

Freemason's Contribution To Freedom

A Speech Given By
Brother Albert Wahl Hawkes
U.S. Senator
to the
Albert W. Hawkes' Class
Crescent Temple, Trenton, NJ
June 10, 1967

Presented by Matthew Korang
NJ Lodge of Masonic Research and Education No. 1786
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On Tuesday, July 11, 1967, the honorable Karl E. Mundt, US Senator from South Dakota, standing before the Senate, made the following statement:

“Mr. President, on June 10, 1967, at Crescent Temple, Trenton, N.J., a class of 185 new Shriners was designated as “The Albert W. Hawkes Class.”

Albert Hawkes is a former Member of the U.S. Senate from the great State of New Jersey. During his service in the Senate, he was in the forefront in the continuing effort to build a stronger America and to preserve the cherished freedoms which we enjoy today and which are the envy of many nations around the world.

In his remarks to the class designated in his honor, Senator Hawkes points out that the teachings of Freemasonry have been responsible for inspiring leadership and character for our Republic and other vitally important things in life. He urged the class designated as “The Albert W. Hawkes Class” to be, by their conduct and example, an inspiration to others and thus help to show the way to the preservation of freedom in a peaceful world.

Mr. President, in order that we might all share in the wisdom of our former colleague's remarks to his class, I ask unanimous consent that there be printed in the RECORD the introduction by Edward D. Stites, Sr.; Senator Hawkes' remarks; and the response of George E. Stringfellow, past imperial potentate of the Shrine.”

Karl E. Mundt was one of the most prominent Senators to ever serve this country. He was a true patriot and fought for freedom in all his endeavors. I am unsure whether he was a freemason or not.

The primary objective of this paper was to once again present the speech of Albert Hawkes. It carries a fine message for all freemasons. We are lucky to have had Bro. Hawkes as a Freemason in New Jersey.

A secondary objective was to try to discover why Senator Mundt would propose this speech to become part of the record of the Senate. Unfortunately, I was unable to find a reason other than an association between Senator Mundt, Senator Hawkes, and Ill. George E. Stringfellow.

Albert W. Hawkes was born in Chicago, Ill. on November 20, 1878. He was named president of Congoleum-Nairn, Inc., at Kearny, N.J. in 1927 becoming chairman of the board in 1937. During the next several years he served on many boards for NJ and Washington . He was elected as a Republican to the United States Senate in 1942 and served from January 3, 1943 to January 3, 1949. He was not a candidate for re-nomination in 1948 and resumed former business activities in Montclair, N.J. until 1961 when he moved to Pasadena, Calif. He died at Palm Desert, California, May 9, 1971. He is buried in Mt. Hebron Cemetery, Montclair, N.J.

Hawkes was a good friend of George E. Stringfellow. According to Stringfellow it was he who got Hawkes involved Freemasonry and the Shrine. George Stringfellow was also a very prominent New Jerseyian. He was a close associate of Thomas Edison, serving as vice president and general manager of Thomas A. Edison, Inc. Stringfellow was a member of Hope Lodge #124 – Now Genesis #88.

Following Hawkes speech Stringfellow said “I am most happy to take part in this Ceremonial honoring Senator Albert W. Hawkes, one of the nation's truly good citizens. It was my pleasure to have proposed our honored guest for membership in Freemasonry and the Shrine.”

Stringfellow was also associated with Karl E. Mundt. Mundt said George had a “long life of fruitful and Constructive service to the economic, political, fraternal, and community development of our Nation”. Both Stringfellow and Mundt served Kiwanis at a very high level.

So it would seem that Mundt, a fierce patriot, had a friendship with both Stringfellow and Hawkes. Perhaps Mundt was a Freemason. If so, he kept it close to vest. He is not listed on the Grand Lodge of South Dakota's website list of Famous South Dakota Freemasons. Inquiries to the South Dakota Lodge of Masonic Research return nothing. If not a Freemason, perhaps Mundt was so taken by the words of Hawkes, he felt compelled to make part of the record of the Senate.

Was Mundt at the Shrine to hear the speech in person or did he read it later? Perhaps given to him by his friend and associate. I am not sure.

What ever the circumstance, the following speech, made by the Honorable Albert W. Hawkes to a class of 186 shrine candidates, carries a wonderful message for our fraternity and our country.

FREEMASON'S CONTRIBUTION TO FREEDOM

"Illustrious Potentate Edward D. Stites, Sr., I deeply appreciate your kind remarks in presenting me to this fine Class and audience and for the great and meaningful tribute on this beautiful plaque from Crescent Temple, for which I trust I may in some measure be worthy.

I am highly complimented that this Class has been named in my honor. The fact that it numbers 186 gives me hope for the future, because the teachings of Freemasonry have been responsible for inspiring leadership and character for our Republic and other vitally important things in life.

I believe if the teachings of Freemasonry were understood by the leading citizens of the nations of the world, we would find a way to make all the necessary sacrifices to live in a world of freedom and peace and thus avoid the miseries and destruction of war.

It was Lord Byron who said "A thousand years are scarce enough to Form a state; a single hour may lay it in the dust." It is the responsibility of the citizens of all nations to avoid that "single hour." Every thoughtful American realizes that that single hour could occur and destroy everything we have and believe in, if the gray cells in a few irresponsible brains became confused and, in anger, pushed the wrong button.

When he was near the end of his long and productive life, George Washington was asked "To what do you attribute your calm and courage on the battlefields, your faith and determination in the right and your honesty and integrity in public office?" After some meditation, he replied "I think I must give as much credit to my teachings in Freemasonry as any one thing."

Paul Revere, who sounded the alarm so valuable to our revolutionary soldiers, was another Freemason and he, like Washington, was Worshipful Master of his Lodge.

The records reveal that a majority of all those who signed the Declaration of independence were Freemasons. Those patriots knew that if their efforts failed, the signing of that great document meant for them the supreme sacrifice.

A majority of those who signed the Constitution of the United States were Freemasons. That important document became the foundation for our American system of free men, under a rule of laws as enacted by the people's freely-chosen representatives. Our Constitution was referred to by William E. Gladstone, the eminent Prime Minister of England, as "the greatest piece of work ever struck off by the brain and purpose of man." Our Constitution was again referred to by William Pitt, defender of the rights of American colonists, as "the admiration of all future generations."

Behind the chair of George Washington, who presided over the Constitutional Convention, was a representation of the rising sun. After the delegates had signed the Constitution, the venerable Benjamin Franklin, who had been Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Freemasons in the State of Pennsylvania for three years, said "In the course of the session . . . I looked at the sun behind the President without being able to tell whether It was rising or setting, but now, at length, I have the happiness to know it was rising."

When a nation remains faithful to the ideals of freedom of the spirit—the essence of Freemasonry--there is no final sunset for its people.

The late Winston Churchill, said by many to have been the greatest statesman of this century, was also an active Freemason.

The years since we became a nation have brought swift changes in the American scene. However, patriotic public service remains now, as in the time of our Masonic forebears, the keystone of the Republic's vitality and power. We Freemasons, who are proud of our heritage, can do no more than emulate their example and we can not, in good conscience, do less. If we are eternally vigilant and act courageously, on time, in defense of our way of life, we will be worthy of our heritage and will thus discharge our duty as citizens.

Lest we forget, I beseech every American to recall those unforgettable words of our great patriot, Nathan Hale who, when sentenced to death at the age of 21, said "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country." That is such a great statement that it makes those who have lived many years realize it is not the years one has lived that count, but rather what one has done in those years.

For some time Americans have faced the controversial question of whether our political leaders were wise in abandoning Washington's advice in his Farewell Address "Beware of foreign entangling alliances." In disregarding his advice, before we were prepared to accept world leadership, all will agree that we have not made the world safe for democracy.

We are now an inseparable part of a sick world, therefore we must stand together to help the world find peace. We have cured nothing, even though we have given away hundreds of billions of dollars. It is reliably stated that our total debts of Federal, State and local government are as great as the total assessed valuation of all the property in the United States for taxation purposes.

No price, except the abandonment of principle, is too great to pay for peace and freedom, but we must spend our "substance" wisely to avoid defeat of our objective.

If we would have freedom and peace in a happy world, our conduct must be governed by equity--which is the soul of justice and the spirit of righteousness which know from the bosom of God.

In our negotiations to establish peace and preserve freedom, here are some of the things we must never forget.

- See things clearly and as a whole.
- Remember that there are usually three sides to every controversy our side, the other fellow's side and the right side.
- Realize that who is right is inconsequential when compared with what is right. Who is right fades from the memory of man in a few generations or centuries, but what is right is eternal.

- Try to teach the world that fair reward as an incentive to accomplishment has done almost as much as "old mother necessity" in causing human beings to burn the midnight oil to find new and better ways of doing things, not only for one's own benefit, but for humanity in general.
- Understand that "he who seeks equity must do equity." That "he who comes into equity must do so with clean hands."
- Voluntary cooperation is the mainspring of free men at work. Voluntary cooperation cannot exist without confidence in one another. Confidence in one another cannot exist without character, honesty, integrity and a spirit of equality in the hearts of our citizens toward one another.

Liberty Is freedom, but freedom is not free. It is the most expensive thing in the world, because it is the most valuable thing in life. Life without freedom is a tragedy. In seeking the preservation of individual freedom in a peaceful world, it would be well to remember Abraham Lincoln's advice that our objective in this country should be to find a way to divide "the fruits of common effort fairly among the people who produce those fruits."

My faith in the teachings of Freemasonry tells me we will find a way and make the necessary sacrifices to save and improve the important things our Masonic forebears helped so much to create for the benefit of mankind.

Let us, as Freemasons and Shriners, by our conduct and example, be an inspiration to others and thus help show the way to the preservation of freedom in a peaceful world.

I can think of no better way for us to keep faith with our Masonic forebears than to make one of our most important objectives the outlawing of war by the powerful nations of the earth and thus prove that we no more condone mass murder throughout the world, as a means of settling our differences, than we condone single murder in our midst for the same purpose.

Our No. 1 objective in life, which includes most of the other objectives, must be the accomplishment of the mandate of the Supreme Architect of the Universe--Peace on earth, good will toward men.

Let us all try to make the little poem "The Man In The Glass" applicable to us in our daily lives.

THE MAN IN THE GLASS

"When you get what you want in your struggle for self
 And the world makes you king for a day,
 Just go to a mirror and look at yourself,
 And see what that man has to say.

For it isn't your father or mother or wife
 Whose judgment upon you must pass;
 The Fellow whose verdict counts most in your life
 is the one staring back from the glass.

You may be like Jack Horner and chisel a plum
 And think you're a wonderful guy,
 But the man in the glass says you're only a bum
 If you can't look him straight in the eye.

He's the fellow to please, never mind all the rest,
For he's with you clear up to the end,
And you've passed your most dangerous, difficult test
If the man in the glass is your friend.

You may fool the whole world down the pathway of years
And get pats on the back as you pass,
But your final reward will be heartaches and tears
If you've cheated the man in the glass."