

The Honorable John Dingell, Jr., of Michigan

Heroes and Inspiration: Part Two

Recollections of Speaker Sam Rayburn of Texas and other role models.

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But what it means is that we work for a just and a humane and a decent society, where everybody has a chance to amount to something. And, and where we don't give handouts, but we give hands-up, so that people can grow. And to abate the suffering and misfortune, which we have a great deal of in this world. So he was one of my great heroes. And then Rayburn, who was a giant, but who was rather aloof. If you look at the statue of Rayburn you'll find he was just a little guy. There's one for him, in the front of the building here—and he's up on a pedestal. And you think, "God, he's a shrimp." But I always, I always saw Rayburn as about 11 feet high. Had an enormous presence. And nobody ever called him anything other than Mr. Speaker. Some of the more senior Members would call him "Mr. Sam." But he was a, he was a very good-hearted man. He was a Texas, Texas populist. And he understood how tough it was to live, and to make it. And Texas was a harsh place in the days when he and Johnson were coming up. Those were probably my two great heroes. And, of course, President Roosevelt was, he was a giant. And Harry Truman. And of course, Churchill. Those were my great heroes. They and my dad.