

REMARKS OF SENATOR BOB DOLE
ANNOUNCEMENT OF JACOB JAVITS AWARD

THANK YOU. IT IS BOTH AN HONOR AND PRIVILEGE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS CEREMONY, WHICH IS SUCH A FITTING TRIBUTE TO JACOB JAVITS.

THOUSANDS OF NEW YORKERS, THOUSANDS OF AMERICANS KNEW, RESPECTED AND ADMIRERED JACOB JAVITS. I KNEW SENATOR JAVITS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SENATE -- A PLACE HE LOVED AND RESPECTED. HE SERVED IN THE THE SENATE FOR 24 YEARS, AND DURING THAT TIME HE COMPILED A RECORD OF LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS THAT FEW IN THE HISTORY OF THE SENATE COULD MATCH. HE WAS A TRUE STATESMAN WHO USED HIS AWESOME LEGISLATIVE SKILLS TO HELP THE POOR AND VULNERABLE. A MAN OF CONSCIENCE AND COMPASSION, JACOB JAVITS' DEATH REPRESENTED A GREAT LOSS. BUT AS THIS AWARD TODAY PROVES, HIS GOODNESS AND HIS GOALS TRANSCEND HIS DEATH.

JACOB JAVITS HAD COURAGE. HE HAD THE KIND OF COURAGE THAT COMES FROM DEEP MORAL CONVICTION AND FROM COMMITTING YOUR LIFE TO WHAT YOU THINK IS RIGHT. HE NEVER SHIED AWAY FROM A DEBATE, AND REVELED IN TAKING UP THE CAUSE OF THE UNDERDOG. BUT I DON'T THINK THAT ANY OF US WHO SERVED WITH JACOB JAVITS IN THE SENATE APPRECIATED THE DEPTH OF HIS COURAGE UNTIL HE LEFT CONGRESS AND WAS STRICKEN BY AMYTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS, A DISEASE THAT INCAPACITATED AND FINALLY TOOK THE LIFE OF ANOTHER GREAT AMERICAN HERO, LOU GEHRIG.

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EVEN AS THIS DREADFUL ILLNESS RAVAGED HIS BODY, LEAVING HIS ACTIVE MIND IN A USELESS, IMMOBILE SHELL, JACOB JAVITS KEPT GOING -- GIVING SPEECHES, ATTENDING BENEFITS, AND STILL PRACTICING THE ART OF LEGISLATING -- THIS TIME ON THE OUTSIDE, AS A LOBBYIST FOR ISSUES HE BELIEVE IMPORTANT. NO ONE WHO TALKED WITH JACOB JAVITS OR HEARD HIM SPEAK DURING THOSE LAST FEW YEARS COULD FAIL TO BE TOUCHED BY HIS STRENGTH AND INDOMITABLE SPIRIT.

PERHAPS SENATOR JAVITS' COURAGE CAME FROM HIS ROOTS IN A POOR SECTION OF THIS CITY. HIS FATHER WAS A TENEMENT JANITOR AND TAMANY HALL WORKER: HIS MOTHER WAS AN IMMIGRANT FROM WHAT WAS THEN PALSESTINE. GROWING UP IN POVERTY, HE HAD TO WORK HARD TO OVERCOME THE BARRIERS OF THE INNER CITY GHETTO. HE MADE IT, BUT HE NEVER FORGOT THOSE HE LEFT BEHIND. THROUGHOUT HIS PUBLIC LIFE HE MAINTAINED AN EMPATHY FOR THE PEOPLE WHO STRUGGLE ALL THEIR LIVES BUT NEVER QUITE MAKE IT THEMSELVES. INDEED, AS A MEMBER OF THE SENATE, HE MADE HIS MARK AS THE CHIEF ADVOCATE FOR SOCIAL PROGRAMS AND LABOR REFORMS TO HELP THE UNEMPLOYED AND WORKING POOR.

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TODAY I ANNOUNCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ANNUAL JACOB K. JAVITS AWARD TO BE GIVEN BY INTERNATIONAL REHABILITATION WEEK FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE IN THE FIELD OF REHABILITATION. THE JACOB K. JAVITS AWARD IS CONCERNED WITH IMPROVING THE LIVES OF A SIGNIFICANT SEGMENT OF OUR POPULATION, PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES. THIS AWARD COULD NOT BE MORE APPROPRIATELY NAMED. ALL HIS LIFE SENATOR JAVITS WAS CONCERNED WITH HAVING THE BENEFITS OF OUR SYSTEM SHARED BY GREATER NUMBERS OF OUR PEOPLE. IT DIDN'T MATTER IF YOU WERE FROM NEW YORK OR KANSAS, OR ANY OTHER STATE, JACOB JAVITS WAS CONCERNED WITH MAKING LIFE BETTER AND MORE REWARDING FOR YOU.

LAST MONTH THE UNITED STATES SENATE LOST A BELOVED FORMER COLLEAGUE, BUT THE NATION HAS LOST MUCH MORE. HE IS GONE, BUT HIS MEMORY, AND HIS GREATNESS WILL LIVE ON FOREVER IN AWARDS SUCH AS THE ONE BEING ANNOUNCED TODAY -- AND IN THE ANNALS OF HISTORY AS A LEGENDARY GUARDIAN OF FAIRNESS AND JUSTICE.