

Caroline Roeder, MT – 2019

“To whom much is given, much is required.”

Luke 12:48

(Shared by Former 10th District Chief Judge Robert H. Henry)

This verse, so very fittingly, set a theme for my United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) experience. All of the young people I met were blessed with incredible talents and passions - such that I felt unworthy to be there. The delegates were constantly reminded, whether it be while meeting with President Trump or standing on the piazza of Mount Vernon, of our infinite potential but also that we were accountable for the future. The future rests in our hands. The future is what we make it. So, now what? What do we, the 2019 USSYP delegates, do?

Be respectful. Jack Warren, Executive Director of the Cincinnati Society said, “Our job is to fulfill the American Revolution”. Most importantly, the revolution gave us independence. Our job, therefore, is to maintain and increase independence worldwide. But, how? What most limits independence, after oppression has been removed, is a lack of respect within society. How we treat each other in day-to-day interactions creates our nation’s overall attitude. Respect does not mean that every idea, philosophy, and principle must be accepted. It simply means each person, each country, is treated with the justice they so deserve. While we can talk about eliminating oppression, it will not vanish on its own. Widespread respect sets a positive tone. Secretary Ben Carson said, “All of you, I hope, will be people of significant influence. Use that significance in a positive way.” Let us use our significance and talents to lead in an example of respect helping ensure the future security of independence.

Be decided. Sometimes deeds so necessary and demanded for fall in the gray area of right and wrong. Susan Gordon, Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence, said, “Can I afford the consequence of being wrong?” Can we afford the consequences of being wrong? Are we willing to take risks? Change is a necessity. What our form of government provides for is the ability to change. While the foundation of our government must be maintained, we must, also, be willing to change and accept the results of right decisions or wrong decisions. I challenge you to make waves of positive change and accept the outcomes of those choices. Let us be people of force and accountability.

Be objective. Armando Varricchio, the Italian Ambassador to the United States, said, “Sometimes you have to be able to look at your country from above.” I personally think this means two things. First, we must look at our country’s problems simply as the problems they are - not as complicated and unsolvable issues. Secondly, we must be united as a country. When we look at our country from above, we are better able to focus on what makes us Americans (independence, uniqueness, self-reliance, and compassion to name a few). Let us be open-minded and united.

While I could have given you an overview of exactly what happened during my USSYP experience, I hope you see now that my experiences gave me a new attitude towards my country. I hope my fellow delegates went home with similar, newly revised perspectives. Let us, the 2019 USSYP delegates, be respectful, decided, and objective. As we have been so wonderfully blessed, let us bless others in return by creating an outstanding future for our nation. So, what will you do?

The USSYP staff, the Hearst Foundations, the Military Mentors, and our speakers and hosts made our trip incredible. To them, thank you. I thank my fellow delegates, too, as many of my favorite memories revolve around our dynamic discussions. Thank you.