

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Lyn was proud to be an educator. The words below of Lyndon B. Johnson, speaking at the Sid Richardson College dedication ceremony, Rice University, October 16, 1971, exemplify Lyn's belief in the vital role of educators in our society.

...

How can we unite our people to live together and work together in a common cause to better mankind? How are we going to withstand the emotional appeal of those divisive elements which seek to pit brother against brother?

I think that Sid Richardson hoped that by strengthening our universities, he could help strengthen America as well -- and ultimately help save America. But buildings alone will not save us. Buildings alone will not train young men and women to understand the greatness of America... or to commit themselves to correct its flaws.

That is the task of the instructors and the professors. They--and only they--can encourage our students to speak truth not slogans... to seek change, not chaos to use reason, not riots to make a better world.

And I would hope that every teacher would ask himself at the end of every day: "Have I done everything I could to help build a stronger, more just and more united America?"

...



LYN RAGSDALE

March 31, 1954-December 13, 2020
Educator, Wife, Mother, Sister, Friend

WE MISS YOU

"I WASN'T BORN TO JUST TEACH. I WAS BORN TO INSPIRE OTHERS, TO CHANGE PEOPLE, AND TO NEVER GIVE UP; EVEN WHEN FACED WITH CHALLENGES THAT SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE."

Anonymous

CELEBRATION OF LIFE SERVICE

LYN RAGSDALE

Kraft Hall, Rice University

May 4, 2022

Order of Service

Kennedy “We Chose to go to the Moon” Rice University, September 12, 1962

We meet at a college noted for knowledge, in a city noted for progress, in a state noted for strength, and we stand in need of all three, for we meet in an hour of change and challenge, in a decade of hope and fear, in an age of both knowledge and ignorance. The greater our knowledge increases, the greater our ignorance unfolds.



Welcome: Rev. Talitha Arnold

Remembrance: Tracy Ragsdale

Pie Jesu; Andrew Lloyd Webber, Composer.
Performed by Rinat Erlichman

Remembrance: Dean Bridget Gorman

Reflections: Rev. Talitha Arnold

Remembrance: Chair Ashley Leeds

Largo from Xerxes; George Frideric Handel, Composer.
Performed by Rinat Erlichman

Remembrance: Prof. Jack Yeager

Closing: Rev. Talitha Arnold

Lyn's Death A Teachable Moment: Tracy Ragsdale

Reception Kraft Hall: All Are Invited to Toast or Share
Memories

Acknowledgement: Production of Life Video and IT Services,
John Hallmark

Twelve Presidents, One President-Elect, and One Astute Journalist

As a tribute to Lyn, I have chosen to look at the years of her life through presidential speeches, plus two others. Twelve presidents were in office during her life. At the time of her death, there was one president-elect. (I couldn't leave the presidential quotes end with Trump. Lyn would never have forgiven me.) I also include the words of one very astute journalist whose words 22 days before her birth did much to end McCarthyism and save our democracy. Below are excerpts from the speeches of these men. Sadly, they were all men. Lyn never got to see a woman president. Oh, how she would have enjoyed that. But, even more sadly, these excerpts reveal how very little has changed in the fabric of our country, our world, during Lyn's nearly 67 years. In light of today's events, I hope reading these quotes will be a catalyst to inspire and challenge us all, to work for a better tomorrow. Tracy Ragsdale, Editor 03/31/2022

Dwight Eisenhower Inaugural January 20, 1953

...Science seems ready to confer upon us, as its final gift, the power to erase human life from this planet.

So we are persuaded by necessity and by belief that the strength of all free peoples lies in unity; their danger, in discord.

John F. Kennedy Inaugural Address Jan. 20, 1961

Now the trumpet summons us again—not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need—not as a call to battle, though embattled we are—but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in and year out, "re-joining in hope, patient in tribulation"—a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease and war itself.

Lyndon B. Johnson Voting Rights Speech March 15, 1965

...Rarely are we met with a challenge, not to our growth or abundance, our welfare or our security, but rather to the values and the purposes and the meaning of our beloved Nation.

The issue of equal rights for American Negroes is such an issue.

...There is no Negro problem. There is no Southern problem. There is no Northern problem. There is only an American problem. And we are met here tonight as Americans—not as Democrats or Republicans--we are met here as Americans to solve that problem.

Richard Nixon Resignation Speech August 8, 1974

As we look to the future, the first essential is to begin healing the wounds of this Nation, to put the bitterness and divisions of the recent past behind us and to rediscover those shared ideals that lie at the heart of our strength and unity as a great and as a free people. By taking this action, I hope that I will have hastened the start of that process of healing which is so desperately needed in America.

Together with the Soviet Union, we have made the crucial breakthroughs that have begun the process of limiting nuclear arms. But we must set as our goal not just limiting but reducing and, finally, destroying these terrible weapons so that they cannot destroy civilization and so that 'the threat of nuclear war will no longer hang over the world and the people.

Gerald Ford Pardoning Richard Nixon Sept. 8, 1974

My conscience tells me clearly and certainly that I cannot prolong the bad dreams that continue to reopen a chapter that is closed. My conscience tells me that only I, as President, have the constitutional power to firmly shut and seal this book. My conscience tells me it is my duty, not merely to proclaim domestic tranquillity but to use every means that I have to insure it.

Jimmy Carter "Crisis of Confidence" July 15, 1979

We are at a turning point in our history. There are two paths to choose. One is a path I've warned about tonight, the path that leads to fragmentation and self-interest. Down that road lies a mistaken idea of freedom, the right to grasp for ourselves some advantage over others. That path would be one of constant conflict between narrow interests ending in chaos and immobility. It is a certain route to failure.

Ronald Reagan Inaugural Address January 20, 1981

To a few of us here today this is a solemn and most momentous occasion. And, yet, in the history of our nation it is a commonplace occurrence. The orderly transfer of authority as called for in the Constitution routinely takes place as it has for almost two centuries and few of us stop to think how unique we really are. In the eyes of many in the world, this every-four-year ceremony we accept as normal is nothing less than a miracle.

George H.W. Bush Inaugural Address Jan. 20, 1989

For Congress, too, has changed in our time. There has grown a certain divisiveness. We have seen the hard looks and heard the statements in which not each other's ideas are challenged but each other's motives. And our great parties have too often been far apart and untrusting of each other. ...

William Clinton Inaugural Address January 20, 1997

The divide of race has been America's constant curse. And each new wave of immigrants gives new targets to old prejudices. Prejudice and contempt cloaked in the pretense of religious or political conviction are no different. These forces have nearly destroyed our Nation in the past. They plague us still. They fuel the fanaticism of terror. And they torment the lives of millions in fractured nations all around the world.

George W. Bush Inaugural Address Jan. 20, 2001

Our democratic faith is more than the creed of our country, it is the inborn hope of our humanity, an ideal we carry but do not own, a trust we bear and pass along. And even after nearly 225 years, we have a long way yet to travel.

While many of our citizens prosper, others doubt the promise, even the justice, of our own country. The ambitions of some Americans are limited by failing schools and hidden prejudice and the circumstances of their birth. And sometimes our differences run so deep, it seems we share a continent, but not a country.

Barack Obama Inaugural Address January 20, 2009

Forty-four Americans have now taken the presidential oath. The words have been spoken during rising tides of prosperity and the still waters of peace. Yet, every so often the oath is taken amidst gathering clouds and raging storms. At these moments, America has carried on not simply because of the skill or vision of those in high office, but because We the People have remained faithful to the ideals of our forbearers, and true to our founding documents.

Donald Trump Inaugural Speech Jan. 20, 2017

What truly matters is not which party controls our government, but whether our government is controlled by the people. January 20th 2017,

will be remembered as the day the people became the rulers of this nation again. The forgotten men and women of our country will be forgotten no longer. Everyone is listening to you now. You came by the tens of millions to become part of a historic movement the likes of which the world has never seen before. At the center of this movement is a crucial conviction: that a nation exists to serve its citizens.

Trump Speech Urging Supporters to Go Home Jan 6, 2021

...There has never been a time like this where such a thing happened, where they could take it away from all of us, from me, from you, from our country. This was a fraudulent election, but we can't play into the hands of these people. We have to have peace. So go home. We love you. ...

Joseph Biden Jr. Victory Speech November 7, 2020

...We've won with the most votes ever cast on a presidential ticket in the history of the nation, 74 million!...

... I pledge to be a president who seeks not to divide but unify. Who doesn't see red states and blue states, only sees the United States. ...

Now this campaign is over, what is the will of the people? What is our mandate? I believe it's this: Americans have called upon us to marshal the forces of decency, the forces of fairness, to marshal the forces of science and the forces of hope in the great battles of our time. ...

... Let us be the nation that we know we can be. A nation united, a nation strengthened, a nation healed. ...

Edward R. Murrow, See It Now, March 9, 1954

No one familiar with the history of this country can deny that congressional committees are useful. It is necessary to investigate before legislating, but the line between investigating and persecuting is a very fine one and the junior Senator from Wisconsin has stepped over it repeatedly. His primary achievement has been in confusing the public mind, as between internal and the external threats of Communism. We must not confuse dissent with disloyalty. We must remember always that accusation is not proof and that conviction depends upon evidence and due process of law. We will not walk in fear, one of another. We will not be driven by fear into an age of unreason, if we dig deep in our history and our doctrine, and remember that we are not descended from fearful men -- not from men who feared to write, to speak, to associate and to defend causes that were, for the moment, unpopular.

