



PRESS RELEASE

A SOLDIER, STATESMAN, AND A PRESIDENTIAL SERVICE BADGE RECIPIENT (PSB) IS HONORED AND MOURNED BY THE UNITED STATES PRESIDENTIAL SERVICE CENTER® MEMBERS

Washington, D.C. – "Passionate, but not a fanatic. A person who has views, but who is not an ideologue." That's how former Secretary of State Colin Powell, and Presidential Service Badge Recipient, described himself in a 2007 interview with the New York Times. Powell, 84, died Monday at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. A family statement said Powell died of complications of COVID-19, despite being vaccinated. A spokesperson said that Powell had recently undergone cancer surgery (myeloma) which weakened his immune system.

"He was a leader," said Dr. Miguel Rodriguez, a Trustee and retired U.S. Army veteran. He served with Powell at the Pentagon. *"He was a soldier, but he was also tempered toward peace. I think history will remember him as a person who recognized that there had to be reforms."*

Born to Jamaican parents, Powell joined the Army after graduating from City College of New York and its ROTC program. He served with distinction in Vietnam and later rose to be the youngest Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under President George H.W. Bush.

It was in that role that he led the effort to oust Iraqi President Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. In a now-famous Pentagon briefing, he spoke with clarity about the military's role in

defeating Hussein's army. *"Our strategy in going after this army is very simple," he said. "First, we're going to cut it off, and then we're going to kill it."*

That clarity of purpose made Powell one of the most popular public figures in America. When he retired from the military in 1993, he was courted by both parties. He debated a run for the Presidency in 1995 before saying no and fading from the public eye.

He returned to serve in 2001 as Secretary of State under President George W. Bush. Powell left at the end of the President's first term. In later years, he used his political capital to support Democrats, most notably Barack Obama. His endorsement in the campaign's final weeks was seen as a significant boost to Mr. Obama's candidacy.

Powell was also a big believer in sending the right message, said Dr. Rodriguez. *"He (Powell) felt that if the message became distorted that it would ruin every one of us. So, when you ask me if he was a soldier or was he a diplomat? He was the best American, period."*

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