

THOMAS JEFFERSON'S 267TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

JEFFERSON MEMORIAL, WASHINGTON, D.C. – APRIL 13, 2010

Remarks of Judge Edward F. Butler, Sr.

President General National Society Sons of the American Revolution

I am very proud to be here today, as I have always been an admirer of Thomas Jefferson. He has been ranked by many scholars as “one of the greatest United States Presidents. Let’s recall some of the things that make him a great president and an exceptional person. He was an outstanding public servant at the highest levels for 40 years, including:

Member of the Virginia House of Burgesses (1769-1776).

Member of the Virginia House of Delegates (1776-1779).

Virginia Delegate to the Second Continental Congress (1775-1776), where he served as the principal author of the Declaration of Independence.

Second Governor of Virginia (1779-1781). He served during the American Revolutionary War, including two invasions by the English. He supported General George Rogers Clark as Virginia Militia Commander of Kentucky County, Virginia, which led to the defeat of the British in the Northwest Territories.

Virginia Delegate to the Congress of the Confederation (1783-1784).

United States Ambassador to France (1785-1789).

First United States Secretary of State (1790-1793).

Second Vice President of the United States (1797-1801).

Third President of the United States (1801-1809). Under his leadership, Ohio was admitted as a state in 1803.

Jefferson left a great legacy. He will always be known as the principal author of the Declaration of Independence. As U. S. President he arranged the Louisiana Purchase (1803), which doubled the size of the United States; he sponsored the Lewis and Clark expedition (1804); and he defeated the Barbary Pirates in 1805.

As a man, he was multifaceted. In addition to being a very capable attorney, he was a self taught horticulturalist, architect and inventor. He was a voracious reader and was multilingual. When President John F. Kennedy welcomed 49 Nobel Prize winners to the White House in 1962

he said, "I think this is the most extraordinary collection of talent and of human knowledge that has ever been gathered together at the White House – with the possible exception of when Thomas Jefferson dined alone."

Clearly, he was a gifted intellectual, who dedicated his adult life to public service. He was a great man, and the United States is much better off because of his service.