REMARKS TO BE DELIVERED BY BENJAMIN L. HOOKS  
Tuesday, December 8, 1998  
For The Services of Senator Albert Gore, Sr.  
Nashville, Tennessee

I Fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.  
II Timothy 4: 7

*Soldier  *Steward  *Scholar

As an African American who can trace his roots in the State of Tennessee back to at least 1876--- one who grew up in Memphis under a rigid and unyielding system of racial discrimination and segregation, I can appreciate the extraordinary contributions of Albert Gore, Sr. Looking back over the past few decades, I marvel at the tremendous changes in the lives of, African Americans, the poor and impoverished, and the forgotten of this land. Many born after the curtains fell upon this sad chapter of our country’s history—cannot appreciate how far we have come as a nation.

Much of the credit belongs to men and women of vision and tenacity who saw our beloved nation mired on a course of oppression and economic want-- and dedicated their lives to lifting our nation from the quagmire of racism, sexism and want. American patriots--- who swam against the prevailing tide, putting their careers and popularity on the line to do not what was expedient, but what conscience told them was right.

Such a man was Albert Gore, Sr. A man of extraordinary character he refused
to adopt the seductively tempting incendiary rhetoric of the 40's, 50's and 60's of---
interposition and nullification. He was a Southerner who saw early on the
contradictions between the promise which was America,--- "We hold these truths to be
self evident, that all men are created equal";--- juxtaposed against the backdrop of the
diametrically opposed reality of racial superiority, segregation and exploitation---- and
declared that this dichotomy must end. Senator Gore reached deep down into the well
springs of his faith, peered into the bright vistas of the future ,and declared that this
contradiction of creed vs deed must cease.

Dr. King, quoting Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, said often that the measure of a man
is not where he stands in moments of convenience and comfort, but where he stands in
moments of conflict and controversy. If we use this measuring rod, Senator Gore stands
tall in the face of history.

When his fellow southerners urged him to sign on to the Southern Manifesto of
1956, it was a tempting and seductive enticement for one who was to seek re-election in
the State of Tennessee. Senator Gore said no. In 1964, when some urged that the south
not obey the 1964 Civil Rights Act---- he implored his fellow Tennesseans to obey the
law. When his friend, President Lyndon Baines Johnson, with whom he had joined to
help wipe out the scourge of poverty under the egis of the Great Society Program, led
our nation deeper into the War in Viet Nam, Senator Gore put character ahead of the
convenience of friendship-- and stood up against this immoral and unjust war. This was
a mark of the man’s indomitable spirit and of his impeccable character.

Yes, today we pause to pay tribute to a 20th Century giant—one who led by example, served with humility, fought for principle with the fortitude and the tenaciousness of a majestic lion, and sought to bridge the chasm between peoples of different racial and economic backgrounds.

No, Albert Gore, Sr. was not a summertime soldier, he served his nation in the War, and helped to lead it in peace. He was not a politician driven by polls, but one driven by precious principle. He was not one who said what he thought his audience wanted to hear, but he told them what they needed to know. His legacy is a nation vastly different from the one that he found. His legacy is a unvarnished place in the history of this experiment that we call America. His legacy is a nation entering the next century, less torn by sexism, racism and classism. His legacy is a son whose public record matches his father’s values, and vision.

*Senator Gore was a soldier, he fought a good fight.* His military record would reflect that he left the serene comfort of the U.S. House of Representatives, put on the uniform of his nation, and went on to fight totalitarianism. It will show that he fought in the battle to cross the Roehr river. His military record will not show that he fought ignorance and bigotry. It will not show that he was a general in the army of decency, or that he has many medals for integrity.
I tell you he fought a good fight.

Then, Albert Gore was a good Steward. God blessed him with unique talents and skills. He used them well. In the classroom he was diligent. As superintendent of schools, he was innovative. As labor commissioner, he was honest. As a member of the United States House of Representatives he was faithful to his oath of office. As a member of the United States Senate, he represented not only the people of the state of Tennessee, but the people of the entire nation. As a father, he was an example of decency, dignity, diligence, and determination. As a husband, he was devoted caring and proud of her accomplishments. As a grandfather and a father, he was an unshakable rock to lean on. As a candidate he was magnanimous in victory and gracious in defeat. As a believer in the God of creation, he chose to serve rather than to be served.

Albert Gore, Sr. kept the faith.

Senator Gore, was a scholar who kept the faith. He had faith in America’s future. He saw education as the weapon that defeats poverty, ignorance, and want. Somehow he knew that our tomorrows could always be better than our yesterdays. He knew that every child could learn, and that every generation could improve upon the foundations built by the preceding generation. He knew that if the mind could conceive it that when trained and disciplined it could achieve it. He knew that only by enlightening the minds and training the hands of America’s young will we ever reach our fullest potential as a nation.
He believed that the best investment that we can make as a nation was not in Trident submarines, not in inter-continental ballistic missiles, not in building more monuments or more jails. The greatest investment that our nation can make is in the education of all of the nation’s children.

Albert Gore, Sr. was a perceptive scholar. The passing of the years never diminished his hope in the future, nor his confidence in the ability of the young to cross seeming uncrossable rivers of challenge.

In his latter years, he became an elder statesmen—who gave sage advice, to governors and presidents. Now he has completed his dissertation of active life. He has met all of the requirements of the committee. His PhD has been awarded by nature’s God; Phenomenally Helpful Disciple of Goodness, Dignity and Integrity.

_Senator Gore, you have finished your course._

Thank you Senator Gore. Thank you for a well spent life.

Thank you, for your faith in the dignity and the worth of the human personality.

Thank you, for helping to provide food for the hungry, and shelter for the homeless.

Thank you, for you for standing up against bigotry.

Thank you, for the your concern for the young, and your compassion for the elderly.

Thank you, for being a disciple for peace.

Thank you, for helping to break down the barriers of discrimination.

Thank you, for being a voice for the voiceless.
Thank you, Senator, for leaving this state and this nation a better place than you found it.

Thank you, thank you for being a role model for young men and women, black and white.

Thank you, for showing us that there can be integrity in high office.

Thank you, Heavenly Father, for this servant—this public and private servant—who has been faithful over a few things.

THANK YOU SENATOR GORE FOR A RACE WELL RUN !!!

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