

important matter of the emergency defense supplemental that was before this body. However, I was not recorded on final passage of that bill, H.R. 1664 due to an electronic mistake or malfunction.

TRIBUTE TO FORMER
CONGRESSMAN JOE KILGORE

HON. RUBÉN HINOJOSA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 11, 1999

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, back in February of this year we lost a great Texan with the passing of former Congressman Joe Kilgore, who represented the 15th Congressional District from January 3, 1955 to January 3, 1965.

Recently, someone shared with me the eulogy presented at his funeral by former Member of Congress J.J. Pickle, who ever so ably represented the 10th District (Austin) in this body for over three decades. Congressman Pickle's remarks, which I am inserting into the RECORD today, are very moving and speak volumes about the unique relationship these two gentlemen, who were the best of friends and colleagues, shared for over sixty years.

The word exemplary is not one I use loosely; however, when used to describe Joe Kilgore it is indeed apropos.

JOE KILGORE EULOGY

(By J.J. Pickle, February 13, 1999)

Joe Kilgore was a Gentleman. But to me, Joe Kilgore was more than a Gentleman. He was my Soul Mate—a Kindred Spirit—who comes along once in a lifetime. Our bond of friendship began at our University of Texas as members of a small law fraternity whose 'political' leaders were self-appointed: John Connally, Joe Kilgore, and me—when I could get a word in sideways. We were kindred spirits—and we were close—Joe, John, and Jake: Tres Amigos! We kept that close bond of friendship for more than 60 years.

Again, old friends, reserve the right to remember what they want to remember. I hope you and Joe's family will accept my recollections of earlier times when we were young and twenty-something and had no thoughts of high public office.

All my life, Joe was 'Amigo Joe'—a salutation we gave this gentleman from the 'Valley' who loved this area. When we said, 'Amigo Joe'—we were met with a smile, a happy grin, and a warm greeting, as if we shared a lot of fun and wonderful memories. Which we did.

While in the University, we became enamored with our Southwest and Mexican heritage and practiced for perfection the best 'El Grito' yell. As the Rebel 'El Grito' yell, designed to strike fear or excitement in the enemy, developed, it took on a Border flavor, described by a colleague of Joe's as "the cry of a mother coyote" bereft of her young. As a screeching eagle dived from the sky on its hapless prey. Our contest participants included Kilgore, Connally, Don Jackson, Ed Potter and maybe, yours truly. I still have a tape recording of that thunderous contest—Joe did not win. Ah, we were young and eager.

I suppose it was inevitable that we would become campus 'políticos'—of a sort. We took part in student politics—3 successive presidents of the U.T. student body—largely engineered by Amigo Joe!

I can still hear the majestic voice of Joe Kilgore, as our group serenaded the girls dormitory—the ladies of S.R.D. He made John and me look good.

Inevitably, we became young campaigners for Lyndon Johnson, Allan Shivers, Price Daniel, and, for ourselves, too. Joe became a member of the Texas Legislature and then the U.S. Congress for 10 years serving his district in the Valley. Later, I became one of his Congressional colleagues, while Connally was satisfied in just being our Secretary of the U.S. Navy, U.S. Treasurer, and Governor of Texas. We were young and eager.

"Then war came, and the bugles sounded"! Brother Joe joined the Air Force and became a distinguished B-24 bomber pilot in the Mediterranean Theater. I like to remember the story of Joe the B-24 Bomber Pilot. On one of his test bombing runs, he found himself, as the chief pilot, surrounded. On his left, was a Texas Aggie co-pilot and on his right, by another Texas Aggie co-pilot. Joe said to them "You guys be careful, I know what you Aggies are capable of doing".

Later, Joe received the Silver Star Distinguished Flying Cross whose official citation reads in part: "For valor and heroic disregard of his own safety beyond and above the call of duty . . . the dauntless courage shown by Captain Kilgore exemplifies the highest tradition of the United States Air Force."

During a break in the war, in 1943, Joe and I were in Austin as a part of a War Bond Rally where movie actor Robert Taylor, and heavy weight champ of the world, Jack Dempsey were participants. The entourage journeyed to Southwestern University in Georgetown in Ambassador Ed Clark's new yellow Packard. On the return trip, they had a flat tire and pulled off to the side of the road to jack up the car, which was resting on a steep slope. No one could work the car jack under the car and time was running short. So Jack Dempsey came to the rescue. He backed up to the right rear wheel, spread his legs, securely grabbed the bumper and frame and literally lifted the right side of the car up high. Joe quickly put the jack in place for Jack Dempsey. It was one of the few times in his life that Joe did not do the heavy lifting.

After the War, in 1945, Joe married his first and only love, Jane Redman. From that moment it was one person: Joe and Jane. They settled into a family life that can only be described as close, loving and warm.

In 1945, Joe and Jane lived in Edinburg, in the 'Valley'. There was no air conditioning in Edinburg, or anywhere else, and with temperatures hovering in the 100's the nights were hot and stuffy. One night, in particular, Jane was sleeping restlessly and woke Joe up. He asked, "What are you doing—killing snakes?" From that time on, Jane said laughingly, "we continued on a life course of killing snakes and building castles".

Their marriage brought four wonderful children who were fortunate enough to gain wisdom and character from Joe and Jane. I've never known a happier or prouder family.

Mark, Dean, and Bill, like to remember that Joe, who was partial to home-spun advice, made a point early in their lives, that "honesty is the best policy". All the children

understood that, to Joe, the value of truth-telling was sacred. The kids nevertheless, as a safety measure, plotted their own quick escape route to Mexico just in case they slipped in the honesty department. The kids never had to use that escape route. But they always suspected, anyway, that they couldn't outrun Joe in his 1963 Oldsmobile, flying like a B-24.

Joe and Jane's daughter, Shannon, likes to recall that there was never a time when she would call his office, for advice or just to talk, that he didn't take her call immediately or call her back within 10 seconds. When he returned her call, more often than not, he'd say that Senator Bentsen or Congressman de la Garza was in the office or he was in a meeting. But, he took that call—family always came first.

Joe's values and goodness of character went far beyond his immediate family. He was unselfish and backed up that trait with action.

When his good friend and fellow lawyer, Amos Felts died, Joe called Amos' son Dan, who was a senior in law school. Joe told Dan not to worry about his Dad's law practice. For more than 6 months, Joe, or his partner, would go to Amos's office in another building and answer the mail, return calls, and hand out what legal advice they could to keep the practice going. When Dan got out of law school, Joe handed over to him the keys to his Dad's practice.

Time and time again, Joe extended his hand to help others. I know—I was a constant seeker for free advice, counsel, and comfort.

As he practiced law, advanced in the legal profession, helped to develop one of the most respected law firms in our state, Joe was willing to serve and help others.

He had a 25 year association with Scott and White Hospital as a very active board member. He was a University of Texas Regent, and rightly honored Distinguished U.T. Alumnus recipient, and president of his beloved U.T. Ex-Students Association. He served with distinction on national and state governmental advisory boards. Joe was always giving back to others.

Although he was a confidant to the Politically Powerful and an advisor to Presidents, Governors, Senators, and to the highest public officials in our land, he still found time to work, for example, with the Boy Scouts because of his belief in young Texans and the future.

He will be remembered for his sense of humor and for his high morals and the goodness of his character. No one ever dared question his honesty, integrity or ability.

To many countless Texans, he was Joe Kilgore: respected lawyer, gentleman, and someone you could count on to give you the right advice or help on a problem or a project. You could depend on his word with your life. He was Trusted.

To me he will always be my Amigo Joe.

And now, in a few minutes, we will inter Joe in his final resting place in our now beautiful State Cemetery. Joe will rest a short 25 feet away from John Connally's monument. And in good time—not just yet—in that same triangle, I will stand guard over both—just another 25 feet away. Our bond of love and friendship will always stay strong and close . . . and forever.

Adios, Amigo.