3-2-1955

Address at memorial service for Burnet R. Maybank

Strom Thurmond

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Recommended Citation
Thurmond, Strom, "Address at memorial service for Burnet R. Maybank" (1955). Strom Thurmond Collection, Mss100. 1340.
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ADDRESS BY SENATOR STROM THURMOND AT MEMORIAL SERVICE IN U. S. SENATE FOR THE LATE HONORABLE BURNET R. MAYBANK, MARCH 2, 1955

From the time he was 27 years old, Burnet Rhett Maybank devoted his life to public service.

Most of you knew him here in the United States Senate as a colleague from 1941 till last year when his untimely death came on September 1st—a man admired, respected and loved by his associates and by vast numbers of people who knew him only through his reputation.

Prior to coming to the Senate as successor to the Honorable James F. Byrnes, who was appointed to the Supreme Court, Burnet Maybank had served as Governor of South Carolina from
1938 through 1941. For the eight years from 1931 through 1938, he served the City of Charleston as a distinguished Mayor. Before being elected Mayor, he was an alderman in Charleston from 1927 through 1930. Also, during this long period of outstanding public service, he was chairman of the South Carolina Public Service Authority, which created the huge Santee-Cooper power project, now serving lower South Carolina. President Roosevelt appointed him to the Public Works Administration.

My distinguished predecessor was, by profession, a cotton exporter. You who were his colleagues know of his continuing interest in, and vast store of knowledge on, the
subject of cotton. He was an expert in this field.

You know, too, of the great legislative ability which he demonstrated throughout his career in Washington. He served exceedingly well as he went about the task of representing the people of his State and the people of the United States in this great deliberative body.

He performed in an unusual manner the duties of a Senator—whether on the floor where he seldom spoke at length—or in the committees of which he was a member. As chairman of the Banking and Currency Committee, Senator Maybank established himself deep in the favor of members from both sides of the aisle.
who recognized the superb qualities inherent in this South Carolinian.

Not only in the Senate, but also as a leader in the Democratic Party, Burnet Maybank was held in high esteem by his fellow members. From 1930 on, he was a member of all city, county, State and National Democratic conventions for which he was eligible.

We recognize him as having been the epitome of the people of his native city, Charleston. He graduated from Porter Military Academy in Charleston and from the College of Charleston. His college career was interrupted from service in the Navy during the First World War. But he finished at the top of his
college class as its honor graduate.

Burnet Maybank's political record was phenomenal. He never lost a political contest in which he was a candidate. After having served on the Charleston City Council and one term as Mayor, he was virtually drafted by public demand for Mayor for another term, and he was opposed. Although he knew little of the technical aspects of sociology, he was at all times conscious and mindful of the desires and needs of his people.

He was the first Governor elected from Charleston in 75 years after the War Between the States. The second time he ran for a full Senate term, in 1948, he won nomination in the first
primary by a handsome majority over four opponents. Six years later, last year, he was accorded the unusual honor of being nominated to another six-year term without opposition.

I first knew Burnet Maybank while he was Mayor of Charleston. In 1932 when both of us attended the National Democratic Convention, I came to know him more intimately and to like him. Later, I was closely associated with him in the creation of the South Carolina Public Service Authority. During the years 1947 through 1950 while he was in the Senate and I was Governor of South Carolina, we worked together on many projects. He was sincerely and deeply interested in the public good.

He has been described as a man who had an inherent
feeling of obligation for public service. Burnet Maybank came of ancestry which was used to high office and leadership. Five of his forebears had been Governor of South Carolina.

A most intimate friend of Senator Maybank told me recently that "he had the most forgiving disposition of any man I ever knew. He never held opposition against anyone and, therefore, he gained friends and votes with each succeeding election, even among his former opponents."

This friend declared that the Senator had a deep feeling of attachment for the land and for the people who worked it, in spite of the fact that he, himself, was city-bred. He loved the restful seclusion of his mountain retreat and went
there as often as his duties in Washington and South Carolina permitted.

Burnet Maybank liked the sun and the surf of the beaches of his native State. He was a hunter of turkey and ducks in the low-country of South Carolina—an excellent shot. This love of the out-of-doors gave him the appearance of robust health until very near the end of his life.

Despite the honors and demands of public life, and the attractions associated with such a career, the outstanding characteristic of Burnet Maybank was his utter devotion to his family. As a husband and a father, he fulfilled the highest meaning in the definitions of those relationships. He was fond
of children and he enjoyed the days during which his two daughters and his son were growing up. I am told that he enjoyed playing little jokes on his children and they in turn on him, knowing his excellent sense of humor.

Senator Maybank was a member of the Episcopal Church and served as a vestryman at historic old St. Michael's Church in Charleston. At the time of his death, he was senior warden at St. John's-in-the-Wilderness at Flat Rock, N. C., where his summer home was located.

A South Carolina newspaper editor has expressed the thought well which aptly sums up the feeling of the people who knew him best. This is what he said in an editorial the day
after Senator Maybank died:

"The sincere sadness felt by the people of South Carolina over the death of Senator Burnet R. Maybank is a mirror of the distinguishing trait of the man they grieve.

"For Senator Maybank was above all a sincere man. He had other fine qualities, to be sure, but shining above them all was his innate freedom of hypocrisy, his nature to appear to be no better or worse than he was."

In conclusion, I offer, with you, my colleagues, consolation to our deceased friend's family with the thought that Burnet Maybank's sacrifices for his State and Nation were not in vain. Long will his record stand for lesser statesmen to
emulate. But more significant, long will he be remembered for what he was himself—his ability, his generosity, his friendliness and his impulsiveness to do good for others.