

**BG LALOR REMARKS  
FOR  
PRESIDENT MONROE  
WREATH LAYING CEREMONY  
28 APRIL 2023**

**HOLLYWOOD CEMETARY  
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA**

**861 WORDS / 6 MINUTES**



[DV LIST]

**Delegate Betsy Carr (D)**

**Distinguished Guests**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

**Good Morning,**

**We gather here today to pay tribute to James Monroe, the 5th President of our Nation, on the 265th anniversary of his birth.**

**He was a giant in our Nation's history - the last of the 'Founding Fathers' to serve as President.**

**And tis is simply a magnificent place to honor him.**

**I have to say, regardless of the weather, these beautiful gardens do more to honor his greatness than any words I can humbly offer. Still, I consider it an absolute privilege to represent the President of the United States for a second consecutive year in continuing the tradition of laying a wreath at the tomb of this celebrated American leader.**

**I would like to first set the important context and background that established the foundation from where President Monroe grew and developed.**

**The son of a Scottish patriot, [Spence Monroe](#), and his wife [Elizabeth Jones Monroe](#), he was born in Westmoreland County, about 60 miles north of here. He briefly attended the College of William and Mary but withdrew during his sophomore year to join the [3rd Virginia Regiment](#) during the American Revolutionary War.**

**He saw action during battles in Monmouth, Brandywine, and Germantown. He was among the first of Washington's troops to cross the icy Delaware River and was critically wounded during the Battle of Trenton.**

**He served with distinction, rising to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in just **six** years. His military career ended when funding for the state militia was cut after the war, but his love of the military and his strong desire to serve never wavered.**

**Following the Revolutionary War, Monroe's strong sense of duty to country propelled him into the political arena:**

- **He served **three times** in the Virginia House of Delegates,**
- ****twice** as Governor of Virginia,**
- **as a delegate to the Continental Congress **and** later as a United States Senator.**

- He served as Minister to both France **and** Great Britain,
- and during the War of 1812, he **simultaneously** performed the duties of Secretary of State and Secretary of War!

Having served in every political office available at that time, Monroe entered his first term as president with more **practical and diverse** experience than any president in American history.

It is no exaggeration to say his contributions had a profound impact on our Nation's history. Among his many accomplishments, he

is credited with expanding the frontiers of freedom through:

- the Louisiana Purchase of, under President Jefferson, which doubled the size of the United States...
- and the settlement of the West Florida Dispute during which Spain ceded all claim to West Florida.
- During his presidency, **five** new states were admitted to the Union: Mississippi, Illinois, Alabama, Maine, and Missouri, expanding the country to the West, South, and North.
- and the policy that came to be known as the Monroe Doctrine, secured the Western



**Hemisphere from foreign interference and remains a cornerstone of American foreign policy to this day, serving as a testament to his enduring legacy.**

**President Monroe was a gifted leader whose military service earned him the respect of his peers. Also known for his diplomacy and judicious character, he was an independent thinker who often provided an alternate viewpoint in the debate that shaped the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.**

**A proponent of Federalism, he opposed a strong central government that did not reserve power for the states nor offer enough protection to individual liberties.**

**While many of our Founding Fathers disapproved of a standing Army during peacetime (because of the tyranny it might enable), Monroe envisioned a permanent, professional Army (much as we have today) as a means of protecting our liberty. Our Army has evolved and changed significantly over the course of our History but today remains a**

**direct reflection of the Nation and Society  
from which it emerges.**

**President Monroe was an exceptional patriot  
and selfless servant who dedicated more than  
50 years of his life to securing the blessings of  
liberty.**

**He stood as a sentinel against any threat that  
would, as he put it, “break our union, and  
demolish us as a Nation.” In his first  
inaugural address, he said:**

**“It was by one Union that we achieved our independence and liberties, and by it alone can they be maintained.”**

**Monroe was the last of the revolutionary fathers to serve as President of the United States and his departure from the White House in 1825 marked the end of the ‘Virginia dynasty,’ but his extraordinary example of patriotism and selfless service lives on.**

**Today we commemorate the life of a man who significantly shaped the course of our nation's history and embodied the values that we hold**

**dear as Americans. We honor his life and legacy and pledge to carry forward the principles in which he so passionately believed. His ideals influenced nearly every U.S. President since his administration and set the conditions needed for the United States to grow into the powerful Nation we have become. May he rest in peace knowing that our generation will ‘take up the torch,’ walk in the light of liberty, and preserve it as a legacy for future generations.**

**Thank you,**

**[END]**