

## Diane Sawyer Eulogy for Nancy Davis Reagan

March 11, 2016

Thank you so much. It's an honor and I'm so grateful to be included today and I've been asked to say just a few words before I read a passage from the New Testament for Mrs. Reagan, so you may want to sit down. Fifteen years ago I interviewed her. It was long after the White House years and I didn't really know her then but our conversation was about the president and Alzheimer's and how you go on when every single day, as someone said that "the size of the love is, the size of the loss." And when the interview was over we kept talking and I think I joined so many of you here in this room who checked in with her by phone and came to Los Angeles to have the lunches with her. Those lunches in which he ate microscopic amounts of food, tiny little chopped salads and one chocolate chip cookie and an iced tea. I was so terrified of that, that I used to hide my roll under the table and butter it so she couldn't see it. I didn't want to offend her. But make no mistake she would bop journalists and I mean bop any journalist in this room, and we know this, if she didn't like a report you had done. But unlike so many people these days, she never seemed to harden differences into definitions. She was way too interested in people and who you really were and what you really knew, all of us woven together in this life. And so we talked about politics and celebrities and she told very wicked stories about old Hollywood and the days when life would throw you a curve and you got up, put on your lipstick and you combed your hair and you kept the band playing. And I always thought of that old desert movie *Morocco* describing the way of a generation of women. It says, "There is no Foreign Legion just for women but there is a Foreign Legion for women too. They have no uniform, no flag, no medals when they are brave." And as the lunch would end, she would make her way up the hill to the house with the memories and the silences and her happiness when the children were coming. And all this week I've been thinking about watching her head down the hall because she would head into the bedroom and right there I can't remember exactly what it was, was it a pillow or a framed needlepoint, but I know the words were clearly from President Reagan and it said something like this, "If you must leave, could

you just take me with you?" And I think of that again today as I read what I've been asked to read this passage from the Gospel of John.

Jesus said do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. Trust also in me. In my father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, I would have told you. I'm going there to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I'm going and Thomas said to him 'Lord we don't know where you're going, so how can we know the way?' and Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'" For Nancy, the word of the Lord