

Bates College

SCARAB

Speeches

Edmund S. Muskie Papers

9-7-1971

Remarks by Senator Edmund S. Muskie at Martin Luther King, Jr. Hospital

Edmund S. Muskie

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scarab.bates.edu/msp>

REMARKS BY SENATOR EDMUND S. MUSKIE

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. HOSPITAL

Los Angeles, Cal.

SEPTEMBER 7, 1971

2:30 P.M. (P.D.T.)

THE BRIEF MOMENT OF ONE MAN'S LIFE VERY SELDOM HAS A MEANING FOR ALL MEN EVERYWHERE. BUT MARTIN LUTHER KING'S YEARS HAVE SUCH A MEANING -- AND THEY ALWAYS WILL...AS LONG AS PEOPLE KEEP THEIR FAITH IN FREEDOM...AS LONG AS PEOPLE REMEMBER THE SIMPLE DECENCY OF CARING ABOUT HUMAN LIFE.

THERE IS NOTHING LEFT TO SAY ABOUT MARTIN LUTHER KING THAT HAS NOT BEEN BETTER SAID BEFORE. HE WAS, TO BORROW DIETRICH BONHOFFER'S PHRASE, A "MAN WHO LIVED FOR OTHERS." AND THE ONLY FITTING WAY TO HONOR HIM NOW IS TO LIVE IN THAT SAME SPIRIT -- THE SPIRIT WHICH BUILT THIS HOSPITAL AS SURELY AS BRICKS AND MORTAR AND MONEY.

MARTIN LUTHER KING WAS ALWAYS INTERESTED IN RESULTS -- AT FIRST, WHETHER A BLACK LADY NAMED ROSA PARKS COULD TAKE A SEAT IN THE FRONT OF A BUS -- AT THE END, WHETHER SANITATION-MEN IN MEMPHIS COULD WIN A FAIR WAGE. SO I THINK HE WOULD BE PROUD OF THE \$26 MILLION HOSPITAL NAMED FOR HIM BECAUSE THERE IS A VITAL REALITY BEHIND THE NAME.

THE REALITY OF COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CARE BY 1978 FOR 450,000 PEOPLE WHO NOW OFTEN FIND HEALTH CARE LITERALLY OUT OF REACH -- AS FAR AS 13 MILES AWAY.

THE REALITY OF A COMMUNITY HOSPITAL WITH A COMMUNITY STAFF COMMITTED TO SERVING COMMUNITY NEEDS.

THE REALITY OF A BEGINNING HERE IN WATTS AGAINST THE NEGLECT WHICH HAS LEFT AMERICA FIRST IN WEALTH, BUT FAR BEHIND IN HEALTH.

THERE IS MORE TO DO IN 1971 -- FROM ENDING THE WAR MARTIN LUTHER KING ALWAYS OPPOSED TO SECURING THE NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE HE DEMANDED AGAIN AND AGAIN. BUT THERE IS ALSO LESS INJUSTICE THAN WHEN HE STARTED ON HIS WAY. AND MARTIN LUTHER KING TOOK THE COUNTRY WITH HIM...AWAY FROM THE TERRIBLE STAIN OF RACIAL PREJUDICE...TOWARD THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE ONLY RACE THAT COUNTS IS THE HUMAN RACE.

WHAT OFFICIALS LIKE KENNY HAHN AND TOM BRADLEY AND NEIGHBORHOODS LIKE WATTS HAVE DONE IN BUILDING HOSPITALS LIKE THIS TESTIFIES TO OUR DETERMINATION TO COMPLETE THAT JOURNEY TOWARD JUSTICE. AND THIS BUILDING ALSO TESTIFIES TO OUR COMMON BELIEF IN THE PROMISE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT: "BE YOU STRONG THEREFORE, AND LET NOT YOUR HANDS BE WEAK: FOR YOUR WORK SHALL BE REWARDED."

I AM PROUD TO VISIT MARTIN LUTHER KING HOSPITAL AND I AM PROUD TO VISIT WITH YOU.