

Administration of Barack Obama, 2015

Statement on the Death of Theodore M. Hesburgh

February 27, 2015

Michelle and I were saddened to learn of the passing of Father Ted Hesburgh. During his lifetime of service to his country, his church, and his beloved University of Notre Dame, Father Hesburgh inspired generations of young men and women to lead with the courage of their convictions. His deep and abiding faith in a loving God and in the power of our shared humanity led him to join the first-ever United States Civil Rights Commission and join hands with Dr. King to sing "We Shall Overcome." His belief that what unites us is greater than what divides us made him a champion of academic freedom and open debate.

When I delivered the commencement address at Notre Dame in 2009, I was honored to thank Father Hesburgh for his contributions to our country and our world. Father Hesburgh often spoke of his beloved university as both a lighthouse and a crossroads: the lighthouse standing apart, shining with the wisdom of the Catholic tradition; and the crossroads joining the differences of culture, religion, and conviction with friendship, civility, and love. The same can be said of the man generations of students knew simply as Father Ted. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family, his friends, and the Notre Dame community that loved him so dearly.

Categories: Statements by the President : Deaths :: Hesburgh, Theodore M.

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