

May 3, 1934

[Eugene Memorial Education-]

FDR Speech File

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ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT AT THE DEDICATION  
OF THE BRYAN MEMORIAL  
WASHINGTON, D. C.,  
MAY 3, 1934.

This memorial to William Jennings Bryan, erected pursuant to authorization by a joint resolution of the Congress, I gladly accept on behalf of the United States.

Our nation thus recognizes through its government the essential qualities and the high services of a great American.

No selfish motive touched his public life; he held important office only as a sacred trust of honor from his country; and when he sought a mandate from his fellow citizens the soul of his inspiration was the furtherance of their interests, not his own, not of a group, but of all. No man of his time was or could have been more constantly in the limelight than he; yet we can look back and scan his record without being able to point to any instance where he took a position that did not accord with his conscience or his belief.

To Secretary Bryan political courage was not a virtue to be sought or attained, for it was an inherent part of the man. He chose his path not to win acclaim but rather because that path appeared clear to him from his inmost beliefs. He did not have to dare to do what to him seemed right; he could not do otherwise.

It was my privilege to know William Jennings Bryan when I was a very young man. Years later both of us came to the Nation's capital to serve under the leadership of Woodrow Wilson. Through this service and the intimate relations which ensued, I learned to know and to love him.

As we look back on those days -- the many of us who are gathered here together who were his friends and associates in the Wilson Administration -- I think that we would choose the word "sincerity" as fitting him most of all. It was that sincerity which brought to him the millions of devoted followers; it was that sincerity which served him so well in his life long fight against sham and privilege and wrong. It was that sincerity which made him a force for good in his own generation and has kept alive many of the ancient faiths on which we are building today.

It was Mr. Bryan who said:

"I respect the aristocracy of learning; I deplore the plutocracy of wealth but I thank God for the democracy of the heart."

Many years ago he also said:

"You may dispute over whether I have fought a good fight; you may dispute over whether I have finished my course; but you cannot deny that I have kept the faith."

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We who are assembled here today to accept this memorial in the Capital of the Republic can well agree that he fought a good fight; that he finished his course and that he kept the faith.

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ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT  
at the Dedication of the Bryan Memorial  
May 3, 1934, 4.45 P.M.

This memorial to William Jennings Bryan, erected pursuant to authorization by a joint resolution of the Congress, I gladly accept on behalf of the United States.

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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.

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This Address of the President at the dedication of the Bryan Memorial, Washington, D. C., May 3, 1934, is released for publication automatically at 4:45 O'clock P. M., Eastern Standard Time, today.

STEPHEN EARLY  
Assistant Secretary to the President.

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