6-27-1950

Speech at Senate Campaign Meeting. Pardons

Strom Thurmond

Follow this and additional works at: https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom

Materials in this collection may be protected by copyright law (Title 17, U.S. code). Use of these materials beyond the exceptions provided for in the Fair Use and Educational Use clauses of the U.S. Copyright Law may violate federal law.

For additional rights information, please contact Kirstin O'Keefe (kokeefe [at] clemson [dot] edu)

For additional information about the collections, please contact the Special Collections and Archives by phone at 864.656.3031 or via email at cuscl [at] clemson [dot] edu

Recommended Citation
Thurmond, Strom, "Speech at Senate Campaign Meeting. Pardons" (1950). Strom Thurmond Collection, Mss100. 947.
https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/947

For additional information about the collection, please contact the Special Collections and Archives by phone at 864.656.3031 or via email at cuscl [at] clemson [dot] edu

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Manuscript Collections at TigerPrints. It has been accepted for inclusion in Strom Thurmond Collection, Mss100 by an authorized administrator of TigerPrints. For more information, please contact kokeefe@clemson.edu.
I want to give you another example of the type people my opponent turned out of the penitentiary when the pardon racket flourished in his office while he was Governor.

At the October 1936 term of the Court of General Sessions for Berkeley County, a man we will call C. D. was convicted of the crime of murder and was sentenced to serve a life term.

Just before he went out of the Governor's office in 1939 Governor Johnston freed him by a parole. This was a little over two years after his life sentence was pronounced.

On January 14, 1939, the father of the young man who had been killed by this criminal wrote my opponent a letter of protest against his action.

The father said that reputable witnesses testified that this man seized a gun, stepped on the running board of the automobile in which his son was sitting, and shot his son through the head as he sat in the front seat of the automobile, defenseless and unarmed.

The deceased was a young man of the age of 19 years, who had enlisted some months before in the United States Army,
and was stationed at Fort Moultrie where he had an excellent record as a soldier. He had never had any trouble with the criminal and did not even know him.

This bereaved father wrote my opponent as follows:

"I am satisfied that the slightest inquiry or investigation by you into the facts of this case would have shown you that this was one case in which you could not conscientiously exercise executive clemency at this time, and that it was a case in which your campaign pledge to the people to uphold the verdicts of juries and the decisions of the courts should have been kept.

"Instead of keeping this pledge, you have chosen to substitute your action for that of the duly constituted authorities whom you promised to back up. You have backed up instead the conduct of one who maliciously took the life of another human being under such circumstances that a jury of his own county found him guilty of murder. You have struck a blow at the safety of the children of every father and mother in South Carolina, and you have brought distress and sorrow to all of us who loved my son.

"It is a horrible tragedy when a father and mother have raised a child to manhood and he is shot down, unarmed and
defenseless. It is small recompense that the law has functioned and the man who took his life forced to pay the penalty provided by the laws of the state, but it is some satisfaction that the lives of other people's children have been made safer. When this small satisfaction has been taken away without proper investigation and without any consideration either for the feelings of the family of the dead boy or the safety of other people's children, I would feel derelict in my duty to the memory of my dead son if I did not do all in my power to bring the truth to light and attempt to undo what has been done."

Not satisfied with paroling this criminal when he went out of office in January 1939, my opponent gave him a full pardon when he became Governor again, just as he was about to leave to go to the United States Senate.

The records show that since he was freed, this man has been convicted of running a whiskey still and also of threatening the life of an officer of the law with a rifle, and he is now serving a five year term for that.
I don't care what the newspapers say or what my opponent claims Senator Maybank said.

I know from talking with Senator Maybank after the election in 1948 that he did not violate his candidate's oath to support the candidates of the Democratic Party of South Carolina, and I resent my opponent's implication that he did.

I also know that when the national Democratic committee refused to seat Mrs. Agnew and wanted Senator Maybank to take his seat on the committee, he refused to do so and stated that he took his orders from the State Executive Committee of the Democratic Party of South Carolina.

He went further and said the 1950 state convention that when the principles of the Democratic Party of South Carolina were at stake they knew where he would stand, and my opponent was there and heard him.