

Here is a transcript of Meghan McCain's remarks:

*"The world is a fine place and worth the fighting for, and I hate very much to leave it." When Ernest Hemingway's Robert Jordan, at the close "For Whom the Bell Tolls" lies wounded and waiting for his last fight, these are among his final thoughts.*

*My father had every reason to think the world was an awful place. My father had every reason to think the world was not worth fighting for. My father had every reason to think the world was worth leaving. He did not think any of those things. Like the hero of his favorite book, John McCain took the opposite view: You had to have a lot of luck to have had such a good life.*

*I am here before you today saying the words I have never wanted to say, giving the speech I have never wanted to give. Feeling the loss I have never wanted to feel. My father is gone.*

*John Sidney McCain III was many things. He was a sailor, he was an aviator, he was a husband, he was a warrior, he was a prisoner, he was a hero, he was a congressman, he was a senator, he was nominee for president of the United States. These are all the titles and the roles of a life that has been well-lived. They're not the greatest of his titles nor the most important of his roles.*

*He was a great man. We gather here to mourn the passing of American greatness, the real thing, not cheap rhetoric from men who will never come near the sacrifice he gave so willingly, nor the opportunistic appropriation of those that live lives of comfort and privilege while he suffered and served.*

*He was a great fire who burned bright.*

*In the past few days, my family and I have heard from so many of those Americans who stood in the warmth and light of his fire and found it illuminated what's best about them. We are grateful to them because they're grateful to him. A few have resented that fire for that light it cast upon them, for the truth it revealed about their character, but my father never cared what they thought, and even that small number still have the opportunity as long as they draw breath to live up to the example of John McCain.*

*My father was a great man. He was a great warrior. He was a great American. I admired him for all of these things, but I love him because he was a great father. My father knew what it was like to grow up in the shadow of greatness, he did just as his father had done before him. He was the son of a great admiral who was also the son of a great admiral. When it came time for the third John Sidney McCain to become a man, he had no choice*

*but in his own eyes to walk in those exact same paths. He had to become a sailor. He had to go to war. He had to have his shot at becoming a great admiral as they also had done.*

*The past of his father and grandfather led my father directly to the harrowing hell of the Hanoi Hilton. This is the public legend that is John McCain. This is where all of the biographies, the campaign literature and public remembrances say he showed his character, his patriotism, his faith, and his endurance in the worst of possible circumstances. This is where we learned who John McCain truly was. And all of that is very true except for the last part.*

*Today I want to share with you where I found out who John McCain truly was. It wasn't in the Hanoi Hilton. It wasn't in the cockpit of a fast and lethal fighter jet. It wasn't on the high seas or on the campaign trail. John McCain was in all of those places, but the best of him was somewhere else. The best of John McCain, the greatest of his titles and the most important of his roles was as a father.*

*Imagine the warrior, the knight of the skies, gently carrying his little girl to bed. Imagine the dashing aviator who took his aircraft, hurtling off pitching decks in the South China Seas, kissing the hurt when I fell and skinned my knee. Imagine the distinguished statesman, who counseled presidents and the powerful, singing with his girl in Oak Creek during a rainstorm to "Singing in the Rain." Imagine the senator, fierce conscience of the nation's best self, taking his 14-year-old daughter out of school because he believed that I would learn more about America at the town halls he held across the country. Imagine the elderly veteran of war and government, whose wisdom and courage were sought by the most distinguished men of our time, with his eyes shining with happiness as he gave blessing for his grown daughter's marriage.*

*You all have to imagine that. I don't have to because I lived it all. I know who he was. I know what defined him. I got to see it every single day of my blessed life.*

*John McCain was not defined by prison, by the Navy, by the Senate, by the Republican Party or by any single one of the deeds in his absolutely extraordinary life. John McCain was defined by love.*

*Several of you out there in the pews who crossed swords with him or found yourselves on the receiving end of his famous temper or were at a cross purpose to him on nearly anything, are right at this moment doing your best to stay stone-faced. Don't. You know full well if John McCain were in your shoes today, he would be using some salty word he learned in the Navy while my mother jabbed him in the arm in embarrassment. He would look back at her and grumble, maybe stop talking, but he would keep grinning. She was the only one who could do that.*

*On their first date, when he still did not know what sort of woman he was, he recited a Robert Service poem to her called "The Cremation of Sam McGee," about an Alaskan prospector who welcomes his cremation as the only way to get warm in the icy north. "There are strange things done in the midnight sun by the men who moil for gold. The arctic trails have their secret tales that would make your blood run cold."*

*He had learned it in Hanoi. A prisoner in the next cell had rapped it out in code over and over again during years of captivity. My father figured that if Cindy Lou Hensley would sit through that, and appreciate the dark humor that had seen him through so many years of imprisonment, she just might sit through a lifetime with him as well. And she did.*

*John McCain was defined by love. This love of my father for my mother was the most fierce and lasting of them all, Mom. Let me tell you what love meant to John McCain and to me.*

*His love was the love of a father who mentors as much as he comforts. He was endlessly present for us. And though we did not always understand it, he was always teaching. He didn't expect us to be like him. His ambition for us, unmoored from any worldly achievement, was to be better than him, armed with his wisdom and informed by his experiences, long before we were even old enough to have assembled our own.*

*As a girl I didn't appreciate what I most fully appreciate now; how he suffered and how he bore it with a stoic silence that was once the mark of an American man.*

*I came to appreciate it first when he demanded it of me. I was a small girl, thrown from a horse and crying from a busted collarbone. My dad picked me up. He took me to the doctor, he got me all fixed up. Then he immediately took me back home and made me get back on that very same horse. I was furious at him as a child, but how I love him for it now.*

*My father knew pain and suffering with an intimacy and immediacy that most of us are blessed never to have endured. He was shot down, he was crippled, he was beaten, he was starved, he was tortured and he was humiliated. That pain never left him. The cruelty of his Communist captors ensured he would never raise his arms above his head for the rest of his life. Yet he survived. Yet he endured. Yet he triumphed. And there was this man who had been through all that with a little girl who simply didn't want to get back on her horse.*

*He could have sat me down and told me that and made me feel small because my complaint and fear was nothing next to his pain and memory. Instead, he made me feel loved. "Meghan," he said in his quiet voice that spoke with authority and meant you had best obey. "Get back on the horse." I did. And because I was a little girl, I resented it. Now*

*that I am a woman, I look back across that time and see the expression on his face when I climbed back up and rode again, and see the pride and love in his eyes as he said "Nothing is going to break you."*

*For the rest of my life, whenever I fall down, I get back up. Whenever I am hurt, I drive on. Whenever I am brought low, I rise. That is not because I am virtuous, strong, resilient, it is simply because my father, John McCain, was.*

*When my father got sick, when I asked him what he wanted me to do with this eulogy, he said, "Show them how tough you are." That is what love meant to John McCain.*

*Love for my father also meant caring for the nation entrusted to him. My father, the true son of his father and grandfather, was born into an enduring sense of the hard-won character of American greatness, and was convinced of the need to defend it with ferocity and faith. John McCain was born in a distant now vanquished outpost of American power, and he understood America as a sacred trust. He understood our republic demands responsibilities, even before it defends its rights. He knew navigating the line between good and evil was often difficult but always simple. He grasped that our purpose and meaning was rooted in a missionary's responsibility, stretching back centuries.*

*Just as the first Americans looked upon a new world full of potential for a grand experiment in freedom and self-government, so their descendants have a responsibility to defend the old world from its worst self. The America of John McCain is the America of the revolution, fighters with no stomach for the summer soldier and the sunshine patriot, making the world anew with the bells of liberty. The America of John McCain is the America of Abraham Lincoln, fulfilling the promise of the Declaration of Independence that all men are created equal, and suffering greatly to see it through. The America of John McCain is the America of the boys who rushed the colors in every war across three centuries, knowing that in them is the life of the republic, and particularly those by their daring as Ronald Reagan said, gave up their chance as being husbands and fathers and grandfathers and gave up their chance to be revered old men. The America of John McCain is, yes, the America of Vietnam, fighting the fight, even in the most forlorn cause, even in the most grim circumstances, even in the most distant and hostile corner of the world, standing even in defeat for the life and liberty of other peoples in other lands.*

*The America of John McCain is generous and welcoming and bold. She is resourceful, confident, secure. She meets her responsibilities. She speaks quietly because she is strong. America does not boast because she has no need to. The America of John McCain has no need to be made great again because America was always great. That fervent*

*faith, that proven devotion, that abiding love, that is what drove my father from the fiery skies above the Red River delta to the brink of the presidency itself.*

*Love defined my father. As a young man he wondered if he would measure up to his distinguished lineage. I miss him so badly. I want to tell him that he did. But I take small comfort in this. Somewhere in the great beyond where the warriors go, there are two admirals of the United States meeting their much loved son. They are telling him he is the greatest among them.*

*Dad, I love you, I always have. All that I am, all that I hope, all that I dream is grounded in what you taught me. You loved me and you showed me what love must be. An ancient Greek historian wrote, "The image of great men is woven into the stuff of other men's lives." Dad, your greatness is woven into my life, it is woven into my mother's life, it is woven into my sister's life, and it is woven into my brothers' lives. It is woven into the life and liberty of the country you sacrificed so much to defend.*

*Dad, I know you were not perfect. We live in an era where we knock down old American heroes for all their imperfections when no leader wants to admit to fault or failure. You were an exception and you gave us an ideal to strive for.*

*Look, I know you can see this gathering here in this cathedral. The nation is here to remember you. Like so many other heroes, you leave us draped in the flag you loved. You defended it, you sacrificed it, you have always honored it. It is good to remember we are Americans. We don't put our heroes on pedestals just to remember them, we raise them up because we want to emulate their virtues. This is how we honor them, and this is how we will honor you.*

*My father gone. My father is gone and my sorrow is immense, but I know his life, and I know it was great because it was good. And as much as I hate to see him go, I do know how it ended. I know that on the afternoon of August 25th in front of Oak Creek in Cornville, Arizona, surrounded by the family he loved so much, an old man shook off the scars of battle one last time and arose a new man to pilot one last flight up and up and up, busting clouds left and right, straight on through to the kingdom of heaven. And he slipped the earthly bonds, put out his hand, and touched the face of God.*

*I love you, Dad.*