

H. RES. 151

Whereas the death of the late Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, Robert H. "Bob" Michel, on February 17, 2017, has created not only a personal loss to his family, his many colleagues, and friends, but also a great loss to the Nation;

Whereas Bob Michel led a remarkable life, personally blessed with four children, eight grandchildren, and two great grandchildren;

Whereas Bob Michel was born and raised in Peoria, Illinois;

Whereas as a young man, Bob Michel joined the United States Army at the height of World War II, landing on the beaches of Normandy and fighting across Europe through the Battle of the Bulge, earning two Bronze Stars, four Battle stars, and the Purple Heart for his wounds;

Whereas Bob Michel returned home from Europe, graduated from Bradley University, and embarked on a career in public service that would span 44 years;

Whereas Bob Michel was then elected to Congress, going on to serve honorably for 38 years representing Peoria and much of Central Illinois with great distinction, and was chosen by his colleagues to serve them as House Minority Whip, and for 14 years as the elected Republican Minority Leader of the House of Representatives;

Whereas Bob Michel's formidable legislative skills were invaluable in enacting key initiatives of President Reagan and President George H.W. Bush on behalf of the people;

Whereas Bob Michel will be long remembered by all for his strong dedication to responsible public service and his love of the people of the United States;

Whereas Bob Michel conducted himself as a leader with a commitment to civil discourse, personal dignity, political consensus, and adherence to fundamental human values;

Whereas Bob Michel's public service culminated in the award of the Nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom; and

Whereas in the House of Representatives and in his life, Bob Michel's uncommon decency and generosity of spirit were evident to all who knew and worked with him: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) honors the life, achievements, and distinguished public service of Bob Michel; and

(2) expresses its condolences to his family on his passing.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HONORING THE LIFE OF THE HONORABLE BOB MICHEL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BACON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials in the RECORD on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to honor the life, career, and pub-

lic service of Robert H. Michel, known as Bob Michel, former Congressman of the 18th District of Illinois and the longest serving Republican leader of the House of Representatives, who passed away earlier this month on Friday, February 17. He was 93 years old. This Thursday, March 2, he would have turned 94. He served in Congress in this institution from 1956 to 1994.

To staff, friends, and colleagues, Bob Michel was more than a Congressman and House leader. He was a mentor and larger-than-life person. Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to stand before you and our colleagues tonight to recognize the remarkable life of our departed leader and friend. Over the past week I have had the opportunity to hear testimony from friends, family, former colleagues, and the public as they reflect on the reputation of Mr. Michel.

Among the many stories that have been told, it has been mentioned time and time again the foundation upon which Bob Michel built his remarkable career and reputation. Throughout Mr. Michel's 50 years in politics, he never wavered from his values of civility, uncommon decency, and humility. Those values were instilled in him at the earliest age, rooted in his faith and family upbringing, and followed him throughout his life.

Bob Michel was born to German and French immigrants in Peoria, Illinois, on March 2, 1923, to Anna and Charles Michel. Hard work and respect were required among the Michel children. After dinner each night, it was mandatory for the Michel household to read the Bible rather than go outside and play. The young Bob Michel was a product of Peoria Public Schools.

Bob Michel didn't come from a privileged background or a family that had money. He held numerous jobs, which played a formidable role in his upbringing, teaching him the rewards of hard work and accountability. His early jobs varied from mowing yards, delivering on two newspaper routes, working in a factory, a tailor shop, and a grocery store.

Michel graduated from Peoria High School and attended one semester at Bradley University before enlisting at age 19 as an infantryman in the U.S. Army to fight in World War II. Michel landed in Normandy on the fourth day of the D-day invasion of Europe and fought his way across France and Belgium to the Battle of the Bulge. He was wounded in action and was discharged after earning two Bronze Stars, a Purple Heart, and four Battle Stars. When we talk about the Greatest Generation, Bob Michel was a shining example of the Greatest Generation.

Bob Michel would return to Peoria, Illinois, after the war to complete his business administration degree at Bradley University. He joined the a cappella choir there, where he would meet the love of his life, Corinne Woodruff. They were married for 55 years.

It was immediately after graduation that Michel's path into politics started

after then-president of Bradley University David Owen approached Bob to inform him about a candidate by the name of Harold Velde running for Everett Dirksen's congressional seat. After interviewing, Velde hired Michel as a staffer. Years later, Michel would go on to replace Velde in the House after he retired, winning a contested four-way primary and defeating his Democratic opponent. Thus began the service of Bob Michel in the U.S. House, which would lead him to rise to the House leadership and serve a stint as minority whip and eventually minority leader for 14 years.

Throughout his rise in leadership, Bob Michel remained grounded to his district, never forgetting where he came from. Michel was masterful at building personal relationships and represented the gold standard for public service. That reputation derived from his commonsense approach and midwestern upbringing.

This past Saturday, we laid Bob to rest in his hometown of Peoria, Illinois. Bob was remembered at that time and honored as an American hero, a tremendous public servant, a devoted father, husband, and friend. Mr. Speaker, the life of this incredible statesman will never be forgotten, and the legacy he has left behind should serve as a reminder for how we as public servants can continue our work moving forward.

Again, I am proud to stand with my colleagues tonight as a successor to Congressman Michel's seat and to honor our beloved friend, colleague, leader, and mentor.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS), the dean of our Republican delegation.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and friend, Congressman LAHOOD, for having this tribute tonight.

Bob Michel was a giant here in Washington, and he left this world in a manner in which he probably would liked to have—without fanfare, without parades, just going home.

As was said, Bob Michel actually served in this House for 38 years. He loved the House of Representatives. He cherished this Chamber and he cherished this institution. He served as minority leader for 14 years in, as he lovingly called it, the people's House, in this institution he dearly loved.

Few are left in this Chamber who actually served with him. It is my hope that Minority Whip HOYER gets to the floor, who served with him. I think STENY also tries to represent that era of time when there were people who disagreed without being disagreeable or who could work across the aisle. I look forward to hearing STENY's remarks.

Bob was known for his aw-shucks demeanor and his baritone singing voice. I remember once at a Lincoln Day dinner, when he was leaving and I was running, and the people always wanted him to finish the Lincoln Day dinner singing "God Bless America." Always.

It was mandatory. But his aw-shucks demeanor and his baritone voice should not distract from his keen legislative ability, where he steered the Reagan Revolution through this Chamber as the minority leader. As those of us who have served post-Bob Michel know, that is a difficult thing to do.

Many times you would see Bob Michel wearing his CIB on his lapel pin. For those of us who served in the military, the CIB is one of the most treasured awards because it means he was an infantryman who served in combat. My colleague, Congressman LAHOOD, relayed his service from Normandy to the Battle of the Bulge, meritorious service awards, and wounded in combat.

You can see Bob's presence here in the Chamber. The Speaker's Office is named the Bob Michel Room. Or go to Peoria—which I was fortunate to go to to attend the funeral—and you will drive across the Bob Michel Bridge. The funeral service was on the campus of Bradley University, and the student union is named after Bob Michel.

Bob Michel loved baseball. As an avid player myself, we shared fond memories. I pitched, he pitched. I think he won more games than I did. One flaw in Bob Michel's character was being a Cubs fan. As a Cardinals fan, I was able to say that. But when all the ceremonies were going on with the Cubs winning the World Series, I finally found that a reason to be happy about the Cubs' success is that Bob was alive to experience it. In fact, stories over the weekend said he stayed up to see the final play and the final out. There is a great picture of him on his porch flying the W.

□ 2000

Bob was laid to rest in Peoria on Saturday. I remember one of the statements made at the funeral, "If Pekin is good enough for Senator Dirksen, then Peoria is good enough for me," and there he was laid to rest.

My thoughts go out to his sons, Scott and Bruce, and daughters, Robin and Laurie, and also Vicki, who, after Corinne's death, became a loyal companion.

I appreciate this time to reflect. I will end with: You get to meet some great people in this Chamber, and one of those that I will always cherish is my opportunity to get to know and become friends with Leader Bob Michel.

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman SHIMKUS for those beautiful words for Leader Michel.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BUSTOS), who shares Peoria, Illinois, with me, Bob Michel's hometown, and she was also at the funeral on Saturday.

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I join with my Illinois colleagues, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. LAHOOD, and Mr. HULTGREN, who will speak in just a moment, to recognize the life and the legacy of a great man who dedicated his life to service.

For decades, the hardworking men and women of Peoria were proud to have Bob Michel fighting for them in the United States House of Representatives. And even though we were from opposite parties, I learned a lot from Bob Michel, who had been a friend of my family for decades.

Like a lot of men and women from his era, Bob Michel believed in America to his core. He believed in the midwestern values that have made our heartland a great place to live, work, and raise a family. Hard work, service, community, and working together to achieve a common good, these are the values that Bob Michel lived by.

Bob Michel could have gone into business and become a wealthy man. He could have left Peoria for a big city. He could have done anything he set his sights on. But what Bob Michel did was he decided to give back to the community that had given him so much, and he gave a life of service.

It was in 1956 that Bob Michel ran and won his seat representing Peoria and several communities across central Illinois. Even though he went to Washington, Bob Michel's heart was always in Peoria. He never lost sight of his profound responsibility to the people that he served. For nearly 40 years, he rose through the ranks of Republican leadership to become the longest serving minority leader in our Nation's history.

Even though I might not have agreed with him on every single vote that he cast, Bob Michel proved that you can disagree without being disagreeable. Over the last several days, I have heard from Members from both sides of the aisle about their memories of Leader Michel, and there are several things that we can all agree on.

First, if Bob Michel gave you his word, you could always count on it.

Second, if you had a good idea, whether you were a Democrat or a Republican, if it helped the families that he represented, you could count on his support.

And finally, if he didn't agree with you on something, well, you could probably count on a fight, but not a fight like we think of it today, certainly not the kind of divisive, personal, and negative partisan battles that have become far too common in Washington.

Bob Michel didn't believe in something like that. He believed in healthy debate, grounded in mutual respect for both sides of the aisle; because, when it gets down to it, all of us are here with the intent of bettering the families that we serve, bettering the communities that we represent, and, of course, bettering our Nation. That is what Bob Michel stood for, and it is why we as a nation come together tonight to mourn his loss.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand along with Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. LAHOOD, and Mr. SHIMKUS, my colleagues in Illinois, in offering the heartfelt condolences of the entire U.S. House of Rep-

resentatives to Leader Michel's children, Scott, Bruce, Laurie, and Robin, as well as their families. The city of Peoria will always honor and remember the life of service that Bob Michel gave.

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HULTGREN).

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman LAHOOD and Congresswoman BUSTOS. It is so good to be here with my friends and colleagues to join in mourning the loss and celebrating the rich life of Illinois' own Bob Michel, who passed away this month at the age of 93.

Bob absolutely embodied a uniquely American combination of decency, civility, a commitment to public service, and a deep patriotism throughout his long life. Observers across the spectrum agree Bob Michel defined public service and bipartisanship during his long tenure in Congress as minority whip and as minority leader.

Bob seemed to be uniquely called to the legislature and the legislative process. A workhorse instead of a show horse, Leader Michel steadily pushed forward conservative priorities in the House under both Democratic and Republican Presidents.

Building relationships across the aisle and promoting civility and debate helped move legislation through the House Chamber. To him, treating others with respect and care was essential to making deals and moving forward solutions to American problems.

And he cared little if he obtained credit for his efforts. As commented in the National Review, Bob "made little noise, but made things work."

Bob was also a patriot. This son of Illinois was a war hero who landed at Utah Beach at Normandy. During the war, he was wounded and awarded two Bronze Stars and the Purple Heart, among other recognitions. He now joins fellow Americans of that Greatest Generation whose humble and steady love for country carried us through difficult seasons.

I wish his family peace and hope during their time of mourning. He will be deeply missed.

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman HULTGREN for those wonderful words for Leader Michel.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the minority whip.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Peoria. Well, maybe not exactly Peoria, but Bradley University.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor one of the most decent, patriotic Americans with whom I have ever served in any legislative body. I had the great honor of being Bob Michel's friend, the great honor of being his colleague, and the great honor of believing that what Bob Michel represented in this Congress was the best of us, the most decent of us, the most considerate of us, and deeply committed to his country and

respectful of those with whom he served, perhaps differing with them, but, nevertheless, deeply respectful of his colleagues. He and Tip O'Neill were good friends. They could argue their side and their policies vigorously but be the best of friends after we adjourned that day.

I thank my colleague from Illinois for leading this tribute, and I rise to join in remembering this great man, a great American leader, Bob Michel.

Mr. Speaker, Bob's entire life was given to service to his country. From his time in the Army as an infantryman on the front lines of the fight for democracy in the Second World War to his long career in government, Leader Michel sought to make America and the world safer and to protect the American Dream for all of our people.

Mr. Speaker, I did not want to lose the majority in 1994, but when we lost, I lamented the fact that Bob Michel did not become the Speaker of the House of Representatives. In my opinion, if he had, America would be a more civil place today and this body would be a more collegial body than it is.

I want to congratulate the gentleman who represents Bob Michel's district now, succeeding in that office, his father, who is a very dear and close friend of mine. All three of them represented the best of that which America hopes would serve it well.

Bob Michel and I didn't always agree on policy, Mr. Speaker, but as colleagues, we worked together to reach consensus and achieve results. I remember in 1989 when Tony Coelho and I were working to pass the House's version of what would become the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act. It was Bob Michel who saw how important this legislation would be and asked my friend, Steve Bartlett from Texas to work with me, from the Republican side of the aisle, to achieve a bipartisan version that could become law. That is how Bob Michel operated.

This House would be a better House if we followed the example of Bob Michel. He saw a problem and looked for a way we could come together around a compromised solution, not focused first on confrontation. His decency and friendliness were as evident as his seriousness as a legislator.

As Republican whip and leader, he set an example of how to lead an effective opposition based not on obstruction, but on identifying ways to work together to achieve common goals. To that extent, and in so many other ways, as I have said, Bob Michel represented the best of us.

Now, Bob, Mr. Speaker, could be tough. He could be really tough. He knew how to defend his party's interests and advance its goals in the minority. But Bob believed strongly that we who are sent here by our constituents have, first and foremost, a responsibility to make policy, not to play politics. And that is how Bob Michel served—by always, always, always putting country first. Mr. Speaker, I hope

his example will be an inspiration to all who serve today.

I join in extending my condolences to Bob's children—Scott, Bruce, Robin, and Laurie—and the entire Michel family. I join the people of Illinois' 18th District in mourning the man who was their champion for so many years. Illinois, this House, and our country lost a great light, but one, I hope, that will continue to shine through its reflection in those whom Bob Michel inspired. I was one of those. We will miss him. There aren't enough Bob Michels.

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Leader Hoyer for those warm words and inspiring words and heartfelt words for Leader Michel. It means so much for his family, for all of us in Peoria, and for all of his colleagues.

I want to thank everybody here tonight from the Illinois delegation that spoke so fondly about Mr. Michel. When we think about the traits that he exemplified—integrity, sincerity, humility, genuineness, and civility—that everybody talked about here tonight, I think it is also important to remember where he came from in Illinois.

The congressional district that he represented, the 18th Congressional District, was the same district that Congressman Abraham Lincoln represented from 1847 to 1849. It is also the same congressional district that Everett Dirksen represented and that Bob Michel represented for 38 years, and you think about the values that they all exemplified, those strong midwestern values they never forgot.

The other thing that is unique about all three is they were all buried within 1 hour of each other. Oak Ridge Cemetery, President Lincoln; Pekin Cemetery, Everett Dirksen; and this last weekend, Leader Michel in Peoria, Illinois. Bob Michel could have been buried in Arlington Cemetery in a beautiful grave, but he chose to be buried next to the love of his life in Peoria, Illinois. That says a lot about the person that he was. I think it is unique that, within an hour's drive, you can go see all three of their graves, but I think it reflects the midwestern values that he had and those traits.

□ 2015

The other thing that I just want to mention here in closing is that he served his 14 years as the Republican leader, the longest of anyone in this institution as a leader of the minority party. But he also had a number of people that he mentored and tutored: from Jack Kemp, to Trent Lott, to Dick Cheney, to Newt Gingrich; people that served under him, and he mentored in their positions, and that should not be lost.

Bob Michel was a conservative Republican, but the way that he went about the work that he did, his style of civility and treating friend and foe alike, and being able to work across party lines when he needed to make this institution a better place. We need more people like Bob Michel in public

service. He is a shining example of what public service should be. I couldn't be prouder to serve in the same congressional district that he represented for 38 years.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, he made us proud to be from Peoria, Illinois. He made this institution a better place. He made this country a better place by his service of over 50 years.

Tonight we say: Mr. Leader, rest in peace.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor former Congressman, respected mentor, and good friend Bob Michel.

Bob was a war hero earning two Bronze Stars, the Purple Heart, and four battle stars. He was also one of the most respected members of Congress of all time. His 38 years of service in the U.S. House of Representatives and the incredible footprint he left on Central Illinois and this country will never be forgotten.

Bob's ability to reach across the aisle to make a divided government work for the people he represented was second to none, a trait we should all strive to emulate each day. Bob taught me that bipartisanship matters and working together to get things done is even more important in the polarized environment we have today. That's where Bob Michel excelled and that's the legacy I'm going to remember.

Finally, Bob taught me to be myself, to always do what I think is right for my constituents, and to not be afraid to go home and explain why I voted the way I did. I was honored to attend Bob's funeral this past Saturday, along with many others who knew and loved him. My thoughts and prayers are with his family. He will truly be missed.

CBC/SOCIAL JUSTICE MOVEMENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RUTHERFORD). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands?

There was no objection.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, the CBC chair, Mr. CEDRIC RICHMOND, and myself have a great honor that I rise today as one of the anchors of the CBC, the Congressional Black Caucus' Special Order hour.

For the next 60 minutes I have a chance to speak directly to the American people on issues of great importance to the Congressional Black Caucus, Congress, the constituents we represent, and all Americans.

During this hour, as Black History Month ends in the next day, we believe it is important for this Congress and