“The highest of distinctions is service to others.”
Brief Biography:

JAMES FRANCIS BYRNES

Mr. Byrnes was born May 2, 1879, in Charleston, S. C. His father, James Francis Byrnes, was a clerk with the city government. He died two months before the birth of his son.

Young Byrnes attended Charleston public schools, but at an early age left school to help support his mother. Having studied shorthand with her aid, he entered a Charleston law office as a stenographer and remained there until 1900 when he was appointed official court stenographer for the Second Judicial Circuit of South Carolina, and moved to Aiken. He then began the study of law in the office of Judge James Aldrich and in 1903 was admitted to the Bar. In 1906, on his birthday, he was married to Miss Maude Busch of Aiken.

In 1908 Mr. Byrnes was elected Solicitor of the Second Judicial Circuit and two years later was elected to Congress. He served in the House of Representatives until 1925.

He was an unsuccessful candidate for the U. S. Senate in 1924 and resumed the practice of law in Spartanburg. In 1930 he was elected to the U. S. Senate and reelected in 1936. (In this contest he carried every precinct in the State except one.) He served in the U. S. Senate until July 7, 1941, when he was appointed Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

In October 1942 when the United States was engaged in World War II, he was called from the bench by President Roosevelt to serve as Director of Economic Stabilization with offices in the White House. In May 1943 his formal title was changed to Director of War Mobilization. In this office he exercised authority second only to that of the President, who referred to him as “Assistant President.”

On July 3, 1945, President Truman appointed him Secretary of State. In this office he served until January 1947, when he resigned and returned to South Carolina. In August 1945 President Truman presented him with a Distinguished Service Medal in recognition of his conspicuous contribution to the winning of the Second World War as Economic Stabilizer and Mobilization Director. In 1950, he was elected Governor of S. C. and served from 1951-1955.

He was a Mason, and in religion, Episcopalian. Honorary degrees were conferred upon him by many colleges and universities, including Columbia University, Yale, Pennsylvania, Washington and Lee, and the University of North Carolina as well as most of the colleges of his own State.
The following Concurrent Resolution was introduced by the Barnwell, Charleston, Aiken, Spartanburg and Richland delegations and unanimously passed by the S. C. House of Representatives and S. C. Senate in March 1972:

Whereas, the month of May is defined as "the vigorous blooming time of human life"; and

Whereas, it is recorded in the Encyclopedia Americana that on the second day of this month in the year 1879 God chose to bless this noble State with a son whose name, James Francis Byrnes, would become internationally famous; and

Whereas, this native of Charleston, born and reared in humble circumstances, launched one of the most colorful and diversified careers of public service in the history of this nation in 1900, when, at age twenty-one, he became court reporter for the Second Judicial Circuit in South Carolina, a position he held until 1908; and

Whereas, his ambition and determination to succeed led to his admission to the Bar in 1903; and

Whereas, between the years 1908 and 1955 he successively served as Solicitor of the Second Judicial Circuit, Congressman for the Second District, United States Senator, Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court, Director of the Office of Economic Stabilization, Director of the Office of War Mobilization, Secretary of State and Governor of South Carolina; and

Whereas, his superior performance in these various positions of high honor and trust has been many times toasted at home and abroad; and

Whereas, throughout his magnificent career he never lost touch with his meager beginning as evidenced by his scholarship foundation for deserving orphaned children; and

Whereas, he has always been equally at ease with the rich and the poor, the high and the low and is best known to all simply as "Jimmy Byrnes"; and

Whereas, his farsightedness and dedication to formal education is recorded in the Encyclopedia Britannica wherein reference is made to his public school improvement program which was launched under his stewardship as Governor of this great State; and
Whereas, it was also on this day, made historically significant by his birth, that he and his dear devoted wife and inspirational helpmate, Maude B. Byrnes, were married in 1906; and

Whereas, the sands of time have indelibly recorded the full, wholesome and meaningful life of Jimmy Byrnes in the history of South Carolina and in that of the United States; and

Whereas, the time has come for South Carolina to honor her great son with recognition of a lasting and permanent act of outward manifestation; and

Whereas, it has been previously determined to accomplish this by placing a statue of him on the northeast corner of the Statehouse grounds where it shall remain in mute testimony for all who pass it by that this is indeed the land of opportunity for those who dare to seek it; and

Whereas, there is no more appropriate time to accomplish this recognition than on his birthday and wedding anniversary, May 2, 1972, and to designate such day as “James F. Byrnes Day”; and

Whereas, contributions from throughout the nation were received for the purpose of financing the statue; and

Whereas, this day having been selected, it is the desire of the members of the General Assembly to join in the ceremony and recessing their respective sessions at 12:20 in the afternoon on that day for that purpose; and

Whereas, such members are desirous of State employees in the immediate Greater Columbia area being afforded the opportunity of witnessing this momentous occasion and are further desirous of the public in general to join in. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

That May 2, 1972, is hereby designated as “James F. Byrnes Day”; that both the House of Representatives and the Senate shall recess at 12:20 in the afternoon on this day for the purpose of participating in the unveiling of the statue of Mr. Byrnes on the northeast corner of the Statehouse grounds; that all department heads of State government in the immediate area of Greater Columbia grant an additional half hour to the lunch hour of all employees in their respective departments on this day who desire to witness the ceremony; and that all citizens of South Carolina are invited to bear witness on this day to the recognition of Mr. Byrnes.
PROGRAM

CEREMONIES AT UNVEILING OF STATUE OF JAMES FRANCIS BYRNEs
STATE HOUSE GROUNDS — COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA
12:15 P.M., MAY 2, 1972

STAR-SPANGLED BANNER ........................................ Fort Jackson Band

INVOCATION ......................................................... The Rt. Rev. John A. Pinckney,
Bishop, Diocese of Upper South Carolina

INTRODUCTION ...................................................... The Hon. N. Heyward Clarkson, Jr.,
Vice-President, Byrnes Foundation

REMARKS ............................................................ W. E. Rowe, M.D.,
Former Byrnes Scholar

REMARKS ............................................................ Gen. Mark Wayne Clark

PRESENTATION OF STATUE TO THE STATE ..................... Mr. Clarkson

UNVEILING OF STATUE ........................................... Mrs. James Francis Byrnes

ACCEPTANCE OF STATUE FOR THE STATE ....................... The Hon. John C. West,
Governor of South Carolina

Benediction ......................................................... The Rev. James Stirling, D.D.,
Rector, Trinity Episcopal Church
THE BYRNES FOUNDATION

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Gen. Mark Clark Thomas R. Waring
Gen. Lucius Clay Gen. William C. Westmoreland
Robert R. Coker

*Senator Hammond, with the late Miss Cassie Conner, long-time assistant of Mr. Byrnes, conceived the idea of the statue of Mr. Byrnes. He laid the groundwork which made possible the presentation of this statue to the people of South Carolina.

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Mrs. Cy Young
This statue of James Francis Byrnes, foremost South Carolinian of his time, is presented on May 2, 1972 to the people of South Carolina with affection, esteem, and gratitude for his long and distinguished record of public service by friends of James F. Byrnes.