

motivation for activism came in part from her concern about blindness and other disabilities:

“ I was appointed on a commission to investigate the conditions of the blind. For the first time I, who had thought blindness a misfortune beyond human control, found that too much of it was traceable to wrong industrial conditions, often caused by the selfishness and greed of employers. And the social evil contributed its share. I found that poverty drove women to a life of shame that ended in blindness. ”

The last sentence refers to prostitution and [syphilis](#), the former a frequent cause of the latter, and the latter a leading cause of blindness. In the same interview, Keller also cited the [1912 strike of textile workers](#) in [Lawrence, Massachusetts](#) for instigating her support of socialism.

Writings

Akita dog

Later life

Keller suffered a series of strokes in 1961 and spent the last years of her life at her home.^[2]

On September 14, 1964, [President Lyndon B. Johnson](#) awarded her the [Presidential Medal of Freedom](#), one of the United States' two highest civilian honors. In 1965 she was elected to the [National Women's Hall of Fame](#) at the [New York World's Fair](#).^[2]

Keller devoted much of her later life to raising funds for the [American Foundation for the Blind](#). She died in her sleep on June 1, 1968, at her home, Arcan Ridge, located in [Easton, Connecticut](#), a few weeks short of her eighty-eighth birthday. A service was held in her honor at the [National Cathedral](#) in Washington, D.C., she was cremated and her ashes were placed there next to her constant companions, Anne Sullivan and Polly Thomson.