

The original documents are located in Box D21, folder “Testimonial Dinner for John Kunkel, Harrisburg, PA, February 13, 1967” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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REMARKS AT TESTIMONIAL DINNER FOR JOHN KUNKEL

Ladies and Gentlemen: Tonight we pay tribute to a man we all love and admire. There are many reasons why we hold John Kunkel close to our hearts. He is a great gentleman. He is a fine individual. He epitomizes all those traits of the ~~the~~ early Americans that have made America the great and glorious land it is.

When you go to purchase a piece of silverware, you look for the word "sterling" on it. That is the word that best describes John ~~Kunkel~~ Kunkel's character. He is as solid as the Rock of Gibraltar, always to be counted on, always there when you need him.

John Kunkel is a tremendously capable man. Many others who have ability have a flaw in their character. They toot their own horn. Not John. He is quiet and unassuming. His ability speaks for itself.

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I am one of those people who have great respect for hard work. This is one of the reasons I admire John Kunkel. Believe me, he is a worker. When he served in Congress, he worked day and night, seven days a week. It was only because he thought he was slowing down that he ~~took himself~~ gradually insisted on retiring ~~from~~ from public service.

Public service has been the theme of John Kunkel's life. He had no reason to be interested in the salary and emoluments accruing to a member of Congress. He was simply devoted to the cause of good government. And he loved the people of his district and served them well. They ~~reciprocated~~ reciprocated, and he won election to Congress by ~~the~~ huge majorities. I'm told he led the ticket in his district in every election--in all four of his counties--receiving broad Democratic as well as Republican support.

I guess I don't have to tell you that John Kunkel comes from a family tree which provided many of the roots of our modern American democracy. Except for one generation, ~~his~~ his family has always had some member serving in the Congress. His illustrious ancestry traces back to the Revolutionary War days. His great-great grandfather, Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant, was a member of the Continental Congress. His great-grandfather, John Sergeant, was a candidate for the Vice-Presidency. At one time, grandparents from both sides of the Kunkel family served in the Congress ~~at~~ simultaneously--one from Lancaster and one from Dauphin County.

John Kunkel made many enduring contributions to the strength of America during his tenure in Congress. Perhaps few remember that he served with the late Tad Walter on the Herter Committee just after World War II and helped to

formulate the recommendations that led to establishment of the Marshall Plan. John was a member ~~of~~ of the House Banking and Currency Committee in those years. He later served on the Public Works Committee, and--after I was elected minority leader--I named him to the House ~~Policy~~ Republican Policy Committee. John was one of my earliest supporters when I decided to go after the job of minority leader in January, 1965.

These remarks in tribute to John Kunkel would be incomplete if I ~~my~~ neglected to mention his wife. Mrs. Kunkel, you know, has been very popular in Washington because she is such a fine lady. And I know John is proud of the fact that his wife was president of the Congressional Wives Club for the past two years and did a great job in that office. She ~~was~~ also was president of the Ladies Prayer Group and for two years preceding presided over the Ladies Section of the Presidential Prayer Breakfast.

John received his share of recognition, too. For 10 years he was president of the 76th Club--the Republican congressmen first elected in 1938. After he left the House in 1950 to make a run for the Senate, President Eisenhower offered him an ambassadorship or two--but John politely declined. You all know that John returned to the House in 1961 after Walter Murma passed on.

Maybe you know, too, that John is a whiz of a bridgeplayer...one of the best in the country. He has won many regional championships and once won the national championship of men's pairs in Baltimore.

It turns out that ~~now~~ Secretary of State Dean Rusk is a sharp bridge player, too, and during an international bridge tournament at the State Department he and John Kunkel played the same kind of hand. When the ~~play was over~~ hand

was over, Rusk ~~asked John~~ told John he had made six points and asked John how many he had made. John replied, "Seven."

Now you know why John Kunkel is my candidate for Secretary of State in the next ~~Republican~~ Republican Administration.

Seriously, there is little I can say to pay adequate homage to our dear good friend, John Kunkel. He is the best there is, the kind of man you want always at your side. I miss him greatly in the Congress. He is my kind of man, your kind of man, a truly outstanding American. Thank you.

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CONGRESSMAN
GERALD R. FORD
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS
RELEASE**

FOR RELEASE AT 6:30 P.M.
MONDAY, FEB. 13, 1967

REMARKS BY REP. GERALD R. FORD, R-MICH., AT TESTIMONIAL DINNER FOR JOHN KUNKEL AT HARRISBURG, PA.

Ladies and Gentlemen, tonight we pay tribute to a man we all love and admire. There are many reasons why we hold John Kunkel close to our hearts. He is a great gentleman. He is a fine individual. He epitomizes all those traits of the early Americans that have made America the great and glorious land it is.

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Public service has been the theme of John Kunkel's life. He had no reason to be interested in the salary and emoluments accruing to a member of Congress. He was simply devoted to the cause of good government. And he loved the people of his district and served them well. They reciprocated, and he won election to Congress by huge majorities. I'm told he led the ticket in his district in every election--in all four of his counties--receiving broad Democratic as well as Republican support.

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