

Lost a Keystone of Conservatism

I think it was Deepak Chopra who once wrote that life is like a big jigsaw puzzle and that are no extra pieces. Each of us has a space to fill and every piece has to fit itself in the big jigsaw puzzle. Although I am not sure that Eric Swalwell or Nancy Pelosi aren't extra pieces. Unless they represent the puzzle pieces of hate and bitterness. Most puzzles have different shaped pieces, straight-edged to form the perimeter, small and large pieces to form the mosaic and sometimes there is the keystone piece.

The life puzzle now has hole where the keystone piece used to sit. I am referring to the death of Rush Limbaugh today at the age of 70 years old. He lost his battle with lung cancer. Rush was the iconic conservative talk show host for over thirty years. Millions listened to him every day. His monologues dealt with politics, national events, sports; a whole range of topics. He was your wise uncle telling you the facts of a situation in a conversational tone that made the subject matter easily understood with his expressive analysis and humor. He single handedly saved AM radio. He is responsible for the careers of many famous radio and TV talk show hosts. Roger Ailes, a longtime colleague, started the conservative Fox News in the same vein as the Rush Limbaugh radio show.

I was not a daily listener to Rush. Even when I did listen to his show it was for an hour or so while in the car or eating lunch. I did listen to him more in the last several months. A combination of the political climate and the subconscious notion that it could all end soon. There will be many today that recant the first time they heard Rush on the radio. Here are the memories of the Two Smart Farts of when they remember the when they first heard Rush.

In 1989 I was traveling over the mountain to Aurora, CO from Los Angeles on the way to Pennsylvania. I was turning the dial on the radio looking for something to keep me awake. I stumbled on a station where this guy was talking about a bill being considered in Sacramento. I was familiar with the subject as I heard Dennis Prager talking about on his show in LA. But this guy, Rush Limbaugh, was explaining the bill, its consequences and why this group wanted it and the other side didn't. It was like he was having a conversation with me in the car. Not a lecture, but an education. He cautioned the listeners not to give up hope. There will be a solution. My immediate hope at the time was not to run out of gas going over the mountain. Rush kept me occupied so that I did not stare at the low-fuel warning light and worrying about being stranded in the middle of nowhere.

Living in Seattle in 1992, I had just driven to a job site in Spokane, Washington. The site was a bank in a six-story brick building. However, my desk was located in a "bunker" three floors below the ground. The nerve center of Fiserv for the Pacific Northwest and Western Canada.

The bunker housed six of us malcontents, each programming our fingers off to the newest configuration of the soon to be dubbed IBM "iSeries" computers. Massive. Anyhow that morning only one of my compatriots greeted me. His name was Mark, he was a Mormon (big-un) and there is a whole 'nother story of our sharing sleeping accommodations in Spokane. I

sat down, frazzled from the 4-hour high speed drive down the I90 corridor frequently going into stealth mode to avoid the sheriff from Smokey and the Bandit.

Mark was on headphones and nodding and laughing his head off. Finally, I asked what he was listening to. He said "some guy named Rush Bimbogh" and pulled off his headset and turned up the radio. Yup, an AM radio since our internet access was blocked down in the bunker. Anyhow, Rush was talking about two Senate guys named Lott and Reed. It was foreign to me. But in hindsight, I was about to fall into the rabbit hole. Rush was better than any drug Alice had.

We, along with millions, hoped that Rush would win his battle against lung cancer. Somehow many thought he would be granted a last-minute miracle. But time had come to return his talent to God. It will be strange not to hear his intro music and his voice. They were a keystone to many people's daily routine.

Maya Angela wrote, "... People may forget what you said, or what you did, but nobody will forget how you made them feel."

Rest in Peace Rush. You will not be forgotten, because you made people feel special.