

Prime Minister
Gro Harlem Brundtland

Oslo Cathedral
30 January 1991

EULOGY AT THE FUNERAL SERVICE FOR KING OLAV V

Across our entire country, from the mountains to the fjords, people pause today to say farewell to King Olav V. There is sorrow in our country, but there is also deep gratitude for everything he ment to us.

King Olav's lifetime spanned our recent history as an independent nation. He personified our struggle to preserve our freedom in our darkest hour.

From the snowy November day in 1905 when he was carried ashore at the harbour, until the evening he passed quietly away at Kongsseteren, amidst snow-laden firs, he won increasing respect and affection both as Crown Prince and King.

Each of us regarded King Olav as our King. He represented the best of the Norwegian character, the best in all of us.

Together with his father, King Olav faced formidable challenges when war came to our country. These were met with courage, wisdom and determination. We can still see the two of them: During the bombing, under the birch tree, dignified under pressure, symbols of the living nation in an occupied country.

But King Olav's life was primarily spent in the pursuit of peace. A commitment extending far beyond the call of duty is the real source of our love for this King.

We will remember him smiling from the Palace balcony on the 17th of May. Hour after hour, year after year. An image of our freedom and independence, yet at the same time a person who cared. He brought us closer together.

We often met him on the ski trails. We remember him on the tram during the oil crisis.

He was received with great warmth throughout our country.

He met more Norwegians than any of us, and each of us had a personal relationship to him. His people knew him as a King who performed his duties with infectious enthusiasm and charm.

King Olav belonged to the whole nation. He set an example for all of us. Through his untiring efforts, his deft leadership and his genuine warmth, our young monarchy has -- in less than a century -- become one with the nation, firmly etched into our minds and hearts. It exists, and it will continue to do so, because we know it as our own.

During the days since his death, thousands have spontaneously displayed their deep feelings for King Olav in a way never before witnessed in Norway. More than words, the candles and flowers in the Palace Square express the emotions of our nation: Our sorrow at the loss of our King, our gratitude and appreciation for everything he ment to us. The children have said it best: "He was the nicest King in the world."

The King became a focal point for the nation. But he was also much more: He was a symbol of hope for his people. He showed us the way.

The dramatic events of the past few weeks and the difficult state of world affairs have revealed our need for -- and ability to sustain -- a spirit of community and brotherhood. Today our nation is united not only in sorrow for the death of King Olav, but also in our recognition of what he stood for and what brings us together behind our new King.

The candles, the flowers, the words also give hope and strength to the one who succeeds him, King Harald V and his Family.

A nation stands united in gratitude. May peace be with King Olav.