

THEODORE ROOSEVELT DEDICATION ADDRESS

Mrs. Longworth, distinguished guests -- and relatives, friends and admirers of Theodore Roosevelt.

President Theodore Roosevelt is one of my personal heroes, so it gives me great pleasure to be present and participate in this dedication ceremony today.

This is the fourth major monument erected to honor a President of the United States in this city. It is, I believe, no accident that the same four men -- Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt -- whose giant portraits are carved on the granite face of Mt. Rushmore in the Black Hills of South Dakota are also commemorated by memorial monuments in our nation's capital. Our history eloquently informs us that these men belong in the very front rank of American statesmen.

In the case of President Theodore Roosevelt it is not hard to understand his hold on the American people. He left a permanent imprint in our national life, and wrote his signature large upon our land.

Theodore Roosevelt was one of the most versatile and colorful and farshighted of American Presidents: as a builder, his leadership led to the construction of the Panama Canal and the vast reclamation program of the West; as an international diplomat he negotiated the peace treaty which ended the Russo-Japanese War -- and made him the only U.S. President to win the Nobel Prize for Peace; as a world statesman, he sent the great White Fleet around the world to signify America's emergence as a nation to be reckoned with in the twentieth century; as steward of the nation's resources, he brilliantly orchestrated

the conservation movement and took bold steps to save forest and park and wildlife lands as a legacy for the future.

President Theodore Roosevelt was uniquely American. His striking character and vivid personality personified the vigor and vision of the American people. His versatility, his interest in all facets of American life, his love of the out of doors, caused him to cram into a single lifetime the experience of an age: as a citizen he was a cattle rancher, big game hunter, explorer, scholar, naturalist, and historian as well. In politics was a legislator, led <sup>he</sup> a crusade for civil service reform, was the governor of New York, served as Vice President -- and, finally, became the youngest citizen ever to assume the office of the Presidency.

No American leader ever exhibited more zest for life: he ennobled and enlivened the dialogue of his day as he constantly challenged

his fellow men to renew and enlarge the American Dream -- to attempt great things for humanity at large.

Unafraid of adversity, acquainted with tragedy and defeat, he was always at his best at the forefront of the fight. A statement he made in France, in 1910, after leaving the White House, summed up the spirit of the man as much as anything he ever uttered:

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worse, if he fails, at least fail while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat."

There is something supremely fitting in the location of this monument to Theodore Roosevelt. He was a man who loved nature, and this wild little island located in the center of a historic river is an appropriate place for his statue and his words inscribed in stone.

The other monuments of stone and marble to American Presidents stand severe and separate. His is hidden in the trees. If he wanted such a memorial at all, I believe he would have wanted it right here.

The American people still have much to learn from President Theodore Roosevelt. Now, in addition to the message one can glean about the man at his magnificent home at Sagamore Hill (which is now a National Historic Site) his countrymen may come to this quiet grove to contemplate the work -- and the spirit -- of a truly great American.