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Foreword: Mark O. Hatfield's Legacy

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FOREWORD: MARK O. HATFIELD'S LEGACY

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Politically, Mark Hatfield was an Enigma. As a Republican, he was often standing on his own or crossing the political isle on different issues. He came under great scrutiny from his own party at times, for going against what was then the party line, and voicing his opposition to the behavior of his party's leaders. At the turn of the 1970's Senator Hatfield stood against his party on three of the day's biggest issues, the war in Vietnam, race relations in America, and the distribution of wealth. He believed that these issues were the most important, because "they contain within them, the seeds of our own destruction."

In a 1970 speech to the Fuller Theological Seminary, Senator Hatfield shared letters of his constituents expressing their shame at his decisions to side against the party, the president, and in their eyes, God. He remarked that those letters in particular, when his positions on the issues were called into question as being against Christ, had the deepest effect on him. Hatfield warned of the idolatry of political figures, urging us to remember they are public servants, and should be wary of what resting too much power with an individual can do to them. He talked about the waste of life he believed to be occurring in the east, and he warned about what he saw as the collective sin of inequality in our nation and the world. Senator Hatfield never shied away from the fact that his beliefs and convictions were derived from his deep-rooted Baptist Christian faith, and with that as his bedrock, he was able to persevere. The senator was a man who could take his personal pride out of the equation and take a stand based on his beliefs of what is right and what is wrong.

In that same 1970 speech, he further expressed a desire to resist partisanship and division, which he believed was feeding off of the rapidly changing culture and economy. He warned that the men and women of America should not cave into their fears, prejudices, and insecurities. That instead we should "commit to seeing that each person in this nation is granted the minimal resource for well-being which is justly his by virtue of his humanity." Hatfield asked tough questions of himself and of each of us as Americans. Have we listened to each other in good

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faith policy discussion? Are we really doing all we can do to alleviate the problems plaguing our society? Are we acting out of moral conviction or pride?

In 46 years of public service, Mark Hatfield never lost a political campaign. Despite being campaigned against from the political right and left, the people of Oregon elected and reelected him 11 times. Today, a good portion of Oregon's infrastructure bears the Hatfield name. This Journal shares that honor, and we believe that to the best of our abilities it should share his courage and conviction. To advocate for things which may not be popular, or even practicable, but can move us forward as a society.

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