

Queen Elizabeth Mourned at Funeral by Britain and World

Britain and the world said a final goodbye to Queen Elizabeth II at a state funeral Monday that drew presidents and kings, princes and prime ministers—and crowds who massed along the streets of London to honor a monarch whose 70-year reign defined an age.

A day packed with events in London and Windsor began early when the doors of 900-year-old Westminster Hall were closed to mourners after hundreds of thousands had filed in front of her flag-draped coffin. Many had waited for hours in line, including through cold nights, to attend the lying in state in an outpouring of collective grief and respect.

“I felt like I had to come and pay my final respects to our majestic queen. She has done so much for us and just a little thank you really from the people,” said Tracy Dobson, who was among the last to join the line.

In a country known for pomp and pageantry, the first state funeral since Winston Churchill’s was filled with spectacle: 142 Royal Navy sailors drew the gun carriage carrying Elizabeth’s coffin to Westminster Abbey, with King Charles III and his sons, Princes William and Harry, walking behind as bagpipers played. Pall bearers carried the coffin into the abbey, where around 2,000 people ranging from world leaders to health care workers gathered to mourn her. Ahead of the service, a bell tolled 96 times—once a minute for each year of her life.

“Here, where Queen Elizabeth was married and crowned, we gather from across the nation, from the Commonwealth, and from the nations of the world, to mourn our loss, to remember her long life of selfless service, and in sure confidence to

commit her to the mercy of God our maker and redeemer," the dean of the medieval abbey, David Hoyle, told the mourners, as the funeral opened.

It drew to a close with two minutes of silence observed across the United Kingdom. The attendees then sang the national anthem.

Monday has been declared a public holiday in honor of Elizabeth, who died Sept. 8—and hundreds of thousands of people descended on central London to partake in the historic moment. Long before the service began, city authorities said viewing areas along the route of the funeral's procession were full.

Millions more had been expected to tune into the funeral live on television, and crowds flocked to parks and public spaces across the U.K. to watch it on screens. Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby noted during the funeral that "few leaders receive the outpouring of love we have seen" for Elizabeth.

On the evening before, Charles issued a message of thanks to people in the U.K. and around the world, saying he and his wife Camilla, the queen consort, have been "moved beyond measure" by the large numbers of people who have turned out to pay their respects to the queen.

Following the funeral, the coffin—accompanied by units of the armed forces in dress uniforms and members of her family—was brought through the capital's streets.

At Wellington Arch near Hyde Park, it will be placed in a hearse to be driven to Windsor Castle—where Elizabeth spent much of her time—for another procession before a committal service in St. George's Chapel. She will be laid to rest with her late husband, Prince Philip, at a private family service.

U.S. President Joe Biden was among leaders to pay their

respects at the queen's coffin on Sunday as thousands of police, hundreds of British troops and an army of officials made final preparations for the funeral.

Biden called Queen Elizabeth II "decent" and "honorable" and "all about service" as he signed the condolence book, saying his heart went out to the royal family.

People across Britain paused for a minute of silence at 8 p.m. Sunday in memory of the only monarch most have ever known. At Westminster Hall, the constant stream of mourners paused for 60 seconds as people observed the minute of reflection in deep silence.

In Windsor, rain began to fall as the crowd fell silent for the moment of reflection. Some camped overnight outside the castle in order to reserve the best spots to view the queen's coffin.

Jilly Fitzgerald, who was in Windsor, said there was a sense of community among the mourners as they prepared to wait hours to see procession carrying the queen's coffin.

"It's good to be with all the people who are all feeling the same. It's like a big family because everyone feels that ... the queen was part of their family," she said. {eo}

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