1-24-1976

Remarks, delivered at the Memorial Service for Kenneth W. Robinson at Fountain Street Church on January 24, 1976

Arend D. Lubbers

Grand Valley State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/presidential_speeches

Part of the Archival Science Commons, Education Commons, and the History Commons

Recommended Citation

https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/presidential_speeches/39

This Speech is brought to you for free and open access by the University Archives at ScholarWorks@GVSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Presidential Speeches by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@GVSU. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gvsu.edu.
KENNETH W. ROBINSON

Remarks made by Arend D. Lubbers, at the Memorial Service for Kenneth W. Robinson, held on Saturday, January 24, 1976, at the Fountain Street Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

In my seven years working with Ken Robinson I observed that he was never unreasonable, unsympathetic, unwise, or unintelligent in the decisions he made, the counsel he gave, or in the relationships he had with people. He was a man who came to understand himself and, in so doing, understood others. I venture to say that his life was a complete life even though it did not span nearly enough years for those of us who knew and loved him. By complete, I mean Ken's life had love in it from his wife, his children, and his friends and associates in abundant measure; more, really, than most people have. I have always been impressed by the real sense of belonging to one another that friends and associates of the UAW seem to have for one another. Ken contributed to that and received from it. His relationships with those intimately close to him and with friends seemed genuine, open, and enjoyed. Can anyone ask more than that?

Though his career ended at a relatively young age, it had a completeness about it. He was a successful man in his vocation. He was in it a long time, and his record is one of skill, progress, and acceptance, attested to by those who worked with him, for him, or sat across the bargaining table from him. No person could ask for more success and acceptance in his chosen field than Ken had. Few people have as much success for so long a period of time.
There are satisfactions in life that come from contributing to and being a part of exciting projects that affect the quality of life in a positive way. Ken was there at the beginning of the Grand Valley State Colleges. He contributed to the growth and development of that institution. Though I am not so familiar with his involvement in Black Lake, my guess is that he received the same kind of satisfaction in seeing the realization of that dream. We can wish for everyone the kind of opportunity Ken had, to be involved in important projects that help build the spirit and make life better.

It constantly impressed me how whole, how satisfying, how open, how caring, how complete Ken's life was as I thought about him since last Monday's event. As I tried to work through my troubled feelings about Ken's death at the relatively young age of 54, I kept coming back to the quality of his life, the quality of his love relationships, the quality of his professional achievement, the quality of the projects in which he became involved, the quality of his friendships. The lesson, the moral, the truth, whatever you want to call it, almost shouts at you. The length of life is nothing in comparison to the way life is lived -- the quality of life.

When it comes down to the bottom line, we can say Ken knew how to live. He could influence without interfering, he could love and care without dominating, he could serve without allowing himself to be trampled on, he could lead without ordering, he could both give and receive credit when it was deserved. He was gentle, yet not without firmness. He had a good sense
of humor, and knew how to have a good time. No one is perfect, and Ken wasn't. But do we his friends and family have any regrets about the way he understood life and lived it? I don't think so.

What we are doing here this afternoon is celebrating a life that was unusual for its completeness, unusual in the way it touched the lives of others. Our greatest trouble is the loss and, for Marge particularly and others in the family, the loneliness. But so far as the quality of Ken Robinson's life -- we are in celebration and we will leave this place rejoicing and in gratitude for having known him.