

Remarks
by
Robert M. Gates
Director of Central Intelligence
at the
Unveiling Ceremony
of Judge William Webster's Portrait

CIA Headquarters
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It is a great pleasure for me to be here this afternoon to pay tribute to my dear friend, colleague, and mentor—Bill Webster—by assisting in the unveiling of his official portrait. I also want to add my congratulations to the Fine Arts Commission for securing the extraordinary talents of artist Everett Raymond Kinstler.

It has been said that “art is the window to man’s soul.” And perhaps in no other art form is this more true than in portraiture. Here, the real measure of success is the artist’s ability to look beyond appearances—to provide for the audience a window that captures the special character and the personal qualities of his subject. It must have been a formidable task for Mr. Kinstler to portray—using brush strokes on canvas—the very special character, the commitment, and the dedication of a man like Bill Webster.

Judge Webster has described himself as “an old Navy man who heard the bosun’s pipe” calling him to public service. He first heard the call in 1960, when he served for two years as a United States attorney for the Eastern District of Missouri. He heard the call again in 1970 and left the comfort and security of a successful private law practice because in his words: “A lot of people were saying that the system didn’t work. I believe it does work and I saw public service as a way of helping to keep it work.”

For the next two decades, Bill was sustained by this same dedication to service his country. And throughout his long and very distinguished career—on the Bench, at FBI, and here at the CIA—Judge Webster provided, in the words of President Bush, ‘the very best in service to his nation.’

Judge Webster had many successes in his long federal career but perhaps his greatest contribution was his leadership of the CIA and the Intelligence Community during the period that marked the end of the Cold War. It’s fair to say that he witnessed more changes in the international scene during his four years as DCI than in the 40 years of CIA history that preceded him. During his tenure, the last great colonial empire—the Soviet Union—crumbled under the weight of seven decades of Communist misrule and misunderstanding of history and human nature. In Europe, Germany reunited and many countries of Eastern and Central Europe held their first free elections in over 40 years. And just this past year the United States and its allies achieved a swift and stunning victory in the Persian Gulf with, I might add, the strong and successful support of the Intelligence Community under Judge Webster’s leadership.

It is to Bill's credit that he not only recognized the direction the winds of change were blowing but he began to steer the Intelligence Community toward the new challenges ushered in by the end of the Cold War. His enormous integrity—and his personal commitment to reach out to the public—were critical to our maintaining the confidence of the American people. And through his close relations with the Congress, he proved to be a tireless and effective advocate for intelligence.

All of us are indeed fortunate that Bill answered the bosun's call to public service—and that he provided the steady hand at the helm of intelligence during such a pivotal time in world affairs. Now his portrait takes its rightful place in this corridor—a fitting and permanent reminder of the highest principles and ideals of public service to which we all aspire.

And now, I would like to ask Judge Webster and the artist, Everett Raymond Kinstler, to come forward to lift the curtain from this portrait.