

In Memoriam, Harry Mason Reid (1939–2021)

It is fitting that, in the “good government” issue of *BYU Studies Quarterly*, we recognize the passing on December 28, 2021, of former Nevada senator and Senate majority leader Harry Mason Reid. Of his thirty-four years in office, Senator Reid served four years as Senate minority leader and eight years as majority leader, achieving the highest rank in the U.S. Congress of any Latter-day Saint. Two presidents of the United States, the Senate majority leader, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives spoke at his funeral. The first speaker, however, was President M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who called Harry Reid a dear friend, “a man of faith in word and deed,” and a devoted member of the Church whose bishop recommended him as the best minister in the ward.

Although Reid was known as a tenacious and steely fighter in Congress, he demonstrated many of the qualities we discuss in this issue as necessary in citizens and politicians in order for good government to flourish. One of his primary motivations for entering politics was to help the less fortunate improve their lives. He deeply believed that “when ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17). Current Senate minority leader Mitch McConnell said, upon his passing, “I never doubted that Harry was always doing what he earnestly, deeply felt was right for Nevada and our country.”

President Joe Biden said, “Harry Reid led by hearing all points of view and finding common ground.” Former President Barack Obama described him as having these qualities: “Pragmatism, adaptability, a premium on getting things done, a lack of pretension, and abiding loyalty,” explaining that while these qualities are “in short supply, . . . they are precisely the qualities our democracy requires.” President Obama also said, “Harry understood that we don’t have to see eye to eye on everything in order to live together, to be decent toward each other.”

Reid’s greatest quality was his love, especially for his wife, Landra, and his children, who always felt that, despite his immense responsibilities, they were his highest priority. We join in celebrating the life of this gifted, committed leader from whom we can learn much about applying the principles of the gospel in serving one’s country.