

FATHER WILLIAM CUNNINGHAM

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to pay my deepest respects to Father William Cunningham. Detroit lost one of its favorite sons on Monday, May 26, when Father Cunningham died following a 7-month battle with liver cancer.

His passing, and the loss we now face, brings us great sorrow. True heroes, after all, are never easily replaced. However, it also provides us a moment's pause to reflect upon and celebrate the extraordinary deeds of a man too humble to accept any congratulations while still in our midst.

Rarely do individuals, by the sheer force of the power of their vision, manage to alter the destiny of an entire city. Father Cunningham, without question, was one of these individuals. His commitment to Detroit, and to eradicating the problems that plagued it, was unwavering. Where others decried the insurmountable obstacles, Father Cunningham optimistically advocated solutions.

William Thomas Cunningham grew up in Detroit's Boston-Edison neighborhood. He attended Sacred Heart and St. John's Provincial Seminaries and was ordained into the priesthood in 1955.

Father Cunningham was teaching English at Sacred Heart Seminary when widespread rioting broke out in Detroit in the summer of 1967. Just a few short blocks from his classroom Detroit was being torn apart, both literally and figuratively.

In the aftermath of this deadly summer, Father Cunningham and Eleanor Josaitis, a Taylor, MI, housewife and mother, joined forces. Angered by what they felt was an inadequate response on the part of the religious, academic, industrial, and government establishments, Cunningham and Josaitis formed a civil rights organization, Focus:HOPE, to work to ensure the summer of 1968 was a peaceful one.

In an effort to promote racial harmony, Cunningham and Josaitis began gathering and distributing food and clothing to riot victims. In the process of doing so, Cunningham learned of Agriculture Department warehouses stocked with food supplies. With the missionary's zeal and powers of persuasion that made him such an effective public servant, Cunningham convinced the USDA to donate these large stockpiles for assistance to the inner city poor.

Today, Focus:HOPE feeds 51,000 people a month. However, Focus:HOPE has evolved and grown into so much more than just an organization that feeds the hungry.

Father Cunningham was driven by the belief that the only thing separating the poor and unemployed in downtown Detroit from their better off counterparts in the surrounding suburbs was a lack of job training and education. So Focus:HOPE set out to make people more employable.

Two decades later, on a forty acre industrial and educational complex on

Oakman Boulevard in Detroit, Focus:HOPE runs myriad highly successful enterprises. The Center for Advanced Technologies trains 85 people to graduate with bachelor's degrees accredited by Wayne State University. The Machinist Training Institute offers year-round classes and boasts of a 100-percent graduation and placement rate. Yet another program is Fast-Track, a training course to teach prospective job applicants the necessary math and communications skills to be competitive. Focus:HOPE also runs two for-profit auto parts manufacturing firms, High-Quality and Tec Express, not to mention a child care center, a communications center and a food distribution center.

Consider the following statistics as a measure of the success of Father Cunningham's work. At the time of its conception in 1968, Focus:HOPE had a budget of about \$12,000. In 1996, that budget had grown to \$76 million. Focus:HOPE currently employs over 800 people and has 45,000 volunteers.

Last October, Father Cunningham was diagnosed with cancer. He certainly wouldn't have been faulted had he chose to rest and enjoy his final days. Yet, as he had done his entire life, Father Cunningham chose to fight on. At the same time he battled his cancer, he continued to press forward with his latest project. In the days ahead, Focus:HOPE will open Tech Villas, an apartment complex of over 100 units, will be constructed within an empty former Michigan Yellow Pages building.

Father Cunningham was a man who had received the praise of presidents, heads of industry, and an entire city grateful for his vision. In the end, however, Father Cunningham still thought of himself as a simple parish priest, no more important than those he served.

It may be years before Detroit sees the likes of another leader as dynamic and committed as was Father Cunningham. No amount of tribute can ever begin to sufficiently repay our debt to Father Cunningham and Eleanor Josaitis, who will carry on their work.

Mr. President, on behalf of all my colleagues in the Senate and all those who live in my State of Michigan, I bid a fond farewell to Father William Cunningham. While he may no longer be with us, his legacy lives on in the institution he built, in the city he helped save, and in the countless lives he touched. We truly were blessed by his presence.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR STROM THURMOND—THE SENIOR SENATOR

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I rise today to add in a small way to the many tributes being offered on behalf of one of our colleagues.

There are persons lucky enough to witness history, and persons wise enough to study history. Then there

are those few who are dynamic enough to make history.

This week we honor someone who has made more history than most—our distinguished President pro tempore, STROM THURMOND.

STROM THURMOND was born during the Presidential term of Theodore Roosevelt—probably the only other person in the 20th century to have a comparable energy level.

And in the same way TR launched America on the great adventure of the 20th century, STROM THURMOND has been a real force in building up and guiding America during that century.

A few of our colleagues may have been friends with Jack Kennedy; but STROM THURMOND is the one who ran against Harry Truman—and came within a hair of denying him the White House.

He is the only sitting Senator today who actually was on a general election ballot as a Presidential candidate.

STROM THURMOND has always been a man of the people.

In 1954, when the 31-member committee that represented the political establishment of South Carolina froze him out of a special election, STROM THURMOND did what no one before or since has done—ran and won as a write-in candidate for the U.S. Senate.

STROM THURMOND has always been ahead of his time, with his finger on the pulse of history.

In the middle of the Johnson landslide in 1964, he moved against the tide, from the Democrat to the Republican party.

With the next election, he became only the second elected Republican Senator from the deep South since Reconstruction.

By the time the next two sitting Senators changed party affiliation—30 years later—a majority of the Senators and Representatives from across the Nation—and, for the first time since Reconstruction, a majority from the South—were now in STROM THURMOND's adopted party.

In fact, he is the only Senator to have served as a Democrat in the majority and the minority, and as Republican in the majority and the minority.

When we look at the New South today, we see the fruits of the "Thurmond Revolution," or the "Thurmond Realignment." He showed the way.

The issue on which I've probably worked most closely with STROM has been the balanced budget amendment to the Constitution.

When you work with him closely on an issue like that, you see how, and why, his colleagues revere him.

I cosponsored the first balanced budget amendment that made it to the floor of the U.S. House in 1982. I've been a part of writing every one since.

But STROM cosponsored an earlier version in the 1950's. Once again, he was ahead of his time.

When we finally pass that constitutional amendment, and permanently lock in that balanced budget we