

**The original documents are located in Box 42, “12/8/76 - Remarks at the Unveiling of a Portrait of Leslie C. Arends at the Capitol Hill Club” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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REMARKS FOR UNVEILING OF LES ARENDS' PORTRAIT  
CAPITOL HILL CLUB  
December 8, 1976

Bob Michel called me the other day and said he hoped I wasn't doing anything Wednesday evening because he said "we're having a little party up here on the Hill for Les Arends." And I said, sure, I'd be there and asked him, "What kind of a party?" "Well," he said, "it's going to be a hanging party at the Capitol Hill Club."

There was a long silence and then I said "Bob, don't you think that's kind of extreme?"

And he said, "Well, you know how it is since Chuck Chamberlain took over the Club. They'll try anything to get a crowd."

Anyway, Les, you know I would go anywhere, anytime, to pay tribute to you and to the wonderful friendship we have had for more than a quarter century. I'm not being immodest when I say we were really a great team, because it was mostly due to Les. We won some and we lost some but we always did our darndest. Those of you who worked with us know how Les Arends was always there when it counted -- working twice as

hard as anybody and throwing himself 110% into the job.

I haven't seen the portrait though I understand it is a great likeness of a great American. It must have been a difficult one to paint, Mr. Kintsler, because I can't imagine Les Arends sitting still for very long. To me Les will always be a man in motion. He was the perfect line backer, all over the floor and the cloakroom and the speaker's lobby, stiffening a few spines, soothing a few spirits, perhaps even persuading a few wavering souls to go catch their planes before the roll call.

In a pinch I always figured Les was good for at least 20 votes and I never asked him how he did it.

Since I left the Hill and Les did too, after a record of 40 years that has been exceeded by only 10 other House members since the first Congress met, and an even more remarkable record of having been elected and re-elected as Republican Whip for 31 years -- longer than any other whip in either party

in the history of the Republic -- he still seems to turn up in the right place at the right time.

During the primaries he was in Florida campaigning for me and we won. Then he showed up in Illinois campaigning for me and we won that one, too. And I don't need to tell you how many other Republicans he has helped in their own election contests, or how grateful all of us are for his strong support, his wise counsel, and his fine example.

The next session may be a rough one for Republicans, but not as rough as the Congress swept into office in 1935 when Les beat an incumbent Democrat to become a freshman member of the House minority of only 103 Republicans. So it will be wonderful to have this portrait of Les hanging here to remind the minority members in the 95th Congress that it's not just numbers that count, but fighting spirit, sticking together for the great principles we believe in.

To my fellow Republicans here tonight I say:

We sure didn't win this last election, but almost half

the voters showed that they share the convictions for which we have fought so long and so hard. We all have a responsibility to those millions of Americans, and we are going to meet that responsibility in a responsible way. To the extent that we can be helpful, I know Les Arends and I will be in there fighting right alongside the rest of you.

Les, thank you for your loyalty, for your friendship, and for your dedication to the people of Illinois and of all America.

God bless you.

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