

## **Joe Biden's Tribute to John Lewis**

Sat, Jul 18, 2020

We are made in the image of God, and then there is John Lewis.

How could someone in flesh and blood be so courageous, so full of hope and love in the face of so much hate, violence, and vengeance? Perhaps it was the Spirit that found John as a young boy in the Deep South dreaming of preaching the social gospel; the work ethic his sharecropper parents instilled in him and that stayed with him; the convictions of nonviolent civil disobedience he mastered from Dr. King and countless fearless leaders in the movement; or the abiding connection with the constituents of Georgia's 5th District he loyally served for decades.

Or perhaps it was that he was truly a one-of-a-kind, a moral compass who always knew where to point us and which direction to march.

It is rare to meet and befriend our heroes. John was that hero for so many people of every race and station, including us. He absorbed the force of human nature's cruelty during the course of his life, and the only thing that could finally stop him was cancer. But he was not bitter. We spoke to him a few days ago for the final time. His voice still commanded respect and his laugh was still full of joy. Instead of answering our concerns for him, he asked about us. He asked us to stay focused on the work left undone to heal this nation. He was himself – a man at peace, of dignity, grace and character.

John's life reminds us that the most powerful symbol of what it means to be an American is what we do with the time we have to make real the promise of our nation – that we are all created equal and deserve to be treated equally. Through the beatings, the marches, the arrests, the debates on war, peace, and freedom, and the legislative fights for good jobs and health care and the fundamental right to vote, he taught us that while the journey toward equality is not easy, we must be unafraid and never cower and never, ever give up.

That is the charge a great American and humble man of God has left us. For parents trying to answer their children's questions about what to make of the world we are in today, teach them about John Lewis. For the peaceful marchers for racial and economic justice around the world who are asking where we go from here, follow his lead. For his fellow legislators, govern by your conscience like he did, not for power or party. He was our bridge – to our history so we did not forget its pain and to our future so we never lose our hope.

To John's son, John Miles, and to his family, friends, staff, and constituents, we send you our love and prayers. Thank you for sharing him with the nation and the world.

And to John, march on, dear friend. May God bless you. May you reunite with your beloved Lillian. And may you continue to inspire righteous good trouble down from the Heavens.

Joe Biden