

Mr. Speaker:

I rise to celebrate the life of one of the greatest public servants of any age – the indomitable Alice Rivlin, who died of cancer last week.

An intellectual giant with midwestern sensibilities, she had a resume that will never be matched: Assistant Secretary for Policy and Evaluation at HEW; founding Director of the Congressional Budget Office; Director of the Office of Management and Budget; President of the American Economics Association; and Vice Chair of the Federal Reserve.

In between her government service, she sat on a high perch at Brookings, producing rigorous, centrist, and insightful books and articles on a wide range of federal policies.

In her spare time, she was credited with “saving DC” from bankruptcy – she never forgot her responsibility to her beloved hometown.

Alice was deeply respected and beloved by her peers and politicians of both parties. She was one of the first recipients of a MacArthur Foundation “genius” award – a tribute to her skill building one of the most important public institutions (the CBO) of our lifetime.

Her sustained contributions to public policy analysis have fundamentally shaped our thinking about the impact of public programs and the budget.

She also constantly reminded us that when we refuse to use

evidence in making policy decisions, we do so at our country's peril.

Alice Rivlin was my dear friend. I met her as a newly minted PhD. She was already famous for her classic book – Systematic Thinking for Social Action.

She was funny, warm, generous, and welcoming. She wanted all of us newcomers to love her adopted city as much as she did.

When I returned to Washington to join the Clinton cabinet, Alice, along with her friend Meg Greenfield, the powerhouse editorial page editor of the Post, and the Post publisher Katherine Graham, formed the Smart Women's Club. They invited me to join them in hilarious dinners with interesting guests – a high point in my career.

One of my fondest memories of Alice took place on a day in the eighties when I was still in New York. Alice called me and asked if I could take a month off to go to Kashmir to trek in the Himalayas. What an adventure – the beginning of decades of trekking with friends and her patient husband Sid Winter, himself a world class economist, in some of the most interesting places in the world. Once her fabulous children joined us in Peru – that's a story for another time.

You learn a lot about people when you share a narrow ledge in a rainstorm on some of the highest mountains in the world. Alice was tenacious, brave, and cheerful – and the kindest and nicest person I have ever known.

She was a legend – renowned for mentoring younger colleagues

and helping people of all walks of life with their challenges.

Hers was more than a life well lived – she was a patriot who loved her country and her city and served both with extraordinary skill and passion.

I yield back.