

Nathan Dethloff, OK – 2019

When people talk about events that shape their lives, most of the time, it is about an experience they found stimulating or thought-provoking. My life changing experience was the United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP).

I have never heard such interesting and inspiring lectures from speakers in their respective fields. One of the most memorable, was the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, John Roberts. He was both insightful and well-spoken. He had an incredible amount of wisdom on jurisprudence, but, in my opinion, the most impactful subject he spoke about was how we treat our fellow human beings. He said, "I see the image and likeness of God in every human face. When you do that, it's hard to instinctively hate." This quote had a huge impact on me.

In politics today, we often find ourselves mixed into partisan scuffles. Instead of attacking political arguments, we resort to attacking the individuals who propose contrary ideas. This was exactly what Justice Roberts warned against. One thing which surprised me about the USSYP was the knowledge and willingness my fellow delegates showed while we talked about complicated issues. Being from rural Oklahoma, I do not have opportunities to talk politics with people who have a variety of perspectives. When I was able to talk to delegates from across the nation about how they felt about particular issues, it was refreshing to share ideas in a thoughtful and civil manner. Through USSYP, I have made lifelong friends, and look forward to interacting with them in the future. I am honored to be part of the 5,700 strong alumni group, and owe a part of all my future accomplishments to what I learned at USSYP.