A TRIBUTE TO THE LATE HONORABLE JAMES JARRELL PICKLE

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON
OF TEXAS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 23, 2005

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to my good friend, J.J. Pickle. Those of us who have the tremendous honor of serving in this great institution sometimes fail to see the giants that serve among us. Certainly J.J. Pickle was one of those giants.

He was born in Big Spring, Texas on October 11, 1913 and was educated in the public schools. He was a man who was clearly a leader, not only of the people of the State of Texas, but of this entire Nation.

It is rare that we see people in this institution who worked as hard as J.J. Pickle. However, in doing so, he was always able to retain his touch of the common man. As much as he accomplished academically and through the higher ranks of government in this country, he never lost the ability to relate to people on a day-to-day level. To me he will always be Jake, the fellow who would put his arm around you, smile and joke, and ask how things were going. He was a man who cared about you as an individual and cared about people.

He loved high-powered debates with intellectuals, but he never put on airs. He was one of only seven southern representatives to vote for the 1964 Civil Rights Act legislation. He believed that his most significant accomplishment as a lawmaker was the 1983 Social Security reform bill, which he helped pass as chairman of the Social Security subcommittee. That legislation kept Social Security’s financial problems from raising the age for full benefits from 65 to 67 in the year 2000. He could talk to farmers and mechanics as easily as Presidents such as from his mentor, President Johnson and other leaders. It is no wonder the voters of Central Texas kept Jake in Congress for 31 years. They knew a good man when they saw one. He, and all Americans, have lost someone very special.

HONORING CW4 THOMAS W. GERRISH

HON. JIM MATHESON
OF UTAH
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 23, 2005

Mr. MATHESON. Mr. Chairman, this week marks the 95th birthday of Gordon Bitner Hinckley, the 15th President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Gordon B. Hinckley was born on June 23, 1910 to Bryant and Ada Hinckley in Salt Lake City, Utah. The day Hinckley was born, a can of Campbell’s soup cost 10 cents, a man’s shirt was less than $1 and beef sold for 30 cents a pound in Salt Lake City.

Growing up in Salt Lake City, young Gordon spent summers on the family fruit farm in the rural Salt Lake Valley. He and his brother Sherman often slept out under the stars in the box of an old farm wagon where they lay on their backs, picking out familiar stars. They also weeded and irrigated the family garden, looked after livestock, and dug fence post holes.

In 1923, when President Warren G. Harding visited SLC, Gordon and his siblings helped line the streets to wave flags as the President’s motorcade came into town.

In 1928, just a year before the onset of the Depression, Gordon Hinckley enrolled at the University of Utah thinking he might become an architect. But he loved English literature, particularly Shakespeare, and he decided to go into journalism instead.

From 1933 to the summer of 1935, he served as a missionary for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the British Isles. In addition to the hard work of proselytizing, he led efforts there to improve relations with the press, published articles, and wrote eloquent letters home.

Upon returning to Utah, he accepted a job as executive secretary of the newly formed Church Radio, Publicity and Mission Literature Committee. In this capacity he led the public relations and media efforts of the Church, grasping and utilizing new electronic media to modernize the delivery of the Church of Jesus Christ’s message.

He married the late Majorie Pay on April 29, 1937 and together they had 5 children and 25 grandchildren.

By the time he became President of the Church on March 13, 1989, he had labored nearly 50 years at Church headquarters—38 years of service as a General Authority and 15 of those in the First Presidency.

During the last 10 years, President Hinckley has traveled extensively throughout the world meeting with dignitaries and members of the Church. Through these meetings, he has reinforced his statement that “Good homes produce good people. Good homes become the foundation for the strength of any nation.”

In writing and speaking, he has encouraged church membership and others to strengthen their homes and families and cultivate virtues such as love, honesty, civility, mercy, industry, and good order.

As the leader of the ninth largest religion in the United States, he has overseen significant international building efforts, worldwide expansion of church membership, and has been noted for his openness to the press. He has endeared himself to Church members and others he meets with attributes developed in his earlier years: hard work, an ease with language, a dry wit, and a genuine love for people.

In addition to Church service, President Hinckley has been active in community affairs, receiving numerous honors, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2004.

He wrote, “My plea is that we stop seeking out the storms and enjoy more fully the sunlight. I am suggesting that as we go through life, we ‘accentuate the positive.’ I am asking that we look a little deeper for the good.”

President Hinckley has embodied this positive approach throughout his 50 years and shared it vigorously during his last 10 years.

I hope that my colleagues will join me in wishing a very happy 95th birthday to this great man and leader.