

lynching and to their descendants. It was, as was stated most eloquently and passionately on this floor, a very dark chapter, indeed, in American history, but a real mark against this Senate that, despite the repeated pleas of the victims and their families, thousands of Americans, the House of Representatives, and seven Presidents, of both parties, the Senate failed to act.

Tonight the Senate has admitted its mistake and has taken a very positive step in admitting failure so that we can have a brighter future. I know that many of these victims and their families—"survivors" is really a better word—have triumphed against this evil. Many were African Americans, but they were people of all different races and religious backgrounds. Many of them were here tonight and have been with us all day today.

I know their names are part of the record, but again they were James Cameron, 91 years old, a victim of lynching who miraculously survived to tell his story; Doria Johnson, the great-granddaughter of Anthony Crawford—Grandpa Crawford, as he has been called—from Abbeville, SC—what a story that family has to tell. Dan Distel, the great-grandson of Ida Wells. What a brave and historic journalist she was. In the face of literally constant threats to her life, she continued to write. What a role model for journalists everywhere of the courage of what it really takes to tell a story. And she did it.

We had many other family members and history professors with us today. There was a tremendous effort that enabled us to get to the floor tonight. As I wrap up, I want to again thank the staff. I thank my staff, including Jason Matthews, my deputy chief of staff; Kathleen Strottman, legislative director; Nash Molpus, who is with me on the floor. Our staff has been very helpful. Senator ALLEN's staff has also been remarkable and so many have contributed to this effort.

I had many quotes to choose from, Mr. President, to end tonight. Really, there were hundreds of them that would be appropriate. But one was especially appropriate, for the close of this debate because, while it ends one chapter, it begins many new chapters in the history of our Nation. The woman I will quote from is one I have admired my whole life. I have read much about her and have been taught a lot about her. I will read this quote from this particular woman because it took guts to say what she did, at a time when people in America didn't want to hear it. This came at a time when people didn't want to hear what women had to say, generally, about any subject, let alone the subject of injustice and intolerance not only in our Nation but the world.

The woman I will quote is Eleanor Roosevelt, who actually led a group of descendants into this Chamber in 1938 to urge the Senate, hopefully by their presence, to act—men and women who

came with their own being, their own bodies to try to tell the Senate what you are reading about isn't true; these are innocent people. Eleanor Roosevelt escorted them to this Chamber and, of course, through all of their mighty efforts, actions were not taken, but not through any fault of hers. What I want to quote is what she wrote about universal human rights. I read this as a young legislator. Of course, we read lots of things, and some things stick and some don't. This particular quote is seared into my heart. I try to remember it every chance I get. I read it often, and I would like to read it tonight because it is very relevant to the debate that we have had. She wrote:

Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home—so close and so small they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person, the neighborhood he lives in, the school or college he attends, the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close at home, we shall look for them in vain in the larger world.

We have heard stories today—hundreds of stories about these small places close to home—trees in a public square, river banks, levees, streets, alleys, open fields, behind school buildings, and in front of stores. This is where people want to experience dignity and justice. Some of these towns are so little they may still not be on any map of the United States. Maybe in some of these towns—because of what happened in the past—there are very few people who live there. And some of these places are quite large, where you can find them on the map. I think it is instructive for the Senate, as we make this sincere apology tonight, that we really take a breath and be very introspective to think about where these small places are in America, where these places of any size are in America, and recommit ourselves to be honest about our failings and our shortcomings, to be honest about the fact that we are not always as courageous as we should be.

But when we come to a point where we know we made the wrong decision, we didn't act in the best interests of our country or the American citizens who look to us for their protection and their support, we should at least be able to sincerely say we are sorry. That is what we did tonight. I thank Eleanor Roosevelt. I am forever grateful for her great leadership for the country and for thousands of Americans, people of all races, who advocated for justice and freedom at great expense to their own life—which is not what most of us experience today, gratefully—with great expense to their reputation, their livelihood. She was really not understood or appreciated in the world in which she lived.

There were many children in the Senate today, these children and great,

great, great-grandchildren. Some of the victims and some of the journalists who have written about this in the past were here. Let's make sure they know the truth and they know that tonight we apologize.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I have listened with great interest to the presentations that have been made on the floor and wish to be associated with the sentiments involved.

I come from a State that does not have a history of lynchings, but that does not mean I should be absolved from the concern that all Americans should have over the lynchings that have occurred. I note that it was the filibuster that made it possible for the Senate to be the body that blocked this legislation in the past. I would hope that in the future, we would all realize that the filibuster should be used for more beneficial purposes than that.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

IMPORTANCE OF CONSULTATION ON JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I spoke on the Senate floor last week about the benefits to all if the President were to consult with Members of the Senate from both sides of the aisle on important judicial nominations. I return today to emphasize again the significance of meaningful consultation on these nominations because it bears repeating given what is at stake for the Senate, the judiciary and this country.

In a few more days the United States Supreme Court will complete its term. Last year the chief justice noted publicly that at the age of 80, one thinks about retirement. I get to see the chief from time to time in connection with his work for the Judicial Conference and the Smithsonian Institution. Sometimes we see each other in Vermont or en route there, and I am struck every time by his commitment. I marvel at him. I think that his participation at the inauguration earlier this year sent a powerful positive message to the country. I know that the chief justice will retire when he decides that he should, not before. He has earned that right. I have great respect and affection for him and he is in our prayers.

In light of the age and health of our Supreme Court justices, speculation is accelerating about the potential for a Supreme Court vacancy this summer. In advance of any such vacancy, I have called upon the President to follow the constructive and successful examples set by previous Presidents of both parties who engaged in meaningful consultation with Members of the Senate