue when it appeared the skies were falling. He stood toe to toe with the best debaters this body ever has seen.

Wayne Morse cherished his convictions. He clung to them, fought for them, and yielded to them. One cannot say that about many men today.

... Wayne Morse never thought the point of politics, or of life, was “to get along, you go along.” He was freer than most from that perpetual concern with popularity. It was more important for Wayne Morse to stand for his convictions, and struggle for truth.

Wayne Morse loved the law ... And it was that love which produced such bristling indignation whenever he felt others were jeopardizing the sanctity of constitutional law.

All these qualities equipped Wayne Morse for the most valued contribution he made to our country: His unceasing drive to bring the nation from war to peace.

That is how Americans will remember him best. For he warned America; he pleaded with her; he tried to alarm her; he wanted to tell America how she was endangering her deepest ideals, and spilling innocent blood.

You could say that he spoke then like a prophet, heralding the truth to ears that rarely were open.

He remained undaunted. Steadfast. Unyielding. Indefatigable.

Inexorably the truth he proclaimed was embraced by more and more others, as the nation began to listen.

Words by Dag Hammarskjold bring Wayne Morse back to our minds:

He broke fresh ground – because, and only because, he had the courage to go ahead without asking whether others were following or even understood. He had no need for the divided responsibility in which others seek to be safe from ridicule because he had been granted a faith which required no confirmation.

SEN. JOHN PASTORE (D - Rhode Island)

Amid all the political pressures of present-day Washington many of us in the Senate turned our attention from time to time to the Far West where a former colleague of ours was in the thick of a fight to return to these Halls where he served for 24 years.

That figure was Wayne Morse, seemingly with all the fire, as he campaigned only a week ago, of those oratorical powers with which he made this Chamber echo.

The Senator from Rhode Island did not always agree with the Senator from Oregon – but the Senator from Rhode Island never lost respect for the character and convictions and deep humanity of Wayne Morse.

I value the editorial epitaph from the New York Times of Thursday, July 23, entitled “The Senate’s Loss.” And I prize these lines:

Senator Wayne Morse of Oregon was too much the maverick, too much the gadfly, to be a hero of the Senate establishment; too much the independent to be predictable even in his proved liberalism. He was a superb public servant – not in spite of these attributes but because of them.

SEN. PHIL HART (D – Michigan)

I would like to make one contemporary observation which perhaps is obvious, but one which future generations should consider in assessing Senator Morse.

In the words of the poet Dylan Thomas, Senator Morse did not go gentle into the last good night. He continued to fight for what his conscience led him to believe was right, through victory and defeat, rejecting quiet retirement as a viable option.

For the present then let it be said that his voice of reason and perception will be missed in a society which must have thoughtful and vigorous dissent if it is to remain free and strong. I suspect that of all the tributes contemporaries will pay Senator Morse, he would value that comment above all others.

SEN. FRANK CHURCH (D -Idaho)

How does one compress all this one man did, worked for, and tried to do ... in a few lines. He seemed to have the attribute lacking in today's politics, something that is missing in today's Senate. What was it that made him so uniquely creative and effective? Was it the fire in the belly, the sharpness of the tongue, the quickness of the mind, the willingness of the heart? How does one say what is missing from today's Senate in a couple of words?

Wayne Morse.