

Remembering Madeleine Albright
By Liz Schroyer, USGLC

Yesterday was truly a sad day for America, the world, and the USGLC with the loss of our dear friend and advisor, Madeleine Albright.

As we honor her life and legacy, I wanted to share a few thoughts on what she meant to the USGLC and to me:

As our nation's 64th Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright was a trailblazer, not only as the first woman to serve as our nation's top diplomat, but as a fierce believer in the power of democracy and the imperative of America's global leadership. She was relentless in her commitment to the importance of diplomacy and development – always advocating for how America can and must be a force for good in the world.

She was a true believer in USGLC, championing our cause wherever she went. During her tenure at Foggy Bottom, I will never forget her leadership in defeating a serious proposal that would have abolished USAID by befriending an unlikely ally, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC). Known by some as the “terror of the State Department,” Helms was taken by Albright's diplomatic skills, smarts, and charm. She not only won the day on USAID, but the two worked on several legislative issues together, which she was pleased to share during a speech she gave at his alma mater in North Carolina. She was darn good at old-fashioned “politicking” and connecting with people.

As extraordinary as she was at the State Department, it was perhaps the decades since that illuminate her magic. With her boundless energy, smarts, and quick-wit, Albright was tireless in her pursuit to make the world a better place. A gifted writer and storyteller, she was devoted to making the case that what happens globally matters locally – always speaking out for why America's civilian tools overseas are central to our national interests.

For USGLC, she was a game-changer, joining as a founding member of our National Advisory Council in 2004, honored by our coalition in 2011, and serving as one of our most trusted advisors helping to drive our strategy. Over the years, she participated in too many USGLC events and conversations to count. Whether it was briefing freshmen Members of Congress or joining all the other former Secretaries of State for a timely letter to Capitol Hill, she was passionate in her advocacy, educating Americans and policymakers on why America cannot turn inward. Highly respected from both sides of the aisle, she would famously tell every room that “there is nothing foreign about foreign policy anymore.”

On a personal level, I am heartbroken to lose my inspiring mentor and dear friend of over three decades. I loved talking with her about politics, policy, and life – as she always had yet another great story to tell. She was dead serious about the world, but such fun to be with, ending our conversations in search of the next idea of how we could make a difference.

Of all our many dinners and calls – and more recently Zooms – perhaps my favorite memories will always be joining her each semester with her students at Georgetown, where she certainly was the coolest professor on campus. It was there that I would always see how her joy never ceased in energizing the next generation about the power of America’s role in the world.

She truly embodied what it meant for America to be the indispensable nation – and she was an indispensable voice, who like General Colin Powell, had such a profound influence on our world. The loss of them both in a few short months is a reminder of why we must follow both of their examples and invest in the next generation of leaders committed to America’s global leadership.

May her memory be a blessing.

Liz

