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**Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”**

**The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945**

**Series 1: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Political Ascension**

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**File No. 539**

**1932 September 28**

**McCook, NE - Extemporaneous remarks**

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT LIBRARY  
This is a transcript made by the White  
House stenographer from the original  
notes taken at the  
speech given at the  
McCook, Nebraska  
September 28, 1932

SPEECH OF GOVERNOR FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

McCook, Nebraska

September 28, 1932

I am happy to be with you progressive citizens of Nebraska today. You are progressive not alone by long practice, but equally by a deep-seated intuitive understanding. Your hearts and minds understand the true meaning of the word humanitarian, and support constant progress in behalf of the prosperity and the happiness of our people.

I believe, too, that the great majority of thinking people throughout the nation have come to realize that this is the true basic reason for your support of your great progressive statesman, Senator Norris. This support, even in his independent political action demands with increasing respect and sympathy the admiration of every patriotic citizen in the East, as well as in the West.

In our long national history we have seen in every decade the rise of public servants to positions of great power and great acclaim. In my studies of our history, I have always been deeply interested in the fact that the appraisal of the greatness of statesmen by their contemporaries has often been so completely reversed by a later verdict. If you will take even the history of any one state during a given ten years you will find a de facto leadership and a temporary acclaim for many political leaders, whose very names are wholly forgotten

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

This is a transcript made by the White House stenographer from his shorthand notes taken at the time the speech was made. Underlining indicates words extemporaneously added to the previously prepared reading copy text. Words in parentheses are words that were omitted when the speech was delivered, though they appear in the previously prepared reading copy text.

I am happy to be with you progressive citizens of Nebraska today. You are progressive not alone by long practice but equally by a deep-seated intuitive understanding. Your hearts and minds understand the true meaning of the humanitarian and support constant progress in behalf of the property and the happiness of our people. I believe, too, that the great majority of thinking people throughout the nation have come to realize that this is the true basis reason for your support of your great progressive statesman, Senator Norris. This support, even in his independent political action demands with increasing respect and sympathy the admiration of every patriotic citizen in the East, as well as in the West.

In our long national history we have seen in every decade the rise of public servants to positions of great power and great renown. In my studies of our history, I have always been deeply interested in the fact that the approval of the progress of statesmen by their contemporaries has often been so completely reversed by a later verdict. If you will take even the history of my own state during a given ten years you will find a few leaders and a temporary renown for many political leaders, whose very names are now forgotten

a generation later.

We should remember that the ultimate analysis of history asks the answer to questions which are not concerned so much with what you and I in these modern days call ballyhoo, or headlines, as they are with much simpler fundamentals.

History asks: "Did the man have integrity?"

"Did the man have unselfishness?"

"Did the man have courage?"

"Did the man have consistency?"

And if the individual under the scrutiny of the historic microscope measured up to an affirmative answer to these questions then history has set him down as great indeed in the pages of all the years to come.

There are few statesmen in America today who so definitely and clearly measure up to an affirmative answer to these four questions as does the Senior Senator from Nebraska. In his rare case history has already written the verdict.

Not you alone in Nebraska, but we in every part of the nation, give full recognition to his integrity; to his unselfishness; to his courage; and to his consistency. He stands forth -- whether we agree with him on all the little details or not -- he stands forth as the very perfect, gentle knight of American progressive ideals.

I am hoping that at this moment thousands of boys and girls -- thousands of first voters -- are listening to my words, for I should like them to give some thought and some

study to the very remarkable public service of the man in whose home town I now stand.

I should like them to read of the able and heroic fights on behalf of the average citizen which he has made during his long and honorable career. I should like them to know that sometimes he has made this fight with his party; and sometimes -- as now -- against the leaders of his party.

I should like them to know that always he has been thinking of the rights and the welfare of the average citizen, of the farmer, the laborer, the small business man -- yes, and of the rights and the welfare of those who have been born to, or have acquired greater wealth. But especially it has been an unselfish fight, and one directed to the fact that it is the little fellow who has the fewest friends in high places, and that too often it is the little fellow who has been forgotten by his Government.

I have spoken of his consistency: and by this I mean a consistency in the great things of life; a consistency which has held through the years, through success and adversity towards a goal that overlooks the pettinesses and the jealousies of politics, as we use politics in the wrong and narrower sense.

During this campaign, as the Senator knows, I have stressed the fact that my quarrel is not with the millions of splendid men and women who in the past have called themselves Republicans, but that my battle is against certain forces now in the control of the leadership of the Republican Party, who

have forgotten the principles on which that Party was founded and have become representative of a selfish few who put personal interests above national good. That is why I rejoice in and approve the statement that Senator Norris is "a better Republican than President Hoover."

To those who would say that Senator Norris has been no respecter of Parties, I would suggest something more important: The forces of evil are far less respecters of Parties. Selfish business which seeks through the tariff a monopoly on a given product in order to obtain vast private profit at the expense of the people, is no respecter of Parties. Those bankers and brokers who, in order to obtain a commission, will willingly deceive an investing public into buying worthless domestic or foreign bonds, are no respecters of Party. A conscienceless power trust seeking to charge the home owner, the small manufacturer, the little business man, all the traffic will bear, is no respecter of Parties.

These men and these organizations seek to fatten themselves by the use of the kind of Party regularity, -- whether it be Republican or Democratic, -- which can best be purchased to serve them. Theirs is the type of bad citizenship which cries the loudest against public servants, like Senator Norris, who are consistent, unselfish, courageous and can't be bought. They are the lineal descendants of the men and the organizations who called Jefferson a "radical"; who called Jackson a "demagogue"; who called Lincoln a "crack-pot idealist"; who

called Theodore Roosevelt a "wild man"; who called Woodrow Wilson an "impractical idealist".

Senator Norris, I go along with you because it is my honest belief that you follow in their footsteps -- radical like Jefferson; demagogue like Jackson; idealist like Lincoln; wild like Theodore Roosevelt; theorist like Wilson; -- Dare to be all of these, as you have in bygone years! So can we most greatly help our beloved nation in time of need. Our cause is common. I welcome your support. I honor myself in honoring you.

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FOR RELEASE WHEN DELIVERED - M. H. McIntyre, Press Representative.

SPEECH OF HONORABLE FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT.

DELIVERED AT McCOOK, NEBRASKA

SEPTEMBER 28, 1932.

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