

REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE
MANKATO NATIONAL GUARD ARMORY
DEDICATION TO WINT SMITH
SUNDAY, MAY 8, 1977

MRS. SMITH, GOVERNOR BENNETT, DISTINGUISHED
GUESTS.

TODAY WE HONOR A FRIEND AND A NEIGHBOR, A MAN
WHOSE DEDICATION TO NATION AND STATE ENDURES AS AN INSPIRATION
TO PUBLIC SPIRITED MEN AND WOMEN HERE IN MANKATO, IN KANSAS,
AND IN THE HALLS OF CONGRESS. BY ANY STANDARD, WINT SMITH
WAS AN EXTRAORDINARY MAN, ONE WHOSE GOOD DEEDS AND
ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER SIX DECADES OF SERVICE TO HIS FELLOW
CITIZENS HAVE ALREADY INSURED THAT HIS NAME WILL BE LONG
REMEMBERED.

SOME OF US RECALL MOST WINT SMITH, THE CONGRESSMAN.
BUT HE WAS MUCH MORE THAN JUST ANOTHER POLITICIAN. A
VETERAN OF BOTH WORLD WARS, WINT RETIRED AS A BRIGADIER
GENERAL IN THE ARMY. HE WAS A DISTINGUISHED LAWYER, A
FARMER, A HISTORIAN, AN ACCOMPLISHED MAN WHO RETURNED HERE
TO HIS BIRTHPLACE, TO BE WITH THE PEOPLE HE KNEW AND LOVED,
HIS FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS IN JEWELL COUNTY.

- 2 -

THAT SAYS A LOT ABOUT THE MAN, ABOUT HIS CHARACTER AND DEDICATION TO KANSAS. AND, TO THOSE OF US WHO COUNTED WINT AMONG OUR CLOSE FRIENDS AND ADVISORS, IT IS THIS -- HIS FRIENDSHIP AND INTEGRITY -- WHICH WE VALUED MOST.

YOU KNOW, WE HEAR A LOT OF TALK TODAY ABOUT A "NEW BREED" OF POLITICIANS. MEN AND WOMEN WHO TALK STRAIGHT AND ARE OPENLY SKEPTICAL ABOUT GOVERNMENT. IT'S FASHIONABLE TO CALL THESE NEWCOMERS "PROGRESSIVE" OR "LIBERAL." WELL, WINT SMITH WAS WAY AHEAD OF THEM.

WINT MADE A CAREER OUT OF SAYING EXACTLY WHAT HE BELIEVED, A FAIRLY NOVEL APPROACH DURING HIS TIME IN THE CONGRESS. HE NEVER MISSED AN OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK HIS MIND ON THE KEY MORAL AND LEGISLATIVE ISSUES FACING THE NATION. AND HE DIDN'T HESITATE TO VOICE HIS SKEPTICISM ABOUT THE CAPABILITIES OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

- 3 -

ALTHOUGH MANY DID NOT AGREE WITH WINT, YOU ALWAYS KNEW WHERE HE STOOD. HE DIDN'T QUALIFY HIS OPPOSITION TO FEDERAL PROGRAMS, FOREIGN AID, AND EXCESSIVE FEDERAL SPENDING. AS A MATTER OF FACT, HE ONCE SAID: "I DON'T TRUST THE GOVERNMENT -- I DON'T TRUST WHAT IT'LL DO WITH YOUR MONEY." OF COURSE, WINT MADE THAT STATEMENT IN THE 1950'S, LONG BEFORE IT WAS A POLITICALLY POPULAR THING TO DO, AND HE FOLLOWED IT BY TAKING CREDIT FOR BEING THE WORLD'S WORST POLITICIAN -- SOMETHING HE MOST ASSUREDLY WAS NOT.

WHEN WINT WAS ASKED BY A YOUNG REPORTER A FEW YEARS LATER IF HE WOULD DO ANYTHING DIFFERENTLY IF HE HAD THE FOURTEEN YEARS IN CONGRESS TO SERVE OVER AGAIN, HE SAID: "YES, I THINK THERE IS SOMETHING I WOULD DO DIFFERENTLY. I WOULD BE MORE OUTSPOKEN."

IT'S ALL TOGETHER FITTING THAT WE GATHER TODAY TO DEDICATE MANKATO'S NATIONAL GUARD ARMORY TO THE SOLDIER-STATESMAN-PATRIOT WHO WAS SO INSTRUMENTAL IN LOCATING IT HERE. AT A TIME WHEN MANY OF OUR FELLOW COUNTRYMEN WOULD WEAKEN OUR NATIONAL DEFENSE, WE -- THE PEOPLE OF MANKATO AND KANSAS -- CAN BE PROUD THAT THIS EDIFICE IS TO BE NAMED IN HONOR OF AN INTENSELY LOYAL AND PATRIOTIC MAN WHO UNDERSTOOD THE NEED FOR MILITARY STRENGTH. NOT BECAUSE WE WANT TO RULE THE WORLD OR IMPOSE OUR VALUES ON OTHERS, BUT BECAUSE WE WANT TO PRESERVE OUR LIBERTY.

- 4 -

WINT SMITH UNDERSTOOD THAT. HE KNEW THAT LIBERTY WITHOUT STRENGTH WOULD NOT LONG ENDURE, AND THAT MILITARY SECURITY WITHOUT FREEDOM WAS NOT WORTH PRESERVING. THAT'S WHY HE HAD SUCH A DISTINGUISHED MILITARY CAREER, WHY HE WAS AN OUTSPOKEN ADVOCATE OF AN AMERICA WHOSE STRENGTH WAS SECOND TO NONE. AND IT IS ALSO WHY A DAY DIDN'T GO BY THAT WINT SMITH DIDN'T HAVE A COPY OF THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION -- THAT TIMELESS DOCUMENT THAT INSURES OUR LIBERTY -- IN HIS POCKET. BECAUSE, AS WINT SAID, "IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE CONSTITUTION, YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING."

NO, WE WOULDN'T NEED TO DEDICATE A BUILDING TO WINT SMITH TO INSURE HIS PLACE IN HISTORY. IT'S ALREADY SECURE. BUT I CAN'T THINK OF A BETTER TRIBUTE TO OUR DISTINGUISHED FRIEND AND NEIGHBOR THAN TO DEDICATE THIS FINE ARMORY TO OUR FRIEND, WINT SMITH.

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