



## Claiborne Pell (1918-2008)

Senator Claiborne Pell served six terms in office, until 1997.

Claiborne Pell, a founding member of the USA Club of Rome, board member of USA COR for 15 years, and friend of Aurelio Peccei died after a lengthy illness in his home in Newport, Rhode Island. He will be missed by those who worked with him as a dedicated globalist and futurist. Senator Pell was head of the Senate Foreign Relations committee and frequently found space for the USA Club of Rome to have important speakers on the future of international affairs and energy future problems within the US Senate. Senator Pell was always highly concerned about the planning for the future and felt that some of the vitality and vision had left the group with the sudden death of Aurelio Peccei, whom he considered an important global visionary. Pell brought Senator Al Gore to us about the the "Clearinghouse for the Future" in the US Legislature. Pell was a frequent participant in USA COR meetings along with Dante Fascell (who was head of the House foreign affairs committee) at the USA Club of Rome meetings, most of which were held in Washington, DC in the 1970's to the 1990's. Both the Senator and Congressman were both highly supportive of USA COR projects and meetings including the "Future of the Western Hemisphere."

Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts said in a statement last night "Claiborne was a giant in the Senate and beloved by the Kennedy family. He was a close, personal friend of President Kennedy, and all of our family has been proud to call him our friend since that time." "He believed strongly that a good education could open infinite doors of opportunity, and he has transformed the lives of millions of young people who have been able to go to college because of the grant that rightly bears his name." Senator Kennedy this morning (Jan. 5) gave the eulogy at the Episcopal Church where President and Senator Clinton, Senators Reid, Biden, and others attended with the family. Kennedy's eulogy is found below.

Pell cemented that bond with his constituents over his 36 years in the Senate (14th longest-serving in US history) because Rhode Islanders knew he was on their side. The Senator's mantra was "translate ideas into action and help people" which he did through a record of accomplishments that include the creation of Pell Grants (that has helped 54 million low-income and moderate-income students attend college), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the National Endowment for Arts, the Amtrak railroad system (about which he wrote in 1966, the well-received book "Megalopolis Unbound: The Supercity and the Transportation of Tomorrow." ), and the Sea Grant program,

Senator Pell was instrumental in a series of important initiatives of global importance which included the rule of law in international affairs, an ardent advocate of arms control, a commitment to maritime (Law of the Sea) and foreign affairs issues, sponsoring the legislation that founded the National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities, pro-gay rights in government positions, and strongly pro-choice on abortion rights. Senator Pell also was the guiding hand behind the SEAGRANT program which, like the land grant program before it, created centers of excellence for marine science throughout the coastal states of the USA.

Senator Pell took unconventional positions. In contrast to almost all his Senate colleagues and to several administrations, he advocated an end to the isolation of Communist Cuba by the United States by a policy of small steps toward normalizing relations with Cuba. He challenged Reagan's support of Nicaraguan guerrillas fighting the Marxist Sandinista government. He was also a dedicated supporter of negotiations to reduce nuclear arsenals. In 1988, he led the successful effort in the Senate to obtain ratification of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. In 1964, Senator Pell supported Johnson's request for legislative endorsement of a widened American military role in Indochina and the Gulf of Tonkin resolution. Later he acknowledged that his support had been a mistake, and became an

outspoken opponent of the war in Vietnam. His opposition to American military intervention in foreign conflicts included Lebanon and El Salvador and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Claiborne DeBorda Pell was born in New York City on Nov. 22, 1918. The family had lived in New York since colonial times and its holdings once embraced much of Westchester County and the Bronx. His ancestors included the Lorillard Tobacco company founders. I remember in his Senate office hung a painting of Vice President George M. Dallas, a great-great-granduncle (VP 1845 to 1849). Five of his forebears, including his father, Herbert Claiborne Pell, served in Congress. His father later was minister to Portugal and then Hungary during the presidency of his friend President Franklin D. Roosevelt. When Claiborne Pell was 9, the family moved to Newport Rhode Island. Mr. Pell graduated with a BA from Princeton University. Upon graduation, he went to Europe to help people persecuted by the Nazis and was twice detained. Four months before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, he enlisted in the Coast Guard as a seaman. He served on convoy and did patrol duty in the North Atlantic and the Mediterranean. He remained devoted to the Coast Guard, retiring from the Reserve in 1978 as a captain. After the war he obtained an MA in history from Columbia University and joined the Foreign Service (assigned to Genoa, Italy). His foreign languages included French, Italian, and Portuguese. One of his first assignments, he told me, was to help draft the Charter for the United Nations. His immediate superior in this endeavor was Alger Hiss, he said with eyebrows raised high and his twinkling laugh. In the 1950s, he left the foreign service and went into investment banking in Rhode Island. He also became registration chairman of the Democratic National Committee. In 1956 he also served as vice president of the International Rescue Committee, helping refugees who had made their way to Austria after the Hungarian uprising that year was crushed by the Soviet Union. When he decided to run for the Senate in 1960, he demonstrated his prowess on the hustings by defeating two former governors for the Democratic nomination. He was helped in the general election by his strong ties to John F. Kennedy, and was swept into Camelot. He of course, knew Jacqueline Kennedy and her step-father Hugh Auchincloss from their home in Newport where she wed Jack Kennedy, with Claiborne among the guests.

Importantly in his farewell speech to the Senate, Pell lamented the hyper-partisanship that had eroded civility in the Senate stressing that members must remember that "whatever the depth of our disagreements, we are all common instruments of the democratic process." Pell offered three simple rules -- never attack your opponent personally, "always let the other fellow have your way," and that "half a loaf can feed an army" since in the democratic process achievement of half of an objective is just as significant as achievement of the ultimate objective and makes it that much easier to do so.

Pell's final words in the Senate expressed his hope "that it is our ongoing mission to become, like Athens, a nation that is known for its civility and its civilization" and not solely for its military might like Sparta. With Claiborne Pell's death, we have lost a gentle giant.

Anitra Thorhaug, Ph.D.  
President USA Club of Rome

These are the words of Senator Ted Kennedy at Claiborne's funeral, Monday Jan. 5 in Newport , Rhode Island.

*President Clinton, Vice President-elect Biden, colleagues in government. Nuala, Dallas, Toby and Janet, Jeannie, Julie Smith and all of the grandchildren Claiborne loved so much. I'm deeply honored to be with you today to pay tribute to an extraordinary man -- a respected leader, and a valued colleague and a wonderful friend – Senator Claiborne Pell.*

*Claiborne's life was defined by service. He was so proud to have served in the Coast Guard – “Our mission was to save lives,” he loved to say. The Coast Guard's motto is Semper Paratus – always prepared. Doesn't that describe Claiborne to a tee? Throughout his career, he was always prepared – always eager to serve the people of Rhode Island, the nation and the world. Claiborne and I joined together in the Senate for 34 of his 36 years there –we served on the same committee. But I knew all about him long before that. Claiborne Pell was an early supporter of my brother, the President. And years later, he was an early supporter of Patrick. And none of the rest of our family had ever forgot that. In 1960, Claiborne won the first of his six elections as United States Senator from Rhode Island, and my brother won the election as President. But something was quite clear on that election night in November 1960 – in Rhode Island, the most popular person on the ticket was Claiborne Pell. I have a vivid memory of one year in particular, when I decided to come to Newport Harbor under full sail and asked Claiborne to come out to my boat in a rubber raft. Claiborne didn't blink. I headed Mya up into the wind, and the rubber raft came along side her, and Claiborne jumped on the sailboat like the seaman he was. We then headed down for a truly glorious sail, swapping stories about everything from Senate business to the swimming off Bailey's Beach. The quiet joy of the wind on his face was a sight to behold.*

*Claiborne Pell was a gentleman and a gentle man. On the outside, he was calm and composed. But deep down, he was a real fighter. During his brilliant career, he amassed a treasure trove of accomplishments that few will ever match. It was Claiborne Pell who opened the doors of opportunity and progress for millions of young Americans, who have been able to go to college because of a Pell Grant. It was Claiborne Pell who sponsored the landmark legislation that created both the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. It was Claiborne Pell who said no, our sea beds will not be used as a nuclear testing ground. It was Claiborne Pell who advocated the power of diplomacy before resorting to the power our military might. And it was Claiborne Pell who was an environmentalist long before it was cool. Claiborne was a Senator of high character, great decency and fundamental honesty. And that's why he became the longest-serving Senator in the history of Rhode Island. He was a Senator for our time and for all time. He was an original. He was my friend. And I will miss him very much.*

*I'd like to end with the closing words of the Coast Guard prayer:*

*“Bless the keepers of the lights and be Thou their close friend in lonely watches. Keep the beacons of honor and duty burning that they may reach the home port with duty well performed, in service to Thee and our land. Amen.”*