



PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

VALEDICTORY SPEECH



Hon Bill Joseph Johnston, MLA
(Member for Cannington)

Legislative Assembly
Thursday, 28 November 2024

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VALEDICTORY REMARKS

Member for Cannington

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington) [11.34 am]: The last of the last! I rise to deliver my final speech to the Parliament of Western Australia. I have 1 800 seconds to summarise 41 years of political activism. To start, I want to acknowledge the Whadjuk Noongar people as the traditional owners of this land and of the land of the Cannington electorate. I am very grateful to the people of Cannington for electing me four times. It has been an honour and privilege to represent you in the Parliament. My first loyalty has always been to the people of Cannington.

My next acknowledgement is to my family. My wife, Kate Doust, and I have a unique relationship. While we are not the only married couple in the Parliaments around the country, there are not many of us. When Kate was elected in 2001, I was elected as Australian Labor Party state secretary shortly after. Our kids were aged just nine, six and three at the time and it was difficult for them. Many families have both parents working and there are many fly-in fly-out families. It is not as if our family struggle was harder than the struggle of other families, but that does not mean our family life was easy. The toll on our children was huge. That our three kids, Bek, Zoe and Liam, have successful lives is a credit to their own endeavour and resilience. Kate and I are very proud of them.

When Bek got married, she had the great imagination to marry another Liam, but he is called “Rochie”, so we do not get confused between our son Liam and our son-in-law Liam. I think Rochie was happy to move to the United States after their wedding, literally on the other side of the planet, because he was able to get away from his in-laws. When he and Bek moved back to Perth with their two children, Kora and Tash, I am sure that made him nervous!

I am the eighth child of eight children of hardworking parents, Barney and Carmel. My father died when I was only two years of age, and my eldest sister, Mary, was just 15. My mum was a tough woman, but very caring of all of us. Raising eight kids as a war widow was no easy job. I am very pleased my eldest sister Mary, and her husband, Ian McLean, have joined us in the chamber. It is a big effort to fly across the country to be here for this speech, and I appreciate it deeply. I hope that Andy, Marg, Stephen, Clare, Bert and Jo are watching, plus the various spouses, children, and grandchildren. There are more than 80 “Johno’s” around the country!

In particular, I want to note my sister, Marg, and her husband, Eike. All of us love Marg and are proud that she was awarded an Order of Australia for her services to education. As I explained in my inaugural speech, my childhood shaped my politics; it is why I always support those who are doing their best for their families and our community. I also need to acknowledge the Cannington Labor branch members, some of whom have joined us today. All members of Parliament stand on the shoulders of others, and it is on their shoulders that I have been standing as the Member for Cannington.

It is said that politics is “Show business for ugly people”, which is probably why I have fitted in so well. I have spent 41 years as a member of the Labor Party, including nine years at the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees’ Association of WA, 11 years in party office and 16 years in Parliament. I have had a charmed career, and I am always grateful for the opportunities that have come my way.

Reprinted from Hansard

I got involved in politics to help change the world and I am pleased I have had some success. I finished year 12 in 1980, and I expected that I would go on to university and become a schoolteacher—a noble profession, I am sure you would agree. However, instead, I was accepted into the American Field Service student exchange program. That meant that while my friends started university in 1981, I worked full-time at the Department of Foreign Affairs in the basement packing mail bags for six months before heading to Indonesia in July of 1981, going back to high school for an extra year at SMA2, Government High School No 2, Bandung. Living in Indonesia certainly changed me forever, and not just because I learnt a second language. It changed my attitudes and it exposed me to a different life, a different religion and many different cultures. Keluarga Sumawiganda, the Sumawiganda family, accepted me as a son. I still keep in touch with Lerry, Rudy, Ben, Titan and Pri, my five “brothers”, as well as Ibu Sumawiganda. They still treat me as one of their family all these many years later. It is a joy to be with them, including their wives, children and now grandchildren.

The other students on the program also made a big impression. Tim Dalzell, my Kiwi mate from “Palmy North”, was with me in Bandung along with Maaïke Newhuis from the Netherlands. Sylvie Nys from Belgium, who now lives in Spain, Peter Diamond from Wisconsin, as well as Tania Teese, Mark James and Lucinda Chappell from around Australia. They are all still friends all these many years later. Penny Williams who was in Jakarta for her year is now the Australian Ambassador to Indonesia. What a job that would be. It was great to see her last year as part of the Western Australian delegation led by Premier Cook. I also want to acknowledge the many friends I had at SMA2—classmates like Nyta Pusparia and her sister Irene Apriyanthi. It was certainly an incredible experience.

I have been very lucky to make some great friends along the way in life. Dan Kennedy and I started in kindergarten together and we still keep in touch. Leon Hribar did an AFS program like I did, but he went to the United States. Steve Hodgkin is into cars, even more than I am. Paul Wentworth is still a true friend. I keep in touch with many of the guys from Daramalan. One of those guys was Stephen Conroy. We met in 1974 and we were always talking politics. One night in June 1983, Steve rang me to say he was heading off to a Labor Party meeting and asked whether I would like to come and join as well. It seemed like a great idea at the time, but I must say I had no idea where that decision would take me. At the meeting, I met Michael Kerrisk and Stephen Booth, who were at the Australian National University with Steve. The four of us had much to learn, but we quickly worked out that we needed to take over the Australian Capital Territory Australian Labor Party. That is why we formed “the faction” complete with our own salute. Later, we were joined by Craig Shannon and although we never did manage to take control of the ACT ALP, we certainly took control of ACT Young Labor and I got to be ACT YL president in 1988. There were lots of others like Sally Standen and Ruth Webber who were also part of the team. We supported an engineer from the New South Wales railways, Mike Kaiser, to be the ACT YL secretary. Like so many of the people I have met over my Labor years, Mike is a contributor.

Stephen Conroy was the first of us to get a job in politics, going onto the staff of Ros Kelly. Ros introduced us to the whole pantheon of Labor icons of the 1980s, from Bob Hawke and Paul Keating to John Button, Kim Beazley and Graham Richardson, just to name some. Later, Steve moved to Melbourne and became a dominating influence in Victorian politics. A senator for Victoria, he was Deputy Leader of the Labor Party in the Senate and a minister. When Steve decided to leave the Senate—we have just been texting about this—he famously just tabled his speech rather than read it live. It meant that many people missed the big story. In the speech, he outed my high school nickname. Given that I had been labelled as one of the leaders of the WA Labor right faction, it surprises some that my nickname at high school was “Johnno the Commo”. But for me, Steve is my mate, and while I cannot ski, it is always great to get together

with Steve, his wife, Paula Benson, and their lovely daughter Bella. It is remarkable that we are still friends after more than 50 years. Perhaps our friendship has lasted this long because I live in Perth and he lives in Melbourne!

Michael Kerrisk went on to be the ACT ALP branch secretary and put the branch on a professional footing. Stephen Booth worked for the Australian Workers' Union, including in Western Australia, and later worked for Victorian Labor governments. Craig Shannon, a close friend of both the Speaker and member for Landsdale, has worked hard for Labor in many ways. Craig's parties at his rental properties in the 1980s were legendary. I cannot say out loud what they were called—of course, something to do with "Bond".

We did not hang out with just the Young Labor types. I met a rising talent at the time, Margaret Quirk, who was a local branch member as well. I am proud to have served here in the Parliament with the member for Landsdale, the godmother of my son. In the 1980s, I met a staffer for Kim Beazley called Ed Dermer and we are still friends today. He served the people of this state very well as a member for the North Metropolitan Region. Canberra in the 1980s was a great place to meet staffers, including Morris Iemma, who would go on to be a NSW Premier, and my friend David Tierney who has had a very interesting life. In fact, the members of our Mt Ainslie branch included Gary Gray, Dr Craig Emerson and Bob McMullan, just to name a few. It was an exciting time. We all knew that the Hawke–Keating Labor government was changing Australia forever and for the better. Economic reform, industry reform, the accord, Medicare, superannuation and the social wage was the start of modern Australia, a dynamic, trading, multicultural country, setting a path to prosperity. Another Mt Ainslie branch member was the Labor legend the late Fred Daly. Fred had been elected to Parliament in 1943 and retired in 1975. He treated our group of activists with great respect. Fred was a generous mentor to us. One of his most important lessons was to make sure that at least one of us had read the rules. That became my job and I have continued to do that with the standing orders. He also told us to never assume how anyone will vote. He said you can believe that the person who says they will never vote for you under any circumstances is a "no", but that everyone else is a "maybe"! Likewise, I met you, Madam Speaker. One night Ed Dermer invited me to join a dinner in Manuka with some of the members of the ALP national executive, and that is where I met the Speaker. The Speaker's husband, Greg Roberts, is likewise another good friend. I have always been pleased to have Greg as my plus one at the V8 Supercars each year.

I have been able to do some really interesting things through politics. In 1985, it was the United Nations International Year of Youth, and two big international youth conferences were held, divided by the Cold War. The KGB funded the International Union of Youth and Students and held a conference in Moscow. Instead of going to that conference, I went to the pro-Western event, the International Youth Conference in Kingston, Jamaica. I met Michael Danby at the conference, who went on to be a federal member of Parliament. I also met Matthew Strassbourg, a staffer from NSW, and Ian Blandthorn, the assistant national secretary of the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association. Steve Conroy asked me to nominate as the youth representative on the board of the Australian Bicentennial Authority. I still have the letter from Prime Minister Bob Hawke appointing me as a director. On the board of the authority from 1985 until 1989, I was given an education on the workings of a quango, learning that you are ahead of the game just by reading the meeting papers. That is a good lesson in life no matter what job you have.

In 1991, I went to Indonesia as part of the Australia–Asia young political leaders' program. The delegation leader was Cameron O'Reilly who at the time was a staffer for the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Laurie Brereton. Cameron and I are still friends and he is now a leading voice in Australia's energy transition. Another friend from that trip is Jody Fassina, who was also a Labor staffer. Jody's friendship endures through many changes. I also met Dean Smith on that trip.

In 2002, I was guest of the United States Department of State for the mid-term elections. It was a fascinating insight, but I also met some interesting people. Lizzy Blandthorn and Jason Clare were both part of the delegation. I had been to the conference in Kingston, Jamaica in 1985 with Lizzy's father, and Lizzy is now a minister in the Victorian government. Jason Clare is now the federal Minister for Education. Simon Birmingham was also on that trip and is now a senator for South Australia, and even Barnaby Joyce was one of the crew.

One day, when I was assistant state secretary, I went to Fletcher Rowe and Associates. When I walked in, Ian Fletcher said, "I've met you before." He had been the first assistant secretary at the Australian Customs Service when I was a lowly payroll clerk, but he still remembered me. I have always appreciated Fletch giving me advice and suggestions over the years. I am pleased to say that not everyone that has helped me during my career has been a Labor person. I have always been up-front about my views—some people might suggest too up-front—but if you do not get along with people with whom you disagree, how can society function, and if you will not consider other people's views, how do you know your views are correct?

Bradley Woods started as CEO of the Australian Hotels Association at the same time as I started as assistant state secretary and we met soon afterwards. I am pleased that we are still friends. I always tell Bradley that he is my "second favourite Liberal", because Paul Everingham and I are also friends. Paul was the WA Liberal state director in 2005, which is not the usual path to becoming a friend of the Australian Labor Party state secretary. However, once Paul was off in industry, we struck up a great friendship. He was great to work with at the Chamber of Minerals and Energy during COVID. On that score, I want to acknowledge Claire Wilkinson from the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association and Warren Pearce from the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies for their contributions during COVID.

I am pleased that many people in business have helped me over the years. Hon Nick Griffiths introduced me to his university friend Neil Hamilton, and Neil Hamilton introduced me to Tony Howarth. They have both been great supporters over the years. My good friend Peter Clough, who is in the chamber, has always been a strong Labor man and at the time he worked for Western Mining when I was assistant state secretary. He put me in touch with many people in the mining industry, too many to name, who were happy to educate me on how mining works, how a mine plan is connected to commodity prices, how exploration is the key to sustaining projects and how mining services make a strong mining sector. These lessons have proved very valuable. Likewise, as state secretary, I helped Eric Ripper manage energy reforms through the party. He and his team helped me understand the complexities of the energy system and why an efficient energy system serves working people. This was the foundation on which I built my interest in energy policy, which is so fundamental to our economy.

Of course, my career through the SDA, to party office and into Parliament would not have happened without the support of many Labor stalwarts. I met the late Jim Maher, national president of the SDA, as a fellow director of the Australian Bicentennial Authority. His common sense advice and support were instrumental to my journey through the party. In 1989 I had decided to leave the public service in Canberra and move to Melbourne to see what might happen down there. On my last day at the customs service, Jim rang me up and asked me to come and work for him. Because Jim was also the Victorian SDA secretary, I assumed he meant in Melbourne. When I said yes, he said, "Great, you start in Perth next week!". So, I arrived in Perth the next week, to be met by the SDA's assistant secretary, Joe Bullock, and a senior organiser, Kate Doust. Yes, Hon Kate Doust is literally the first woman I met in Perth! At SDA, I worked with some great officials. Mark Bishop, SDA secretary, was very supportive of my career. Bill McIntosh, now a life member of WA Labor, was a great mentor. Hon Martin Pritchard and Stuart McLean were part of a talented team of dedicated officials. I also made friends with SDA officials in other states like Don Farrell and Ton Koutsantonis from South Australia.

At the SDA, I also served as vice president of the Trades and Labour Council—now UnionsWA. It was an important time, fighting against the first, second and third waves of anti-worker laws in this state. The late Tony Cooke, Steph Mayman, Tony Robinson, Sharryn Jackson, Fran Logan and Janine Freeman were just some of the people who I got to know as we worked to rid our state of those unfair laws. Peter O’Keeffe and Ben Harris would each in turn be the SDA secretary while I was the member for Cannington, and I thank them for their support. Union secretaries are in touch with working people; their thoughts and advice should not be undervalued.

I also got to know a man with “a brain the size of a planet”, Dr Tony Buti, and I enjoyed sitting next to the Minister for Education for three years in Parliament. From the SDA I went on to be WA Labor’s assistant state secretary in January 1998, and then state secretary in May 2001. This is how I met Raj Selvendra, a great friend and supporter. Sel is a true Labor icon. We all wish Ambiga all the best.

Inside the Labor Party there is an indestructible bond that I have always been pleased to be part of—the ex-secretaries club. Mark Cuomo, Stephen Smith and John Halden helped me as part of that special bond. I was pleased to help both Patrick Gorman and Tim Picton while they were secretaries as part of the responsibilities of the club. However, I do not know that either of them really needed my help. I am looking forward to Ellie Whiteaker becoming a senator and joining the club very soon. The club includes ex-assistant state secretaries, and so Hon Sally Talbot and Cassie Rowe, the member for Belmont, are also members. I look forward to Lauren Cayoun becoming an MLC and joining soon as well. And then there is Lenda Oshalem, the most dynamic of all the assistant state secretaries. I hope that her immense talents can be found a role in public life in some way. Oh, that is right—I also acknowledge Lenda’s fiancé, the Minister for Mines and Petroleum! The ex-secretaries club includes members from all around Australia, and I have always enjoyed talking with people like Tim Gartrell, Michael Brown, Mark Arbib and Stephen Loosley, just to name a few.

At the Labor Party, I worked with the late Jim Millar, Rob Meecham and Rob Mitchell to set up the Labor Business Roundtable to reconnect WA Labor and the business community. It must have worked, because 25 years later, it is still operating.

I do not have time to go through every campaign that I have been involved with, but there are a few that I want to mention. In 1999, I spent six weeks working on the Monaro state campaign in NSW. Our candidate was John Durst, a restaurateur. He needed a 23.5 per cent swing to win. We got a 23 per cent swing, and fell just half a point short. When John found out that I was into cars, he lent me his own car for me to drive on those country roads in New South Wales—a Porsche 911. It is not the car you expect to use as a Labor campaign worker!

When Geoff Gallop resigned as Premier and stood aside from Victoria Park, Ben Wyatt replaced him. I live in that electorate and thought about running myself, but Ben was clearly a better candidate. I wanted someone to be Ben’s assistant, so I hired a Young Labor activist. Even 18 years ago I knew Varun Ghosh had a bright future. I am so pleased he is now a senator for Western Australia. The 2007 Peel by-election was very tricky for WA Labor, but Paul Papalia was the correct choice. His service to Australia in the Navy is unsurpassed, and he increased the Labor vote. Again, I needed a Young Labor person to look after Paul. That was Terry Healy, the member for Southern River, who is not in his seat. In the lead-up to the 2007 federal election, Kim Beazley said to me that we should run an ex-military person for the seat of Stirling and I told Kim that I knew just the man. I had met Major Peter Tinley, AO, sometime before. Although Peter missed out narrowly in 2007, he was ready to step up as the member for Willagee, and I am pleased to have shared so many experiences with my friend Peter over our years together.

The period of opposition between 2008 and 2017 was very tough. Time in opposition is never fun, never fun at all, but it is the time of opportunity. It was a rare privilege to work with a talented group of people to hold the Barnett government to account. No successful opposition

just whinges. It has to put together a genuine vision, and we certainly did that. What a talented group—Ben, Paul and Peter, as well as Mark McGowan, Roger Cook and Rita Saffioti, just to name a few. The whole team played their part. Mark McGowan became the dominating personality in WA politics like no-one before him. No observer of politics in 2016 predicted how dominating Mark McGowan would become. The 2021 election was the biggest political victory in Australia's history. I met the Premier, Roger Cook, before I went into party office. Even then, in the 1990s, I knew Roger had the talent to go far. The Deputy Premier has no equal in being across policy detail, which is probably why the opposition never ask her a question. Rita was part of Geoff Gallop's opposition office from 1997, and we worked together right through my time in party office, along with Kieran Murphy and Bruce Campbell-Fraser.

WA is very lucky with the calibre of our cabinet: Hon Stephen Dawson, along with the Minister for Housing, the Minister for Health, the Minister for Training and Workforce Development and the Minister for Local Government, just to name a few. I have known them for many years, before they were in Parliament, and Western Australians know they will always do what is right for WA.

I acknowledge the people who were elected as part of the class of 2008. It has been great to serve with you, and particularly the members for Maylands and Gosnells, who are leaving with me at the same time, and also all my PL friends. You know who you are, as the member for Landsdale said.

After the 2001 election, I needed to find a new executive officer to do the Labor Business Roundtable's admin work. Kate suggested I hire our neighbour, Fran Laine. Fran built the organisation a strong foundation. I used to threaten businesspeople that they were not allowed to offer Fran a job, but eventually that is what happened. I was very pleased that Fran came back to work with me after I was elected to Parliament, and Fran has been my electorate officer for 15 years. Fran has been indispensable. During my time as a minister, Fran was the real member for Cannington. After Fran left the Labor Business Roundtable, I needed to hire another hard worker, so I was pleased when Hon Samantha Rowe came to work, and I am pleased she is now contributing in the Legislative Council.

I have been very fortunate with my electorate staff. David Ashton, a friend and supporter, set up my office; a job he did well. My first full-time electorate officer was Geri Madden, and she stayed for over 10 years. Other staff have included Danae Synot, Jessie Yang and Grace Lamont, among others. Penny Bond worked with me in Cannington prior to the 2017 election, and then worked in my ministerial office. Now Penny is a lawyer and will probably end up as a High Court justice.

Joseph Stephens replaced Penny in my Cannington office. He is an incredible talent. He later came into my ministerial office as well. Joseph was replaced in my electorate office by Matt O'Keefe, who was stolen from me by the Minister for Housing, so I hired Matt's brother, Luke. They job-shared with Ashley Wynhorst, until Ash went to work for Madeleine King. Now Shane Hill is with me. That steady and experienced hand is the former member for Geraldton.

Of course, Ron Sao worked for two years in my Cannington office. Ron grew up in the Cannington area, attending local schools, and his mum would bring him lunch in my EO most days. We all miss her after her passing. Ron first worked for me at the party office as a campaign organiser in 2004. Later he worked in the Gallop and Carpenter governments, before coming to Cannington in 2008. After working in federal and local governments, I was pleased he joined me in my ministerial office in 2017 as my deputy chief of staff. After the 2021 election, when Neil Roberts retired, he became my chief of staff. Ron is now WA Labor's candidate for Cannington for the 2025 election. I know he has the skills, education and experience to be a great member for Cannington. It makes it easier to retire from politics when I know that Ron Sao is ready to serve the Cannington community.

My seven years' service as a minister was a rare privilege. The workload is unbelievable, but it was made possible by my personal staff. They are all talented people: lawyers, journalists, clerical workers—even a diamond valuer! They are people like Mark Andrews, David Alexander and Hope Smith, to name a few. I thank them all for their efforts; I appreciate them all. Any achievements I had as minister were only because of the hard work of my personal staff. I particularly pay tribute to Vetti Kakulas and Belinda Linke, who both started with me in 2017 and were still there in 2023! I acknowledge the thousands of public sector workers in government departments and government trading enterprises who I worked with. Society can only function with a strong public sector, and I thank you for your service and support during my time as a minister.

I now come back to the Cannington community to talk a bit about the huge changes to the residents of Cannington over these 16 years. The 2007 census recorded about 36 000 residents in Cannington; the 2023 census recorded almost 55 000. In 2007, 35 per cent of residents were born overseas—in 2023 it was 51 per cent. In 2007, about 21 per cent of residents spoke a language other than English at home—now it is 45 per cent. Cannington is home to people from literally every corner of the world, with the top source countries being India, Malaysia, China, the Philippines, Indonesia, New Zealand, Singapore, Burma and Pakistan, as well as many people from the African continent. They join previous waves of migrants from the United Kingdom and Italy.

Cannington is not only more ethnically diverse, but also more religious. About 50 per cent of Western Australians told the last census they had a religion; however, in Cannington, almost 63 per cent are religious. While Catholics are still the largest religion, 10 per cent of locals are Muslim, which is four times the state average. Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs are just as common as Anglicans. This is all part of the dynamic change to the Cannington community. When I host—or used to host—the student leaders from local high schools such as Lynwood Senior High School, Sevenoaks College or St Norbert College at Parliament for lunch each year, those young leaders would tell me that multiculturalism is the best thing about their schools.

Cannington is now a community of first home buyers, parents with school-age children, skilled trade workers and people with technical degrees, and Cannington is Western Australia's most multicultural community. It strikes me that it is hard to recognise the huge shift in what it means to be Australian if you are not exposed to the changing Australia every day, like I am in Cannington. If you want a taste of the "real" Australia, do not go to the beach or to a farm—come out to Westfield Carousel! Multiculturalism is Australia's superpower. It allows us to be strong and vibrant. Yes, we need to manage the challenges of growth, but managing growth is a much better problem to have than managing economic and social stagnation.

I am very proud of the work I have done on behalf of the Cannington community. I am not going to list everything that I have helped with, but the current Metronet project to remove level crossings is clearly the highlight. In 100 years' time, this project will still be benefiting the Cannington community. My job as the member for Cannington has been to work for our community and help local people to find solutions to the problems in their lives. There is always more to be done, but that is the real work of politics.

The process of politics is under attack from many quarters. I think the breakdown of discussion and debate is a serious challenge for public policy. How can you debate a policy if everyone you talk to agrees with you? How can you have a debate if you label anyone who disagrees with you? It does not make sense. Once upon a time, we agreed on the facts, then argued about the consequences. Now, we live in a post-truth world. How can complex policy issues be progressed if conspiracies and innuendo are given the same value as facts and analysis? What is the point of election policies if costings and timelines are considered just boring details? We can all do better.

To close, in the movie *Invictus*, Morgan Freeman playing the role of Nelson Mandela sends Matt Damon, in the role of Francois Pienaar, a copy of the poem *Invictus* to inspire him for the Rugby World Cup final. *Invictus* is the poem that Nelson Mandela had used for inspiration during his 27 years on Robben Island. This is not well known, but this was a Hollywood variation. Mandela in fact sent Pienaar *The man in the arena*, an extract from a speech by Teddy Roosevelt, the then US President, that was delivered at the Sorbonne in 1910. So, my last words to Parliament are from *The man in the arena* —

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

I am honoured to have spent time in the arena.

[Applause.]