

Edwin Anderson, Attorney and Personal Friend
Congressional Medal of Honor Ceremony Speech
June 7, 2001

"Thank you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished members of Congress, and to all the friends and admirers of Charles M. Schulz, known to many of you today as "Sparky."

President John F. Kennedy said that a nation reveals itself by those it honors, those it pays tribute to, and those it remembers. Today America, the most powerful nation in the world, confers its highest civilian honor upon a man who:

Never sought power. Never coveted wealth. Never courted fame.

To the contrary, Sparky was humble; unpretentious; generous to friends and, as you've heard, to his community; devoted to his family; and always, always truthful to himself.

Interviewers often asked him. "What are you? Are you a philosopher? Are you a humorist? A writer?" His answer was always the same: "I'm a cartoonist. If you want to know me, read my strip. Everything I am is there."

Charlie Brown, Snoopy, and the *Peanuts* Gang were in Sparky's heart and mind long before they became famous. They were with him when he was ice skating on the frozen ponds of Minnesota. And they were with him when he was playing sandlot baseball. They suffered with him on Valentine's Day, and they marched off with him when he went into the army in 1943. Virtually every experience that Sparky had, from raising his family to playing hockey, tennis, and golf— would be reflected in his strip.

In 1750 Benjamin Franklin recommended that drawing be taught in schools, the academies, and the colleges. He said, "It is kind of a universal language, understood by peoples of all nations. "Ideas", he said, "are better expressed when accompanied by a drawing." Two hundred years later, a young man from St. Paul would prove Benjamin Franklin right. For the last half of the twentieth century, Charles Schulz was one of America's foremost goodwill ambassadors.

The *Peanuts* strip, reflecting American humor and American philosophy, was read and enjoyed each day by hundreds of millions of people in seventy-five nations, making us realize that our fears, our frustrations, our hopes, our dreams are common to all.

Honored as he would have been personally by this prestigious award, what would have pleased him most is the recognition as a cartoonist. Cartoonists numbered among his closest friends. Many of them are here today, and they know he took much pride in their shared profession.

In one of Sparky's strips a dejected Charlie Brown was walking off of the baseball field when Lucy said to him, "Don't feel bad Charlie Brown. Win some-lose some." His face broke out in a big grin and he said, "Gee, wouldn't that be great?" I knew that would be understood in this town.

Today, Charles Schulz, as a cartoonist and an American, wins a big one. And finally, Charlie Brown gets it right: It is great.

The poet Sophocles wrote, "One must wait until the evening to see how splendid the day has been." Privileged to call him a friend, honored that he walked among us, the life of Charles M. Schulz has indeed been splendid.

Thank you."