**Transcription of the 9th Annual Eugene J. McCarthy Lecture with Senator Chris Dodd**

**President Michael Hemesath:**

Good evening, and welcome. My name is Michael Hemesath, I am President of St. John’s University, and I am honored to be with you this evening for the 9th Annual Eugene McCarthy Lecture, Conscience and Courage in Public Life. We are privileged to have with us this evening, among our other guests, Senator David Durenburger. David Durenberger, would you wave your hand here. \***audience applause**\* A pro Johnnie from sometime in the eighties maybe, who earlier this evening was presented with the Eugene McCarthy Distinguished Public Service Award by the St. Ben’s and St. John’s Politics and Public Policy Alumni Chapter. We’re also joined this evening by Senator McCarthy’s daughter, Ellen McCarthy, and her husband Charlie Howell, \***audience applause\*** and the Senator’s niece, Mary Beth McCarthy is here with us as well this evening. \***audience applause**\* We’re gathered here tonight to have a conversation about conscience and courage in public life and honor Senator Eugene McCarthy. While only 19 years old, Gene graduated from St. John’s with top academic honors, while also excelling in baseball and hockey. He was even a member of the monastic community for a short time after he left the college, and he has inspired countless students in our classrooms over the decades. Even though Gene’s life guided him to Congress and eventually a run for the presidency, he never left this place. We found him visiting the campus and community often during his days in public office. He came back regularly to refresh his soul and recharge his batteries to Collegeville. Tonight we also want to recognize a man who demonstrates Gene’s values of conscience and courage each and every day, former Senator Christopher Dodd of Connecticut. \***audience applause**\* We also want to thank our benefactors Katherine and Dan Wayland for endowing the Eugene J. McCarthy Center for Public Policy at St. John’s. Through the center’s programs, internships and other student opportunities, we carry on Senator McCarthy’s commitment to the public good and to civic engagement. And while the Waylands were unable to be with us this evening, please join us in acknowledging their support for the McCarthy Center. \***audience applause**\* And now I’d like to introduce the power behind the throne at the McCarthy Center: Dr. Matt Lindstrom, the Edward L. Henry Professor of Political Science and the director of the McCarthy Center. Dr. Lindstrom. \***audience applause**\*

**Dr. Matt Lindstrom:**

Good evening and thank you President Hemesath. Welcome and thanks to all of you for your attendance and support of the 9th Annual Eugene J. McCarthy Lecture. Tonight we welcome to campus Chris Dodd: former United States Senator and current Chairman and CEO of the Motion Picture Association of America. A well respected national legislative leader on just about all of the most important public policy areas. Senator Dodd, thank you for being here tonight. \***audience applause\***

**Senator Chris Dodd:**

Thank you very much.

**Dr. Lindstrom:**

You’ll also notice a familiar face on stage and a very good friend of the McCarthy Center and our schools, Mr. Gary Eichten of Minnesota Public Radio, \***audience applause**\* who will conduct and interview for a bit and then take your written questions. And by the way if you do have questions, we’re doing it slightly different this year, we are going to write them down and pass it to the side, and we’ll have some student workers kind of picking them up, and we’ll shepherd them to the front here. After the program I welcome you to stick around the lobby where you can meet the two gentlemen on stage, you can buy Senator Dodd’s book, you can have him sign it, and if you have a Gary Eichten bobble head you might be able to get that signed too. \***audience laughter**\* No promises. \***Mr. Eichten mimics bobble head\*** You know. Okay! There you go! For a buck ninety-nine. It is my distinct pleasure to serve as the McCarthy Center, for many different reasons, but one of them is really, to have the opportunity to work with so many impressive colleagues, alum and students. And one of these students is Mai Tong Yang, who will introduce our distinguished guests tonight. Mai Tong is a senior Political Science major from St. Paul, Minnesota, and she has been involved with the McCarthy Center since day one. Since her day one on campus. Mai Tong’s record of success in and out of the classroom exemplifies all that is great about St. Ben’s and St. John’s. She has been a campus leader she is a non-profit entrepreneur she has an impressive record of service through her award winning work with the Boys & Girls Clubs, a Congressional Stenous Fellow, John Brandl Scholar serving in Senator Franken’s Washington D.C. office and also as an Gary Eichten Fellow serving at Minnesota Public Radio; with of course Mr. Gary Eichten. Now, you may be wondering where her favorite place to work was: was it the Senate, was it NPR we are not going to ask her that tonight but we are going to welcome her to the podium so she can introduce our distinguished guest. Thank you Mai. \***audience applause**\*

Mai Tong and Mr. Eichten high five as she walks to the podium.

**Mai Tong**

A little high (referring to the microphone) **\*audience laughter\*** It is an honor for me to introduce tonight not one but two very exemplary individuals the first is a Johnnie who I am privileged to call my mentor after spending three months under his guidance and wisdom as a fellow at the Minnesota Public Radio. A 1969 graduate of St. John’s University Gary Eichten began his broadcast journalism career as a student announcer at KSJR in Collegeville. The small station grew to over 800,000 active listeners into what is now Minnesota Public Radio. For the past twenty years, he has hosted the Midday and other major news programs. His passion, talent and commitment has not gone unnoticed. Mr. Eichten has received several national awards for his career in journalism including the Corporation for Public Broadcasting’s Award for best local news program. He exemplifies thoughtful insight in tempered non-confrontational approach towards interviewed subjects he represents some of the best qualities that a broadcast journalist with humility and humbleness. Why did I forget this? \***laughter from Mai and then the audience**\* Tonight Gary Eichten will be interviewing our 9th annual McCarthy lecturer right here on stage. Please give a Benedictine welcome to one of our fellow Johnnies and a former Midday host and NPR editor at large Gary Eichten. **\*audience applause\***

**Gary Eichten**

Thank you.

**Mai Tong**

Thank you. Now it is my utmost pleasure to introduce the 9th Annual Eugene J. McCarthy Lecturer Senator Chris Dodd. Senator Dodd graduated from Providence College in Rhode Island in 1966. Upon graduation he volunteered for the Peace Corp and served in the Dominican Republic from 1966 to 1968. His commitment to our nation led him to enlist in the United States Army National Guard and Army Reserves while attending law school at the University of Louisville. Following in the footsteps of his father, former Senator Thomas J. Dodd, Senator Dodd was elected to the United States Senate in 1980. For thirty years in Congress, Senator Dodd was a champion for working families, a key participant in nearly every major national policy debate over the last three decades. Senator Dodd is perhaps best known for authoring and co-authoring the Family Medical Leave Act, the Patient Protection Affordable Care Act, the Help America Vote Act and the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, often referred to as Dodd-Frank. The implementation of Dodd-Frank assured many families, like my own my first generation Hmong family that immigrated from Thailand, that the American dream is still alive and achievable by protecting consumers from unfair financial practices. His commitment to find common ground across the aisle while staying true to his values, making public policy to benefit working class Americans, is a true testament to the principles embodied by Eugene J. McCarthy. With a long distinguished career in public service, Senator Dodd serves as inspiration for policy makers across the nation and for Johnnies and Bennies here, to address major issues happening around the world. We are honored and privileged to have you here tonight with us. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming Senator Chris Dodd. **\*audience applause\***

**Senator Chris Dodd**

Thank you. Thanks. Thank you very much, Mai Tong. It’s great we’ll be able to say we knew her when, you know. I hope she remembers us. **\*laughs\*** Senator Mai Tong has a nice ring to it.

**Gary Eichten**

Senator Dodd, welcome to Minnesota, Saint John’s, Saint Ben’s, and the annual McCarthy Center Lecture.

**Senator Chris Dodd**

Thank you. Thank you.

**Gary Eichten**

I want to touch on some of the many issues that you worked on during your years in public life, financial reform, children and family issues, foreign policy. Talk some presidential politics, of course. And we’ll be taking audience questions along the way. But I wanted to start with the latest crisis to consume Washington, namely the debt limit deadline next week, highway fund deadline this week, the government shutdown that looms in December. It looks like the House of Representatives will have a new speaker to wrestle with these problems, so that should help. But, the long and the short of it is what the heck is going on and why all the turmoil?

**Senator Chris Dodd**

How much time do we have this evening? **\*audience laughter\*** Well first of all, let me thank you Gary and Michael Hemaseth, thank you very much for the invitation and Mary Hinton at the College of Saint Benedict to invite me out today to be a part of this center and the Gene McCarthy Lecture Series. I’d be remiss if I didn’t begin by telling what a pleasure it was to see my old colleague and friend David Durenberger here tonight and receiving this award this evening, I was saying to David, we served together in a time that seems almost quaint today despite the fact we served in different political parties, developed a great friendship, worked together, as many of us did in those days. So David, congratulations tonight on being recognized with the public service award from the Gene McCarthy Award. **\*audience applause\*** And let me thank Ellen McCarthy. It was through her and her former roommate in college, Jean Pruett, who heads up the independent film makers who asked me if I could come by this evening and be at Saint John’s and the College of Saint Benedict. I can’t begin to thank you enough for the invitation to be here this evening. So the pleasantries out of the way, let’s get back to the question here. Well first of all, it’s rather stunning in a way, in a sense, and I wish I could have some pithy quick answer for you as to why we are in this fix. You mentioned couple issues that are looming obviously but you could raise any number of issues that we seem unable, or unwilling-even worse, to come to some conclusion about them. Now, I’m hopeful as well and I want to be careful here because I know this broadcast is being carried by the media. If I start saying some generous and kind things about Paul Ryan, he could lose the election on Wednesday. **\*audience laughter\*** So I want to be very careful. Let me begin by saying what a dreadful individual he is. **\*audience laughter\*** And I disagree with him on everything under the sun but it is an important element. You’ve identified it, Gary, in your question. Not an insignificant matter that he is apparently receiving the support of the various factions, including the tea party factions and the House of Representatives that he insisted upon as part of the condition of him accepting the job as Speaker. I’m hopeful that is not just sort of a cosmetic feature but that will actually reflect the willingness of the institution to begin to grapple with some of these issues. And let me offer something I’m sure is not necessarily welcome by the Republicans, but they would be wise to follow it. I can’t think of it any worse regardless of your views and what party you may belong to, about the idea that we’re going to ask the party to assume the job of being president, control of the house and the senate when you refuse to come to terms with basic economic issues. I can’t think of a worse indictment as you come into an election cycle. So, political judgement I hope might prevail. Not to mention, of course, the benefit to all of us that resolve to some of these questions might allow us to move forward. I think we look ridiculous in the eyes of the world for our unwillingness or inability to come to terms with these issues. So I’m hopeful that we’ll see some resolution of it. I’ve got to presume that Paul Ryan receives some assurance that they’ll avoid the kind of shut down- you don’t have to be a great student of history to know the last time that happened in any meaningful way was a devastating political impact for the Republican Party when they did so. So obviously I’m now- as I told you earlier, Gary, I’m not involved in the day to day, I watch, obviously, I’m interested in what’s happening. I’m more worried not only about these set of issues you’ve identified, but the basic inability to grapple with any issue of any magnitude and to come together. Architecturally, the Congress was designed by our forebears specifically to deal with wildly differing opinions of how to resolve matters, but they created the architecture, the structures by which compromise could be reached in order to move forward. It has worked, not without exception throughout our two hundred plus year history, but by and large it’s provided us throughout our history the ability to resolve those issues in a way that allowed us to move forward and increase the progress of our country.

**Gary Eichten**

What changed? Even from when you were serving. There were disagreements, to be sure, sometimes bitter disagreements, but things did get resolved. The government wasn’t shut down. The debts were paid. Things moved along. Now, there’s a real question of whether any of that’s going to happen. What changed?

**Senator Chris Dodd**

Well, I would say, first of all I’m a great believer, not believer but I accept the notion, that one of the wonderful things about our country is that there’s great partisanship. There’s nothing wrong with that. People indict that, but there’s nothing wrong with that. In fact it’s healthy. In an open and free society, to discourage partisan debate is to discourage the very essence of who we are in a sense. So it’s not about the absence of partisanship. In fact, that’s a beginning place. You’ve got to begin there. That’s who we are. What’s missing, and what the architecture allows, is for a resolution of partisanship, and that has broken down considerable. Now I can recite any number of issues on why this has happened. First of all, our, our- just in terms of money, how people raise the money today to run for public office. It is beyond my imagination, even though I only left five or six years ago for congress, I wouldn’t even know how to begin to raise the money necessary to win a state wide senate race today. It is so staggering the amount of money necessary to compete, that I can’t even imagine how these people do it. They do it, and they do it too often, and I don’t believe necessarily that people give away their votes, but the expectation of people who are willing to write massive checks, and you’re seeing this more in the presidential race. What is it, 148 families, in this country are under riding about 90% of the contributions to the major candidates running for the white house in this country because of that dreadful decision that was reached by the Supreme Court on Citizens United? I can’t think of anything that has done more damage to our country than the proliferation of that quantity of resources, financially, in our campaigns. Secondly, the media coverage alone, the twenty four hours news cycles. And again, it’s no longer the days of Walter Cronkite or Tom Brokaw was here a few years ago, or going back even earlier to Huntley and Brinkley, in a sense, where you actually thought these people were giving you objective facts. Now you can have your own ideological network in order to satisfy your own point of view on something. So god forbid you deviate from the orthodoxy at all. Then you’re delegated, or relegated rather, to a corner politically in a sense. So that has contributed significantly as well, to people. The district lines, in the House of Representatives, what are we done to about 45 races out of 435 that are actually contested any longer on a bipartisan basis? Today, if you win the primary, the race is over. And again, no one is listening to minority voices, their own constituency any longer, and so that’s contributing significantly. There was a day not too many years ago, when the federal government only paid for two roundtrip tickets when you were elected to Congress. Your ticket to get to Washington, and your ticket to come back. Today, you can go back and forth ten times a day if you have, quote, a ‘public purpose’. And a public purpose could be nothing more than meeting with a teacher in some public school, is a public purpose. So people no longer go to Washington to serve and to get to know one another and cooperate when possible and reach consensus on issues. They go, and most of them arrive Tuesday mornings, leave Thursday nights or Friday mornings. They have no idea who their colleagues are. What their interests, what their hobbies are. What they care about. What they believe in as individuals. All of those are critical elements that our forebears imagined, in a time when they could not have imagined that people could fly home to Saint Paul in a couple of hours and be home for an event on a Wednesday night, be back in Washington the following morning to make votes if they had to. All of that has contributed, in my view, to what has been this spiraling downward of the inability of our national legislature and our national political leaders to come to terms with the issues of our day. And it is costing our country dearly. And if we don’t change soon, how to reorganize this in some ways, then I worry deeply about the country my ten, fourteen year old daughters are going to live in in this country.

**Gary Eichten**

First step in that reorganization, what needs, in your mind, to happen?

**Senator Chris Dodd**

I’d like to see us redo, we ought to get away, if we can, from the redrawing the district lines. ‘Cause I don’t think there’s anything is more pernicious than that, in a sense- where you end up with these lines being drawn to satisfy ideological needs and you don’t end up with a kind of competition that you have. Where you’re listening to other voices. That would be a major step. If we could go back, and I think it’s going to take a constitutional amendment unfortunately, to undo the Buckley vs. Valeo decision, where money is speech. Again, as long as that decision remains on the books- I manage on the floor of the Senate the campaign finance reform, the McCain Feingold legislation. We thought we had fixed the system but the ink wasn’t dry on the bill and there were fifty ways to get around it in a sense. So in the absence of going back and saying for the purposes of federal elections money is not speech, and then allow us to then regulate how campaign funds are raised and how it was conducted, I worry deeply. First of all, who is going to do this? The days when in our founding years as a republic you had to be a white male that owned property to not only vote but to run for public office. No longer de-jure do we do that but de-facto we have reduced our selves pretty much to the same condition in a sense. It’s no longer being a white male to own property to qualify but today to have access to, personally or otherwise, the financial resources. A seat in the United States Congress or a seat in the United States Senate, even in the state legislatures of our respective states, is becoming so difficult: Who actually goes out and decides to do it? And be willing to engage in the public discourse in aid of our country and so unless we change those kind of rules I worry about where this is all taking us. Now having said that all of that to you, this is not the only time in or history that we have faced difficult problems and we have an audience this evening with not only faculty members and neighbor but also students and as I have said over and over again there is a tendency here for one generation to constantly talk about the political system like they use to talk about how they got to school in bare foot walking through the drifts of snow –

**Gary Eichten**

That’s true isn’t it? \***audience laughter\*** And it was up hill both ways, as I recall.

**Senator Chris Dodd**

It’s true in Minnesota, not in Connecticut. But there’s a tendency to do that, and I’m actually more optimistic about it because I get a sense, despite how difficult it is to watch political news these days, that there is a growing sense, and I hear this, among people who are outraged by what they are watching, and I believe, as we have done historically when confronted with times like this, and there are many of them to go back and refer to, each generation has found its own center in a way, and overcome times like this. And new technologies are creating not only new opportunities but new ways of doing things. So I remain optimistic about it because you have to understand enough history to know that this is not the first crisis, nor the worst one we’ve ever been in, and so I’m more optimistic than many are about the opportunities to come out of it. But those are some of the things that I think need to be done.

**Gary Eichten**

I wanted to ask you about money and politics, and you mentioned that you see that as such a problem right now. What do all the big donors, what are they buying with all the money they give?

**Senator Chris Dodd**

Well I guess it depends on some, are maybe more ideologically general, in the sense of wanting less government and so forth. I suppose the Koch brothers, while they have a big financial interest in their business, my suspicions are about them that it’s something larger than voting on behalf of some issue that may come before you effecting energy issues or something else that they may have a direct financial interest in. Others, of course, it bears directly on what their livelihood is related to in ways. And my experience was over the years, I’m sure there were people who thought they were buying more. But the people I served with, Democrats and Republicans, in a different time now, in the five races I ran successfully for the United States Senate, in addition to three races for the House of Representatives, that I served in before I went to the Senate, beginning in 1974 -- Rick Nolan and I, Minnesota, were roommates, we were both elected in the same year. Now Rick’s gone back. I don’t know why, but he went back **\*audience laughter\***. I talk to Rick quite frequently, I talked to him this morning. But in those nine races, I think I totally spent, in nine races, over 36 years, in Connecticut, where New York was the most expensive media market in the country. I think the total was something around 20, 22 million dollars. In nine races. The person who succeeded me in the Senate race, his opponent spent 50 million and he spent 25 – 25 million dollars for the same Senate seat which I had spent 20, 24million on over 36 years, to give you some idea of what’s happened in the cost of races. I don’t recall people who I thought, and maybe there were some exceptions, maybe David could cite some I probably could if I thought about but most people I knew that 2,500 bucks you raised or the 100 dollars you raised or whatever else I don’t recall anyone saying ‘I’m going to give this check but by the way the next time an issue comes up that involves United Technologies Connecticut or GE or submarine construction or Hartford insurance companies I expect your vote.’ I never had that happen at all in my 36 years. So today it may be different given the magnitude of the dollars involved. The expectation they may have had may have been one thing but they certainly never communicated that to me. Maybe they would have known my response at the outset. Nonetheless, it wasn’t as prevalent as I have suspected it may have become today with the dollar amounts.

**Gary Eichten**

Do regular people have any influence in Washington? People who are not given the big bucks who, you know, don’t have a high profile

**Senator Chris Dodd**

Well listen, it’s not just the money. I mean, people who are organized have a tendency to get your attention. They have the dinner, they have the weekly meeting, and they’ll invite you to come and be the luncheon speaker or be the afternoon or the dinner speaker. Or they are going to come to your office with a group of people, whether it’s at home in Minnesota or in Washington and so it may not be money people but people that belong to structures because your schedule gets filled up. Normally, as a candidate, you are more inclined to design your own campaign schedule because you want to be in certain places. You know I want to be in St. Cloud I want to be in St. Paul or some place. When you are in office you are inclined to respond to those invitations that commit about who asked to see us this weekend or next week when we are not in session and so that schedule gets driven by that. I use to and all of try to do this differently. I use to wonder how can I possibly see people who don’t belong to these things. So I use to go two things, one is somewhat ironic, I use to do bowling league nights. Because I discovered people that were pretty poor living in Connecticut couldn’t afford to do much, didn’t belong to clubs and organizations, but they could afford to be a member of a bowling league on a Wednesday or Thursday night. While you wouldn’t interrupt them bowling, people will take breaks and so forth and go have a cup of coffee or whatever and I’d hang around in that café and it was not a bad way to be in touch with people who had something to say to you, how they felt. I also went to movie theaters. I would be in that lobby before or after a show, set up a little table, and just kind of be there to answer questions. And again, at eight dollars and nine cents, that was an activity a lot of people could afford. They’re not going to go to some Broadway show, they’re not going to go to a symphony or an opera, or a sporting event, a major professional sporting event. So you try to find ways in which you can engage with that constituency that isn’t likely to be able to draw your attention because they belong to something organized. And I’m not suggesting that people who member the Lions Club, or the Knights of Columbus, or the Rotary Club are affluent necessarily, but they have a way of capturing your attention, or that labor union that has a meeting or so forth. That’s what I did; other people do different things. But that’s how I managed to try to stay in touch with a constituency of mine that otherwise probably would never come to Washington, never going to be part of a delegation, to lobby me on what’s happening in their lives.

**Gary Eichten**

Who are you- if you don’t mind my asking- who are you supporting for president?

**Senator Chris Dodd**

Well, you know, I just got a call the other day, as long as Joe Biden was thinking about doing this- Joe and I served together for forty years together, close, close friends, and so I was waiting to see what Joe wanted to do. Now that Joe has taken himself out of the race, and I wouldn’t necessarily have thrown myself to that side of the equation, but out of respect for him and certainly Hilary, and Bernie Sanders for that matter, I would have stayed, probably, fairly neutral in the process but I’ve decided there are too many issues, too important. And I had a call from Bill Clinton the other night, and I’m a super-delegate as the former chairman of the Democratic National Committee to Bill Clinton’s re-election in ’95 and ’96, and so I’ve allowed my name as a super-delegate to be in support of Hilary Clinton.

**Gary Eichten**

What do you make of the ‘outsider phenomenon’, especially on the Republican side with Donald Trump, Ben Carson, and Carly Fiorina?

**Senator Chris Dodd**

Well, you know, it’s interesting. First of all, there’s a certain immediate reaction to it, which is, I’ve almost lost the ability to express myself about them, stunning. Once I get over that, I try to step back from it, Gary, I said this actually a couple months ago. I happened to be on NSMBC one morning on something else and was asked the question as this was beginning to percolate up- it was early on. And I said to the guest or the host of that show: ‘Don’t laugh this off. There’s something deeper going on here than normal politics, and it needs to be understood.’ The most important thing I think you can do as a candidate, and I don’t care what level of office you’re running for. Most of us do not have a long issue of things we care *deeply* about, we have things we may care about. And I use my hands to describe it [holds both hands in front of him] most of us- you can fall of the edge to the left [shakes left hand] or the right [shakes right hand], but most of us are sort of like this [shakes both hands], and in here [right hand moves towards left hand, away, and back again] we’re kind of interested in your thoughts and views on various matters. The one thing we constantly ask about you as a candidate is, ‘Do you believe what you’re saying? Is this something you’re saying because you want me to hear it or do you really believe this?’ I’ll never forget being told in 1976 in the presidential campaign, a pollster back in those days, it was highly regarded, in fact it was President Carter’s pollster. I mean Pat Cadell is no longer involved in the business, but Pat did an exit poll and he asked the following question, and I’ve never been able to forget this number or this question, I don’t think it’s been asked since, and I’d be interested if it were what would be the answer. The question in the exit poll in 1976 was the following: Do you believe the person for whom you voted believed what they were saying? The answer came back no in almost seventy percent, 1976. I was stunned to think about it. First of all, this was a person who decided to vote. They didn’t say ‘humph’; they decided to engage in the electoral process of the country, and they chose a candidate to vote for. But even the candidate they chose they did not believe that person believed what they were saying. And that, to me, is the most important question in many ways constituencies ask of a candidate, ‘Do you believe what you’re saying?’ I’m not suggesting they do or don’t, but I think both Bernie Sanders, I think this guy Carson, and I think Trump, in a sense have connected at least with a certain percentage of the constituency, and they’re answering that question in the positive. They believe what they’re saying; it’s something they believe. That in itself is frightening, the fact that people do, but the notion somehow that they’re conveying an authenticity, and a lot of what they say is contrary to their own self-interest, which gives further credibility I think to the authenticity in some sense. So there is something else going on here beyond the outrageous, ludicrous, *offensive* things that are being said, regardless of your point of view or what point on the spectrum you are, politically. But I think we, at our peril, fail to understand the deeper expressions that are being voiced by people who are willing to ally themselves with these candidates at this junction. Now I don’t believe that any of those two candidates will probably end up being the nominee of the Republican Party, but there are other candidates who may, who are better organized, that pose some serious issues for me as well, in fact more serious in many ways than Trump or Carson. So I don’t believe that they are going to be the nominees. But that’s something, and maybe I am the only person who believes that, but I honestly believe that there is something deeper. And here we are now almost into November. It’s no longer just a summer crush that some constituencies are having. There is a sort of throw away, I can say that now because it doesn’t really mean much. Now we are hundred days away from the first caucus in Iowa, a hundred and six days away from the first primary in New Hampshire. Now it’s getting a little more serious, in a sense because it’s not going away, in a sense. And I think that candidates, regardless of ideology or the party you affiliate with, you better take note of what people are saying. They are looking for people who are telling them the truth, and the truth not what they what to hear but what you really believe. That becomes a critical component.

**Gary Eichten**

Do you think it’s enough, in terms of governance, to be a straight shooter or do you have to bring something else to the table?

**Senator Chris Dodd**

Well, you do more. I think, you know people want to like you. I mean I know it sounds, you know but temperament is important. I was telling you earlier, I love that back in the 1930, 32, 33, we were talking earlier about Franklin Roosevelt. And Franklin Roosevelt had been elected president and he had to be sworn in, but he went to visit Oliver Wendell Holmes, at Holmes’s home in Washington to pay respect on Holmes’s birthday; he was getting on in years in that point. And after he left the media asked Oliver Wendell Holmes what he thought of Franklin Roosevelt. And he said, “Well I think he has a second class intellect but a first class temperament.” An interesting comment. There was a lot more to Roosevelt than that and I think he had a far better than a second class intellect but nonetheless he did have a first class temperament. And he had the wonderful ability to attract bright people around him. He had an incredible ability to connect and relate to people despite his own personal background of coming from the less than one-half of the one percent of the population. And that temperament is important. I always love Doris Kearns Goodwin’s book, *No Ordinary Time,* for those of you who read this about the war years in the Roosevelt White House 1941, 42 through 1945. And it was Heartbreak Hotel in that house, he had every imaginable, people living in that house came from everywhere. And he was mixing cocktails at 5 o’clock for his friends in Congress and whoever happened to be in town. He thoroughly enjoyed the company of people, including members of Congress. People he would never have had any relationship with probably normally, and yet thoroughly enjoyed the interaction with people, in a sense, a critical component in these jobs. We ridicule it to some degree, we minimize it, but temperament and your ability to want to be with people and to engage with people and to listen to people and to invite them to be a part of solutions is an absolute essential ingredient for a successful public figure in my view. And so temperament is important.

**Gary Eichten:**

You said that you didn’t think that Donald Trump or Ben Carson would end up as the Republican nominee. Who is going to end up as the Republican nominee?

**Senator Chris Dodd:**

Well, you know, I think it’s coming down if you follow the stuff from the last few days, again I’m really guessing here, Marco Rubio seems to be getting some traction from people. But the person who is very well organized and has a lot of money and has a spend ratio, that they call that, that is very low and being very careful and I think very smart and I totally disagree with this candidate, by the way, and I am very worried about what it means but Ted Cruz of Texas poses many more threats for Democrats than people think he does. I think they’re focusing on candidates that don’t bring…Ted Cruz was considered one of the brightest students ever to graduate from the Harvard Law School, was a clerk for the Supreme Court and was told he couldn’t win the Republican Senate nomination in Texas and won it going away. And I think he is going to be a far larger presence before this is all over.

**Gary Eichten:**

If you have a question for Senator Dodd, just jot it down, send it to the end of the row and we will collect them and include them in the conversation. We’ll get started with one and this has to do with financial reform. As the author of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform Bill, designed of course to head off 2007-2008 style collapses. And the question is: Are we really any safer from economic collapse than we were in 2009?

**Senator Chris Dodd:**

Oh, substantially more so but never perfectly so. I always love this, by the way. When we voted at about four in the morning to finish the bill between the House and the Senate, the Congressman from Pennsylvania offered the motion to call this the Frank-Dodd bill and Bonnie said, “you can’t do that, they’ll think it’s one person and I don’t want the responsibility for that.” **\*audience laughter\*** And the vote occurred, and I was the only one to object, not because I disliked like the bill, I just think it’s such a- it’s a deception. I mean there’s so many more people involved in these efforts and that was a major undertaking. To put two names on a bill, in a sense, is deceptive. I lost that argument, and that became Dodd-Frank as a piece of legislation. Now I get on planes all over the place and people start yelling at me “Dodd-Frank” and they think that’s my full name. **\*audience laughter\*** Anyway, first of all, there’ll be another crisis, as certain as I’m sitting here, that’ll be the case. But I happen to believe that the crisis that emerged and culminated in what occurred in the fall of 2008 could have been largely avoided had we not so massively deregulated the system. And had we not made more of an effort in ’06 and ’07 to step up and deal with the source of a lot of the problems in the residential mortgage crisis and then it metastasized into something much larger and by the time it occurred, it became so big that we had to respond in the way that we did. I may never have voted against, or voted for something rather, that was singularly the most unpopular thing that I ever was engaged in in my 36 years or simultaneously the most important thing I may have done in 36 years, and that was the TARP legislation. Just to share with you briefly here, it’s the night of September 18, 2008, at Speaker Pelosi’s office, the conference room. At in that room were 10 or 15 of the, of us, the leadership, Republican, Democratic leadership, House and Senate, the key committees that would be involved. I had become in January of ’07 for the first time the Chairman of the Banking Committee in the Senate. Barney Frank was the Chairman of the House Banking Committee, but there were others involved, as well. And Ben Bernanke, along with Hank Paulson and Chris Cox and others, got up, and Ben Bernanke said the following, and it’s one of those things that occurs and becomes permanently etched in your own memory, seared, in your memory. And Ben Bernanke, who’s very low-key and not at all inclined to engage in hyperbole, and there are only about 15 of us in the room, said the following, he said “unless you act”, speaking to that group in that room, “unless you act in a matter of days, the entire financial system of this country and a good part of the world will melt down.” This wasn’t some anybody, this was the most important central banker in the world, telling the leadership, and he had told the president the same thing earlier that day. Less than 48 hours later, Hank Paulson sent me at 1:30 in the morning, a two and a half page bill, proposed bill That said, give me 700 billion dollars, and no court, no regulator can intervene. By 12 noon that day, when the public was aware of this, the country, rightfully, went crazy, and rightfully so, in my view. The idea that the taxpayers of this country would write a check for that amount, with no court, no regulator intervening, was infuriating to people. And so you then had the next two weeks. Judd Greg, who David would remember well, Republican Senator from New Hampshire, and I joined together to write the TARP legislation, others contributed to it. It took us two weeks to do it, and we put together about a 100 page bill, with tremendous conditionality, bifurcated it in many ways and so forth. And brought it up on October 1st on the floor of the Senate. I made every Senator, asked every Senator, to vote from their seats, much like would be a Supreme Court nomination or other critical votes that we have occasionally. And that night, the Senate voted 75-24 to pass the TARP legislation. Ted Kennedy of Massachusetts, who was dying at this point, was the only missing Senator to miss the vote. Before the vote occurred, I went around to Senators, Democrats and Republicans, that were up for reelection in 40 days, national election, and I told them that I had the votes to win this, and if they wanted to vote no, that I would never mention their names or whatever. I understood this could be a lethal, lethal vote. Could end your career to vote for it. To every Senator that I mentioned that to, every one said no. I remember specifically Gordon Smith who was a wonderful Senator, Republican Senator from the state of Oregon. And I went to Gordon and I gave him the same offer, I said, you know listen, your colleague from Oregon is going to vote against this, so it’s going to make it an added pressure on you, but if you want to vote no, I’ve got the votes. If I didn’t have the votes, I’d tell you, but I can lose some votes and still carry this. And I’ll never forget his answer to me, he said “I really appreciate it, it’s a nice thing to offer, but I’ve got to face a constituent in the morning, and I don’t know how to explain this to him.” I said, “Who’s the constituent in the morning you have to see?” He said, “The constituent’s the mirror.” He happened to believe, he said it’s the right thing to do. And he voted for it and 40 days later we lost his seat in the Senate. Bob Bennet of Utah, Republican, wasn’t up that year, but he was two years later, and lost his seat I think primarily over that vote. And you go down a long list of people. And it was critically important to do that, in my view, to stabilize the financial institutions of the country. Then the question became, well if you did that, do you want to just leave the architecture in place that existed that allowed the AIGs and others to get away with what they did? And I felt no, if we did that we’d miss an opportunity. We never could have passed thee Dodd-Frank legislation in 2006, 2007 and 2008, and you could never have passed it in 2011 or 2012. The one window was that window that we went through, to get it through. Ending too big to fail, and we hope we’ve done that, time will tell, I hope we never get tested but we may, and if we do, I think what we’ve written will achieve that. The very first amendment debated on the floor of the Senate carried 92 I think to 5 to end too big to fail and set up a structure by which you could unwind these institutions. Creating the Consumer Protection Bureau, there have been over 700,000 requests that have come through the Consumer Protection Bureau in 4 years. More than 10 billion dollars have been returned to more than 15 million Americans because of fraudulent activity by lending institutions or other financial places where consumers have been adversely affected. You could get a lawnmower fixed at the Consumer Product Safety Commission, but you couldn’t get a mortgage or a loan addressed without going to court. Today we have a place where consumers can go. The FSOB, the Financial Services Oversight Board, looks over the horizon at financial institutions and product lines. And if you’re a systemically important institution, and you put our country at risk, they can literally close you down. Including a bank and break it up. And there’s a long list of those things: whistleblower legislation, the transparency on the derivative market. We covered an awful lot of ground. Did we cover every single thing? No. Did I like every element of it? No. But I had to produce sixty votes on the floor of the senate. When I hear critics talk about it, most of them couldn’t organize a two car funeral. **\*audience laughter\*** Try and keep sixty votes in the Senate, where people are all over the lot of this thing to come through with something that would allow us to move forward and away. Capital requirements, leverage and the like are there. There will be changes to it, this wasn’t biblical. I didn’t write the Ten Commandments. I wrote a financial reform bill. And so time will tell how it works but I think we are basically in good shape. That was a long answer, I apologize.

**Gary Eichten:**

Well it’s a big issue. A lot of people lost their homes during the crisis, a lot people were wiped out, a good many people have never recovered. Nobody went to jail though. Why not? Why didn’t some of the big shots end up in prison?

**Senator Chris Dodd:**

Again I don’t disagree – I wasn’t writing the banking bill not the Justice Department legislation. And obviously there are reasons. Some have gone, you just had a bunch of cases reversed, in fact, on insider trading legislation; but you’re right, 13 trillion dollars in wealth was lost. 5 million homes went down the drain. Millions of people lost their jobs have recovered. Iconic institutions no longer exist and again you can go back. We were writing looking forward, “How do we avoid these kind of things in the future?” And there are obviously authorities and powers exist, but that is not a reason to be against the legislation that we passed, it’s a legitimate concern I think you can complain about what existing law would allow people, institutions to do, and I’m sorry more of that didn’t happen, but we weren’t writing that when we wrote this bill.

**Gary Eichten:**

Another question from the audience: “What in the world are we going to do about gun violence?

**\*Pause\***

**Senator Dodd:**

Well, golly, this is, you know, we’re here and talking about this obviously, at the Eugene McCarthy Center. And we didn’t have a chance to talk about this, but my father served in both the House and the Senate with Gene McCarthy and I knew him, not as well as my parents did, my mother and father. And again, the McCarthy family are here and it’s nice to see them by the way. And had a wonderful relationship, they knew each other well in those years. My father in the 12 years in the senate- Connecticut is the largest gun producing state in the country. This is more than just a gun violence issue, it’s a labor issue. In 1959 my father started inducing gun legislation, for people older in the audience, you could go to the back of *Field and Stream* or *Argosy Magazine*, and mail order virtually every kind of imaginable weapon you could think of and have it sent to your home. The 1995 Mannlicher Carcano, bolt action rifle, that was used in the assassination of President Kennedy was a mail order weapon out of Chicago. It took the assassinations of John Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Robert Kennedy, before the fall of 1968, and then my father was able to pass the Omnibus Crime Bill and the Safe Streets Act to ban the interstate trafficking of weapons. But it was a major problem. I can still buy targets in hunting stores in Connecticut with my father’s picture or mine on it because of opposition to efforts legislatively to deal with the issue. I would have thought after Newtown, Connecticut maybe things would change at least on background checks and the like. I don’t know what else it will take. If you’re not- if you weren’t horrified over what happened there with the kind of weapons used, and there have been other obviously many examples, but that one particularly where 26 people, most of them infant children were being gunned down. If you can’t accept the notion that we have to do a better job at this, I don’t know what it will take. The NRA has been able to capture, unfortunately, sportsmen and hunters to make them believe that there is a fundamental threat to their right to bear arms. Nothing could be further from the truth. And until that constituency decides it no longer wants to be held hostage by an organization that is primarily financed by manufacturers of these weapons, then I don’t think we can win. And my hope and prayer is that the hunters of this state and across this country who believe deeply in that right, who enjoy this great sport, and believe it ought to be protected, and they’re right to do so. Until they disassociate themselves from that organization, and the people that finance them, we’ll never succeed at this; but I hope that will change.

**Gary Eichten:**

Now you are the CEO of the Motion Pictures Association of America. A lot of people who are suspicious of gun control suggest that, “well it’s the culture that really is to blame.” Does the movie industry play a role here?

**Senator Dodd:**

Not really, I mean I know that they say that. If we go back, there people trying to ban comics books in the 1920s for the same reason. I mean, the coarsening of our society, certainly that’s a legitimate concern that’s pretty pervasive but the notion somehow that because someone watches a movie or a television show decides to go out and kill 26 children is- that doesn’t get to the heart of it. That what the gun lobby would like you to believe. Let’s get back to the basics, people who are a mental health issue have criminal records and so forth the idea that they can still acquire these weapons of mass destruction is the problem. Not something on television or in a comic book or in a movie theater. That’s a red herring if there ever was one; when it comes to this issue.

**Gary Eichten:**

Another audience question: What is not working with the Affordable Healthcare Act or Obamacare and how do we fix it.

**Senator Chris Dodd**

**\*Pause\***

Man, what time is it. **\*Laughter from Gary Eichten, Senator Dodd, and Audience\*** What are we having for breakfast around here? **\*Laughter from Gary Eichten, Senator Dodd, and Audience\*** Well look, again I ended up- When Senator Kennedy got very sick I became the chairman of the health labor education; David was on that committee as well and I became the chairman when he got sick and I was then asked to then become responsible for 50% of the adoption of the Affordable Healthcare Act. The Finance committee being the other committee that was involved, the committee that Eugene McCarthy served on as well, and this is a huge story about the development of this piece of legislation. Today costs are down, almost 16 million people are getting healthcare that didn’t have it just a few years ago and if we could get more states to expand the Medicaid program and so forthI think we could include a lot more. I don’t know anyone who thinks about this an knows much and that’s not to suggest and say that there are better ways we can work this and figure how to make this move forward. And again not unlike the financial reform bill anyone who proclaims perfection is an idiot in these matters. But I think that we are on the right track and I think it would be devastating for the country to repeal this: to start all over with what, in a sense? So, my hope is again that thoughtful and intelligent people look at issue and decide how we can include more people, expand it where possible. But how many of us know people that have been through a healthcare crisis and watch what happens economically to them. I always remember Teddy Kennedy talking about this, and I asked him one time, and we were best friends in the senate for thirty years and I didn’t have a closer personal friend than teddy: I said why, your family was affluent enough and you had all the resources in the world why did you want to take this on why mental health as well. Well, you may recall he had a sister, in fact, who you’re familiar with in this state, that had serious problems of mental retardation. And so there was a reason why his sister started the Special Olympics and made it today what that means to millions of people around the country. In Teddy’s case, I’ll never forget him telling me this story: when his son Teddy junior, who is now a state senator in Connecticut, developed cancer and it was so serious they didn’t think he’d live. And so he was put into a clinical trial, with some new medications that were very, very speculative, and everybody in the trial got the benefits of this drug. Somewhere in that trial, when it was half way through or three quarters wherever it was, they came to the conclusion that this procedure, these medications, “worked*”* [Dodd makes air quotes (“) with his fingers]. In which case, at that juncture, the free access to the medications ceased. And what was so compelling, and I remember talking about it, he could hardly talk about this without choking up, *his* child had all the resources in the world to continue to afford that medication that allowed his son to live. *Most* of the people in the clinical trial were from poor families that happened to be chosen to be in it. *Most* of them were going to have to watch their children die because they didn’t have the financial resources to pay for that. And that, to him, was the catalyzing event on healthcare, more than anything else. That his child could live because they had resources to do so and the other children could not. And in this great country of ours, we ought to never, ever, ever come to that, in a sense. And that, more than anything else, is why he became as passionate about this issue. And again, the Affordable Care Act, Obama Care, call it what you want, I know it’s not perfect, I know it’s not working as well as we’d like it to in every place, but it’s a hell of a lot better than what we had before this happened. People are a lot better off today than they were before. And my view is we ought to make the improvements if that’s what it takes, but to move forward with it. You don’t repeal this. That would be outrageous.

**Gary Eichten**

Audience question: What was your worst day in the US Senate?

**Senator Dodd**

[Pauses] Oh god…worst day…you know, I get asked this questions, I get asked it a little differently, Gary…having served thirty six years, I’ve served longer than anyone in the history of my state, in the congress. I’ve so enjoyed it, and I mean this, it was time to go, when I made the decision in 2010. In fact, I can tell you for what it’s worth, [something indistinct] it was the morning of the health care vote. I’d just completed being one of the two floor managers of the health care, Affordable Care Act, on the floor of the Senate. And we’d completed the work, and its seven am on Christmas Eve, 2009. I was leaving to go home, my wife and children had already gone up to Connecticut, and we all did the things we did. It was about 8:30. I was driving, and the plane was going to be late from the airport to get to Hartford, Connecticut. I hadn’t been to Teddy Kennedy’s grave. So I decided that morning I would drive into Arlington Cemetery on the way to the airport and just see his grave. It was one of those mornings, you have them with great frequency here, I think, it was a crisp, cold morning, not a cloud in the sky, there’d been new snow that night, and I’m looking for Teddy’s grave, and the snow’s on the ground and I couldn’t find it and I’m standing at President Kennedy’s grave, and I’m looking back over the city. It’s just after eight o’clock in the morning, the sun is coming up over the Capital. It’s just a brilliant, brilliant morning. And for some reason, without any preconditioning or pre-thought about it, I asked myself: Do you want to do this for another seven years? Which was what it was going to take, to go back and start all over again and run for re-election. And the answer was quick in the question. I said to myself, ‘that’s enough. I’ve enjoyed this.’ I went home, told my wife that was enough. And January 3rd or 4th, made the announcement. So when you ask me the question, ‘what was your worst moment?’ And I’m not saying because he’s here, I know this sounds kind of, probably, quaint and politic toned, I served with great people, great people. People I disagreed with on numerous occasions, but who cared deeply about the country and wanted this to work. And as I said to you a while ago, I believe we’ll get back to it too. I know it’s hard to believe on this environment today, but it will get back to it, in a sense. It was a great, great privilege beyond words I can adequately describe, to serve. So there were days when your bill wouldn’t pass or something would happen or you weren’t able to get someone’s healthcare or VA benefits or something, but those were, those were infrequent in my view. It was knowing your city and working with people who truly wanted to make a difference for the country. And nothing upsets me more, nothing, than the demeaning and the belittling of people who are willing to be on that arena floor that Teddy Roosevelt used to talk about, and to debate and engage in the debate of how our country can be a better place, reach that more perfect union that our founders talked about. And why you may *vehemently* disagree with them, the idea that we will ridicule people who engage in that debate, is something everyone one of us ought to abhor. How are we ever going to get people to do this if the process you have to go through is so demeaning, it is so devastating that we end up with people who will do it for all the wrong reasons? So it would be hard pressed to talk about bad day, when I had the privilege for thirty-six years to serve in the United States Senate in this country. There have only been about two or three thousand people that had the honor of serving in the Senate over the two-hundred and thirty years of the life of our country and I loved every minute of it and I thank the people of Connecticut for giving me that privilege.

**Gary Eichten**

I heard a fellow [pauses] \***audience applause**\* I heard a fellow on the radio today, a citizen who was incidentally was supporting one of the outside presidential candidates, that’s neither here nor there. But anyway, he was saying he, what he finds particularly appalling is this, what he calls, “fake consideration” given the other, given the opponent in say Senate debate. When in fact what you really want to do is punch the other guy in the mouth and there is this “Ohhh, Mr. Senator, I appreciate your blah blah blah.” what do you think about that? I mean

**Chris Dodd**

Well, yeah know, listen.

**Gary Eichten**

Is there room for more candor? Is it hypocrisy to say you like everybody?

**Chris Dodd**

Well what do you, what do you do at home? You turn to your wife or husband and don’t you say, well honey I think you are wrong about that, or something. Do you start swinging at each other? I mean I, you know, how do we engage as a civil society. Uh, yeah there is a certain amount of theatrics I suppose in that, to some degree. But, ya know, don’t get confused by that, I mean in a sense. The fact that you can be civil, we want our children to be raised and the ability to have a debate the discourse with people without engaging in road rage with people you disagree with. This is the coarsening of our society. What’s happened to us as a country, that we can’t have a full throated debate and argument? My valedictory speech on the floor on the Senate was just about this subject matter. That the idea and a particular in the Senate of the United States, which is a unique institution. That learning to be disciplined and learning to have patience so that you can listen to other people, voices that wouldn’t otherwise be heard in a majority-ruled institution like the House. That you’re disciplined enough not to engage in filibusters with every nickel and dime issue that comes along, so that the majority in most cases can prevail. It requires a maturity in the process. So the fact that we engage in a civil discourse while we have strong debates with each other, you are wasting your time talking about a ridiculous point. It’s more the substance of the debate and the argument and we ought to be able to do that. We ought to be able to raise a generation of people in this country that will conduct themselves accordingly. In their own life debates, both in their communities and elsewhere. So I don’t know what people are talking about, who complain about the formalities of the Senate, in a sense. Other then we try to maintain, we should try to maintain ability calling people liars as we have seen as some Senators do with others. Destroying this comedy that allows for those compromises to work. Remember you’re not, you want to be, you want to be executive, run for mayor, run for President, run for governor. You are going to serve in a city council or state legislature, the Congress, in a collaborative body where you are serving in the Congress with 534 other people. You don’t get your own way. What the hell are you doing there? \***Laughter from Gary Eichten and audience**\* Run for something else for God-sakes. \***Laughter from Gary** **Eichten and audience**\* But if you want to run for that place, be prepared to work something out. And if you don’t, don’t run for the place. \***Laughter from Gary Dodd, Gary Eichten and audience while audience applauds**\*

**Gary Eichten**

One of the, one of the students in the audience wants to know what tips do you have for young people today as they want to serve and succeed in life?

**Chris Dodd**

[Pauses] Well those could be mutually exclusive ambitions. \***Laughter from Gary Eichten, Senator Dodd and audience**\* Again, first off, I was very impressed when I went through the McCarthy Center, so first of all, a lot of young people around, and again, Mary your fine institution down the road here at the College of Saint Benedict. The kind of way you brought the student bodies together in these two institutions is terrific. I, first of all, in public life, I think it’s a good example and you are doing this a lot with internships and others for young students to have an opportunity to be engaged in internships that can really give you some insights into whether or not you might want to do something like this. I think volunteering for campaigns is one way to help. Picking a candidate you like or someone you think is doing something that you can associate with is an important way to get a feel for this. I think an awful lot of people see the title and see what the office looks like and have no concept of the road you must take to get there. Once there, how do you function in those jobs? So, to the extent you’re able to provide that kind of an educational experience for people, for young people to go see that, they can make their own decisions about whether or not they want to be involved. I think being involved in the granular activity of a campaign is really important and so, getting involved in a local race for the board of education or planning and zoning or state legislature are wonderful ways to determine whether or not you have an appetite or an aptitude for this and that’s important. The second thing is, and that’s true of all of this. Again, I, my oldest daughter, 14, Grace, was due on 9/11, 2001. She was born on the 13th of September. My wife actually, on the way, racing to the hospital, she couldn’t reach me on the phone – I was at work at 6:30 that morning, and she jumped in the car herself to get over to Arlington for the doctor’s, saw the Pentagon get hit, turned the car around and they they put her on some steroids and they delayed delivery for two days so Grace was born on the 13th. But I was asked a lot, in the midst of that incredible day in the horror of it all, on the floor of the Senate, my colleagues and others made notion of the fact that in all of the bad news, there was some good news. That their colleague had his first child. Both of her grandmothers were named Grace, so there wasn’t much choice of what we were going to call her. But Grace wasn’t a bad name that day, considering we could use a little bit of Grace that time. But I was asked a lot about what my ambitions for her were. And my answer was, I want her to have a life full of passion. That would be my greatest satisfaction, in knowing that my child had a passionate life. That she would do things that she truly felt strongly about. And that, to me is what’s important. That whatever you choose, whatever your course, do it, and make sure it’s something you love doing. That doesn’t mean necessarily you’re going to be the most successful financially. But if you do something you love doing, what a gift that is. What a gift that is. And if you’ve got an ambition for something, try it. And don’t look, don’t wait around as so many people do at a later age and go, “I wish I had taken some time to try something that I was really anxious to do. That’s not wonderful advice to give you when your parents are hoping you’ll get the hell out of the house and afford a job somewhere, but it’s great life advice. And I ended up being so lucky. I’m one of six children. My brother Tom, the oldest, is in his 50th year teaching at the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. I have a sister Carolyn who’s blind from birth. She helped revive the Montessori, the American Montessori system of teaching. A brother who’s a photographer. A sister who had five, four wonderful children, in fact, Michael here taught my sister’s oldest, Helena, who’s now the President of CVS Drugstores. Every one of them have done things with passion in their lives and great conviction about what they’re doing. And my hope is for the students here that’s what they’ll do.

**Gary Eichten**

Eugene McCarthy, undoubtedly best remembered for his efforts, willing to put his political future at risk to stop the Vietnam War. What would you like to be remembered as?

**Chris Dodd**

Well, you know, a bunch of things legislatively. And wherever she is out here, I thank her for mentioning a few things. There are two or three things I really care deeply about. One is having been in the Peace Corps and Latin America. I ended up, because no one had much interest in Latin America. When I was first elected to the Senate, I was the only Senator that spoke a second language and so I became de facto almost, default, um, the leading voice on Central American issues. So did a tremendous amount of work on the Central American Peace Accords. Really wrote a lot of it, worked on a lot of it, and spent time on that. And that gave me a great sense of satisfaction to be involved in that. I started the Children’s Caucus in the Senate with Pat Moynihan and Bill Bradley and others. We had a caucus for every imaginable constituency you could think of except for 1 out of 4 Americans who were children. And as a result of that, that’s where the first childcare legislation I wrote since World War II came out of. When I wrote the Family and Medical Leave Act, took seven years, Bill Clinton signed into law seven, eight days after he was inaugurated president in 1993. 150 million our fellow citizens would be able to take unpaid leave, unfortunately, but that’s all I could do at the time. But autism, premature birth, infant screening, afterschool programs. That cluster of issues gave me more satisfaction that anything else I did in the 36 years. Working on the children’s issues. I just had a great sense of joy about it, and I had great allies and friends. David was one of them, and others who worked on a lot of these issues. The banking stuff, ironically, life treats you this way. I mean again, Connecticut insurance industry, a lot of people involved in that side of it, but the Senate is not a meritocracy. You have to outlive, and hope your friends get defeated in order to move up in the thing. And so I, I sat next to Paul Sarbanes, Joe Biden, and Ted Kennedy. None of those three were going anywhere. And so for 28 years in the Senate I sat next to them. And then all of a sudden, in the space of six months, all of them left. Paul Sarbanes retired, Joe Biden became Vice President, Ted Kennedy died. So I had a choice of chairing the Foreign Relations Committee, the Labor Committee, or the Banking Committee. My first love would have been the Labor Committee. The second would have been the Foreign Relations Committee in some ways, because of the interest I had in Latin America and elsewhere. The Banking Committee was something I felt was important, and I had been on there for 28 years and done a lot of work on it. But I also felt that the crisis that we were in the middle of was deserving of a tremendous amount of attention and that’s where I thought I could make a difference. So, I chose the Committee that was least appealing to me personally given my own preference, where I had been, and ended up doing that. I’ve forgotten your question**. \*Laughter from Gary Eichten and audience\***

**Gary Eichten:**

Do you miss it? Do you miss being in Congress?

**Senator Dodd:**

No. Again, it was time. Bob Dole once said it’s the best assisted living program in America. **\*Laughter from Gary Eichten, Senator Dodd and audience**\* Boy is there a lot of truth in that, looking at some of them. It’s time. It’s the hardest thing because the length of service – the six years in the Senate particularly – you have to begin so early before the next election that you end up sort of getting going and by the time you give it any thought as to whether or not you really want to run again, people are making contributions, staffs been hired, people are organized, people back home are expecting it, and so you really have to make a decision early. Um about when **\*mumbles\***, unless the decision gets made for you, which is easier in some ways. But that’s what it really involves. And, as much as I loved every minute of it and between my father and I there are half a century of service in the Congress. He had a rough ending in it, very tough on him. But I also think he felt strongly about his convictions. He and Gene McCarthy shared so much in common in many ways, and I was thinking about it coming up here today. My father went to a boy’s school at Saint Anselm’s- the Benedictine Order. It became a college, in fact there are presidential debates at Saint Anselm’s all the time now, in New Hampshire. Along the way, he went to Niagara University briefly, which at the time was a seminary and gave some thought to that, went to Providence College, then Yale Law School, started the Young Democrats at Yale. And as a result of that, his reward was to become the state director in 1933 of the National Youth Administration, the first of the New Deal 100 day programs, where he met another young NYA state leader from Texas named Lyndon Baines Johnson. Gene was elected to the House in ’49, my father went to the House in ’52. ’48 and ’52. My father served until ’56 when he ran against Prescott Bush, President Bush’s, two of them’s father and grandfather, lost to him in ‘56 then ran in ’58, and won the same year as Gene McCarthy. They served for exactly the same period of time, 12 years in the Senate together, shared a lot in common, saw themselves as a different generation of Irish-American politicians. Cared about philosophy, my father wasn’t a poet like Gene was, but-but in many ways had similar paths that brought them to public service. My parents were married in Saint Paul. My father was the resident FBI agent in 1934 in Saint Paul before joining the Justice Department and trying civil rights cases in the South in the ‘30s. And then became the Executive Trial Counsel at age 36 in Nuremburg. For the next 17 months, prosecuted the first 21 defendants at Nuremburg. And that became his epiphany on everything else. The Nuremburg experiences, his view of the world on foreign human rights, international politics and so forth was cast in those 17 months. Wrote my mother every single day 400 letters about on average 12-14 pages long each night. And I only discovered them a few years ago and published the letters. He would have shot me for doing that **\*Laughter from audience\*** as I first read them I go, “who’s this guy talking to my mother this way?” **\*Laughter from audience\*** **\*Mumbles\*** I was one of 6 children, there was something else going on. **\*Laughter from Gary Eichten \*** at the time. They’re also a great first draft to history, because he’s writing about this trial, which was a phenomenal trial. Maybe the trial of the century in many ways. Unprecedented historically of actually trying for crimes against humanity, and **\*Mumbles\*** in fact Justice Jackson and my father developed this great relationship. But, as a child growing up, I memorized part of Justice Jackson’s opening speech at Nuremburg, and learned the line which captures the essence of Nuremburg: “that four great nations flushed with victory and stung with injury, stayed the hand of vengeance by voluntarily submitting their captive enemies to the judgement of the rule of law, the greatest tribute that power ever paid to reason.” It’s an incredible sentence that captures the essence of Nuremburg. And my father’s belief in the rule of law, that he wrote to my mother in June of 1946. And he said to her in that, “I will never, ever again do anything as important, as what I’m doing here.” And he believed that the day he died as well many years later.

**Gary Eichten:**

Senator Chris Dodd thanks so much for coming over.

**Chris Dodd:**

Thank you, I enjoyed it very much.

**\*Audience Applause\***

**Gary Eichten:**

Senator Christopher Dodd, former Senator from Connecticut.

**Chris Dodd:**

Thank you, thank you.

**\*Audience Applause\***

 Finished on 1/26/2016