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Tribute to late Senator Burnet Rhett Maybank

Strom Thurmond

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Statement by Strom Thurmond  
Charleston, S. C.  
September 16, 1954

As I open my campaign here in Charleston, the home of the late Senator Burnet R. Maybank, I want to make it clear to the people of South Carolina that I fully and humbly realize that I am asking for a post which has been occupied for fourteen years by one of the greatest Senators South Carolina has ever had (Burnet Rhett Maybank).

When Senator Maybank died, South Carolina lost one of the ablest men of its long history, a gentleman whose forebears were leaders in state and national affairs, and who himself was known throughout the world for his statesmanship and ability. He was respected and loved on both sides of the Senate, in the House, and in the White House. He was not merely a great South Carolinian but a great American.

I want to say at the outset in all humility that any man who seeks to fill Burnet Maybank's shoes is setting himself a goal of the highest aspirations.

When the Senator died, out of respect for him I would not let my name be mentioned as a possible candidate until we had full opportunity to pay him the final tribute of this earth. And I was moved and gratified by the knowledge that the people of South Carolina had, only a few months before his untimely death, paid him the ultimate tribute by electing him for six years without opposition.
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Senator Maybank was especially recognized for his leadership in military and foreign affairs. To take his place, South Carolina needs a Senator who has a deep interest in and knowledge of these matters, and one who is aggressive in his attitude toward the Communistic threat that faces the nation today.