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DEDICATION OF JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, BUTTE, MONTANA

Address by Senator Mike Mansfield (D., Montana)

Butte, Montana, January 4, 1963

3:00 p.m.

It was in this neighborhood that Maureen Mansfield, my wife, lived as a child. These streets echoed her footsteps. These by-ways knew her childhood laughter and tears. These dwellings housed her friends and neighbors.

Many who knew her in those days not so long ago have gone and many who do not know her have come. But the attachment remains. And for that reason I am grateful to be here today among old friends and new.

And I am grateful, too, for another reason. After the immense sorrow of the past few weeks, I am grateful for the occasion which has summoned us all here. For we have come together to give a name to a school. The name we give is that of a fine human being, a man of warmth, of depth, and of deep dedication to his country.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy was an extraordinary man in an ordinary way. He loved his family. He loved the United States of America. And he fused these two great loves of his life, in the fires of a profound human understanding and an exceptional intellect, into a great leadership.

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It was a leadership which sought to awaken us to our responsibilities to one another in this nation. It was a leadership which called to us to correct through our individual lives and our common institutions the inequities and inadequacies which weigh heavily on millions of Americans. It was a leadership for the things which enlighten--for confidence, for tolerance, for mutual restraint and respect among all Americans. It was a leadership against the things which divide--against arrogance and the purveyance of fear, bigotry, hatred and ^{the} idolatry of ignorance.

This nation is a better nation because John Fitzgerald Kennedy lived among us and was our President and died in our service. He gave to us in life. He gives to us, too, in death. For the loss which we have suffered has awakened in all who were touched deeply by it, an awareness of all that is finest in ourselves and in this nation. Out of that awakening may we find the quiet strength to seek a new decency at home and to pursue in the years ahead, a reasoned peace in the world. These were the two fundamental objectives of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy and with God's help they shall be achieved in the fullness of their time.

Today, we give this school his name. There is no more fitting way in which to express a respect and appreciation for him. He knew that education was a master key to human decency and to international peace. And the contributions which, under his leadership, this Congress has made to its advancement represent one of the most significant advances in many decades.

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A school is bricks and mortar. It is wise and understanding teachers. It is young people, eager and trusting. It is all these things brought together and held together by the belief that truth is the end and that by reason and faith we shall know it. That belief, John Fitzgerald Kennedy held in every fiber of his being. May his name help to solidify in this school that belief. May it help to bring to all who are of it in all the years to come a measure of his courage, his wisdom, his decency-- his humanity.