

Vice President Biden speaks at Hollings Library dedication

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JULY 23, 2010 -- Vice President Joe Biden spoke today in the Thomas Cooper Library for the dedication of the Ernest F. Hollings Special Collections Library. The ceremony began promptly at noon with remarks from Tom McNally, the dean of University Libraries.

After an invocation and the national anthem, sung by Katie Hinson, a fourth-year music student, University President Harris Pastides set a celebratory tone and was followed by U.S. Representative James Clyburn. Keeping his humorous remarks on both Biden and Hollings brief Clyburn introduced Biden.

The Vice President shared stories of his 36 years with “Fritz” Hollings in the U.S. Senate, both as a friend and a colleague. At one point he Biden stated that Hollings is the man “who is more responsible for my standing at this podium as vice president of the united states than any man alive.” He went on to say “Sometimes that probably causes his trouble, but that is literally true. That is not hyperbole.”

Later Biden highlighted the many accomplishments of Hollings’ political career and summed up by saying “I can go on and on and on giving proof to the assertion I make that I think he’s the most significant national figure to ever come out of this state in terms of length and breadth of his career and what he’s done, or out of any state.”

Hollings began his portion of the dedication by inviting US Senator Lindsey Graham up

to the stage, and thanking Biden for his kind remarks.

“I can tell you Joe, having served for 36 years as the junior senator to Strom Thurmond I’ve had enough damn humility and I need a little arrogance,” Hollings said. “You gave me a double dose.”

Hollings returned the praise and spent some time bragging on the University as well as the importance of education. After some commentary on President Barack Obama’s travels around the nation Hollings unexpectedly took a moment to speak on the importance of a tariffs and cutting corporate income tax in lieu of a 2% value added tax.

Calling the library opening a “big blinking deal,” to paraphrase Biden’s now famous expletive slip earlier in the year, Hollings entertained and charmed the audience, which included many South Carolina dignitaries and politicians, University staff, faculty, students and board members as well as some Washington elite with South Carolina ties.

Also in attendance were Columbia mayor Steven Benjamin, Charleston Mayor Joe Riley, former USC President Andrew Sorenson, USC baseball coach Ray Tanner.

The 50,000-square foot Hollings Special Collection Library will house the South Carolina Political Collections, the Irvin Department of Rare Books and Special Collections and the Digital Collections. Construction on the \$18 million library, connected to the Thomas Cooper Library, began in 2008. Senator Hollings played an

instrumental roll in securing \$14 of federal money to fund the project.

“This library is just one more piece of proof that the man [Hollings] was put on earth to make South Carolinians lives better, and you named it appropriately,” Biden said.

For full details of the event and the new library check back at dailygamecock.com next Wednesday.

What was said

House Majority Whip Jim Clyburn:

"I tell people all the time that I've learned a whole lot from Fritz Hollings, a lot of what to do and a lot of what not to say."

"Up there in Washington, especially on the floor of the House of Representatives, we refer to each other as 'my good friend' and we really don't mean it, but I really do mean it when I call Joe Biden 'my good friend.' "

"Ladies and gentlemen, it is a pleasure for me to present to you a mainstream American who is articulate and bright and clean."

(While introducing Biden, a reference to Biden's famous campaign gaffe backhandedly complimenting Barack Obama.)

Vice President Joe Biden:

"These days, Democrats and Republicans aren't supposed to be friends, but (Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham) is one of my closest friends. He's one of my wife Jill's closest friends. ... Lindsey and I travel all

over the world. We always go to places where they're shooting at us, literally shooting at us."

"Fritz was the first person on a national political scale talking about how a child cannot learn, cannot develop, cannot have an even shot if they don't have proper nutrition when they are young,"

"I miss being referred to on a daily basis as Joltin' Joe."

(Biden on what Hollings used to call him.)

Fritz Hollings himself:

"(Senate Majority Leader) Harry Reid called me yesterday and he said Fritz, I didn't know you could read, much less (establish) a library."

"Joe, (Biden) I can tell you right now having served for 36 years as the junior senator for Strom (Thurmond), I have enough damned humility. I need a little arrogance, and you gave me a double dose."

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