



Jay Rockefeller

Senator John Davison (Jay) Rockefeller IV served the people and state of West Virginia for more than 50 years. He came to West Virginia in 1964 as a VISTA volunteer in the small community of Emmons, an experience that shaped his extensive career in public service. He served in the West Virginia House of Delegates (1966-1968); as Secretary of State of West Virginia (1968-1972); President of West Virginia Wesleyan College (1973-1976); and Governor of West Virginia (1977-1985). In 1984 he was elected to the United States Senate and was reelected four times before retiring in 2015.

In the Senate, Rockefeller became a leading champion for health care reform; an advocate for improving the lives of children and working families; and a supporter of the nation's soldiers, veterans, and senior citizens. He served as chair of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs; the Select Committee on Intelligence; the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation; and the Committee on Finance Subcommittee on Medicare and Long-term Care. He also served as vice-chair of the Select Committee on Intelligence.

Characterized as a compassionate, conscientious, and tenacious leader, Rockefeller spent 30 years in Congress working on some of the most challenging issues of the day. In 2014, he donated his senatorial archives to West Virginia University. Preserved by the West Virginia & Regional History Center and tied closely to the John D. Rockefeller IV School of Policy and Politics, the archives are a rich resource for exploring the career of a distinguished senator, the democratic process, and the public policy decisions that continue to shape life in America today.

“When I came to West Virginia 50 years ago, I was searching for a clear purpose for my life’s work. I wanted the work to be really hard. And what I got was the opportunity to work incredibly hard -- along with a real and utterly spiritual sense of mission. This work demands and deserves nothing less than everything you have to give.”

Senator Jay Rockefeller, Senate Farewell Address, December 4, 2014