

Ronald Reagan



People's President and Cold Warrior

BrotherWatch™ proudly presents this award to

Ronald Wilson Reagan

*in recognition of an extraordinary leader who conquered
Communism, led the Reagan Revolution and won the hearts of
fellow Americans to become the People's President.*

- November 1997

Introduction

BrotherWatch published a special tribute issue to Ronald Reagan in November, 1997. My “Personal” contained these words:¹

“Ronald Reagan. A legend in his own time. One of the great American presidents. A man of stature, integrity, vision. A freedom fighter and revolutionary patriot. Compassionate conservative and classical liberal. Realistic dreamer and anachronistic visionary. Statesman. American.

“Ronald Reagan, a man who exemplifies the best of what it means to be an American.

“The greatness of his vision, the majesty of his character and the largeness of his heart helped restore national pride, rejuvenate the economy and reinvigorate our culture.”

Here are extracts from one of my articles:²

Ronald Reagan was one of the most popular American presidents. He won two landslide elections and *his* popularity propelled George Bush into the Oval Office. Disparagingly called the Great Communicator and the Teflon President, Reagan won the hearts of the American people, becoming the People’s President, because he genuinely loved people. Ronald Reagan loved the People and the People loved him back.

“We, the People.” This was Reagan’s touchstone, the core of his political philosophy. He viewed the People as rulers over the government, not bureaucrats over the People.

Reagan *loved* people, put his *faith* in people. And he considered himself one of the people. While he resolutely stuck to his principles, he humbly considered himself no better than anyone else. Reagan put his principles into practice with *compassion*.

For Reagan, “We, the People” was the cornerstone of democracy, the natural expression of a national creed claiming the equality of all men. This political and philosophical expression was translated into Reagan’s *personal* life as well.

While Reagan recognized that no man can be above the law, not even the President – *especially* not the President – Reagan went beyond this and considered himself above no other man. He considered others equal to, or, in his genuine humility, superior to himself.

Reagan held to his deep convictions of faith in God, country and his fellow man, and he steadfastly held to his guiding principles against all odds and in all circumstances, yet retained his humility and love for all mankind.

Rather than letting his politics and principles separate him from others, his love for others transcended his beliefs. Throughout his triumphs and tragedies, Ronald Reagan remembered that we are *all* – *each* of us – placed on this earth for a reason, that we are indeed all created in God’s image, equal in His sight.

Author Dinesh D’Souza writes: “Reagan’s graciousness extended even to his critics and political opponents.” Ronald Reagan even forgave and prayed for his would-be assassin.

Daily, President Reagan would *personally* read and respond to about 50 letters. Reagan *secretly* helped those in need. He was *not* a photo-op philanthropist. Reagan always found time for people. He *made* time.

Ronald Reagan was truly a man of the People. He became an extraordinary leader because he understood and loved ordinary people and because he was always willing to translate the commonsense insights of those ordinary people into civic action.

Reagan, the Great Communicator, validated the beliefs of the American People years before Rush Limbaugh. While the cultural and political elites continue to disparage Reagan, the People still love him because he remains one of them.

Who is the *real* Ronald Reagan? A true man of the People.

Even while suffering from Alzheimer's, Ronald Reagan *still* goes out in public to meet the people.³ Reagan "remains as open and friendly as Americans have always sensed he was."⁴ His "personality – his sunniness, his cheer – was not an actor's mask but a window into his heart." Ronald Reagan "is revered because he combined personal kindness with an adherence to principle in a way that moved the world."

Into the Sunset

by Grover Norquist

The year was 1980. Like the cowboy he often portrayed in the western movies, Ronald Reagan came galloping into Washington with a purpose – to give America back her pride.

And just in time – he came after a long, bleak period in our nation's history.

This chapter is being written during the first year of the President George W. Bush's administration – twenty years after Reagan was elected. It is important to note that Bush was elected as a Reagan conservative. The issues that Ronald Reagan envisioned are the commonsense policies of today that enabled Bush to be victorious in November of 2001.

Moreover, Ronald Reagan's policies are the source of conservative philosophy today. They laid the foundation for the Contract with America and are the basis of compassionate conservatism.

But twenty years is a long time in politics and so soon do we forget that, when Ronald Reagan entered the Oval Office, America had high unemployment, soaring inflation and low morale. Taxing and spending were also out of control.

Things were so bad that prior to the Reagan presidency, new terms for economic woefulness were coined – stagflation (the combination of inflation and stagnant growth) and the misery index. We were also told in the 1970s to accept limits to growth and that America had a crisis of confidence. All of this created a demoralizing sense that America had lost control over her destiny.

Reagan knew otherwise. He refused to accept limits to growth because he knew that America had a "rendezvous with destiny."

Reagan's strong commitment to an active social policy agenda for the nation's children helped lower crime and drug use in our neighborhoods. Confronting the worst economic crisis since Franklin Roosevelt, he solved the country's economic troubles with a combination of cutting taxes and regulations

which ultimately created 21 million new jobs, 4.5 million new businesses and resulted in the longest peacetime economic expansion in our nation's history.

On foreign policy, President Reagan's commitment to our armed forces contributed to the restoration of pride in America, her values and those cherished by the free world. His commitment was instrumental in preparing America to win the Gulf War. He gave the military back its pride, strength and spirit.

Reagan's vision of "peace through strength" led to the end of the Cold War and the ultimate demise of the Soviet Union, guaranteeing basic human rights for millions of people. As a young boy, he saw the emergence of the Soviet empire and, as a world leader some 60 years later, played an integral role in its ultimate destruction.

Reagan wasn't content with containment or détente; he said the Soviet menace belonged in the ash heap of history.

Too often Reagan is not given credit for his success in actively working toward the fall of the Soviet Union. We now know from recently de-classified documents that Reagan was successful in helping destroy the Soviet Union through the authorization of several National Security Decision Directives. Some of them included policies aimed at:

- ◆ intensifying Radio Free Europe and Voice of America as well as reducing Eastern Europe's reliance on the USSR.
- ◆ getting European allies to stop extending credit at better than market rates, blocking Soviet access to the high technologies of Western countries, and developing alternatives to Europe becoming dependent on the Soviet Union for natural gas.
- ◆ exacerbating Soviet economic problems by working to decrease its export revenues and forcing it to increase spending.
- ◆ establishing that the United States would not accept the existing Soviet sphere of influence, but would work to roll it back, restricting technologies that might help its economy and exploiting its vulnerabilities.

All of these actions reversed Soviet expansion into countries such as Afghanistan, Angola and Mozambique and encouraged freedom publications in Poland.

What more proof does one need of Reagan's popularity and success than what happened in 1984? That year, he earned the confidence of three fifths of the electorate and was victorious in 49 of the 50 states in the general election. His re-election victory remains a record unsurpassed in the history of American presidential elections.

Most Presidents come to Washington with high hopes and leave office shattered and disillusioned. After all, Thomas Jefferson called the Presidency a "splendid misery." But Reagan was even more popular by the time he left office (having won just 50.7% of the vote in 1980). His legacy was so strong that, in 1989, for the first time in 60 years, a President turned over his office to a successor from his party.

In the words of Rev. Billy Graham, Ronald Reagan "set an example this country hadn't had in a long time."

There are at least four reasons why Reagan was so successful.

- ◆ Reagan spoke from the heart. He never hid behind his words or made people guess at what he really meant. He taught us that, “a government that’s big enough to give you everything you want is big enough to take it all away.” And he wasn’t paying lip service when he said “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall.” He meant it, and people listened.
- ◆ He hired the best people to work for him. From individuals like Attorney General Ed Meese to National Security Counselor Dick Allen, Defense Secretary Casper Weinberger and CIA Chief William Casey.
- ◆ His positive attitude on life. In Reagan’s world the glass was always half-full. This might have something to do with his upbringing which represented a wide cross-section of American culture. He was a man born in a small Midwest town of humble background and, aside from being President of the United States, Reagan also served as an entertainer, union leader, corporate spokesman, and Governor of the largest state in the union. Reagan’s varied career path allowed him to really understand America and his upbringing in the vast plains of the Middle West.
- ◆ He had the vision to succeed and the discipline to lead. George W. Bush is a popular President because his agenda (Reagan’s ideas) is popular with the American way of life. Like all visionaries, he was initially mocked and dismissed (especially by the liberal elite throughout the 1980s) but time would be his vindication. For example, when Reagan was Governor of California he proposed welfare reform to the National Governor’s Association. Even though his proposal was voted down 49 to 1, he laid the groundwork for a powerful issue – the massive overhaul of an entitlement – which was central to helping the Republican Party become America’s majority party in 1994 after 40 years of liberal Democrat control.

Reagan’s policies were great for America and just what the conservative movement needed. At a time when Republican Party ideas were beginning to waiver back into the hands of the Rockefellers, Reagan rescued his party by reminding them of his common sense approach to government. He caused conservatives to come to terms with the post-New Deal role of the central government – the welfare state and the utter destructiveness it had caused on families and society. Because of Reagan and his convictions, each day the Republican Party grows by welcoming young conservatives, independent voters and disillusioned Democrats.

It’s hard to imagine what could have happened to this country had Reagan never been elected. But we do know that if only 794 votes had switched in the New Hampshire primary in 1976, Reagan might have been President when oil prices doubled and hostages were taken in Teheran. But 1980 proved to be his call. When Reagan took office that following year he rolled up his sleeves and worked in a bipartisan manner to enact his bold agenda of restoring accountability and common sense to Government. This led to unprecedented economic expansion and opportunity for millions of Americans and helped save millions from the morbid state of Communism.

Scoutmasters have one rule for the young who are entrusted to them when they go camping: “always leave the campsite a little better than the way you found it.” Ronald Reagan had a “scoutmaster” approach to the nation he led for eight great years; only he left America a lot better than the way he found it. His legacy is an American legacy that we can all be proud of and look to for inspiration.

Grover G. Norquist
 President, Ronald Reagan Legacy Project’s Advisory Board
 November, 2001
<http://www.reaganlegacy.org>

Tributes from Fellow Americans

[NOTE: The titles of individuals are as they were at the time the tribute was given. – DJB]

My defining moment was Ronald Reagan's re-election. His first election was his promise to change the course. But Reagan's re-election was an affirmation of his wisdom, and the conservative path. The country had confidence that we were doing things right. And liberalism was exposed as a ridiculous failure. I matured under the miserable era of Johnson, Nixon, Ford and Carter. Reagan ignited my pride in being an American. He is often given credit for communicating. But actually, it was his inspiration that set him apart. Ronald Reagan awakened the natural conservative in me. When he spoke, it made sense. And his policies actually worked. If he had been blessed with a conservative congress, liberalism wouldn't even exist today. Reagan's cold war victory was an historic stroke of persistent brilliance, and it led to perhaps my #2 defining moment; the fall of the Berlin Wall. But for me, Reagan's re-election was a quiet, solid affirmation that conservatism was the ultimate political path for all. I was young enough to be educated by this moment, and old enough to appreciate it. – **Tom Adkins**, Executive Editor, *Common Conservative*.

President Reagan is one of my heroes. Because of his courage, his character, and his confidence in the common sense of the American people, hundreds of millions of men and women live today in freedom. When the menace of international communism sought to define the 20th Century as one of tyranny and collectivism, Ronald Reagan looked the masters of the Kremlin in the eye and demanded, "Tear down this wall."

In August, I had the opportunity to travel to what was once East Germany. Thanks to Ronald Reagan and the American values that he championed so courageously, the people of the former East Germany, and hundreds of millions of others around the globe, know the warm embrace of freedom.

Ronald Reagan realized the strength of the American character; he refused to accommodate us at our lowest and least, and instead, he called us to our highest and best. – **Sen. John Ashcroft** (R-MO).

Ronald Reagan did win the Cold War. Ronald Reagan did lay the groundwork for this economic boom that we're experiencing right now in 1999. Bill Clinton had nothing to do with it. So I think Ronald Reagan deserves much more credit, even than he's gotten from most conservatives. – **Fred Barnes**, Editor, *Weekly Standard*.

Trying to derive a summary of a great man in a couple of paragraphs is difficult if not impossible. Ronald Reagan is this type of man and was that type of president. Reagan touched the heart of Americans at all levels. He did this because he was in touch with the American people. He never forgot why he was elected. His presidency is marked with the same issues and principles that he campaigned for. Not since that time have we had such a strong sense of patriotism, strong moral stance, and love of God that this great country of ours was founded upon. Reagan never wavered on what he knew to be evil. An example of this was his stance on communism. He referred to the former Soviet Union as the evil empire and the Soviets knew that America did not and would never approve of their regime until they left their godless tyranny behind. President Reagan spoke over the heads of the liberal media and straight to the hearts of the American people. He never wavered on his principles, and was overwhelmingly re-elected for a second term as president. That should be a wake-

up call for politicians today, that the media and the American people do not want the same things, so stand for what you know is right.

On a more personal and individual level I had the privilege to be a part of the Reagan record. In 1983 a girl was born on Long Island, New York. She was diagnosed with Spina Bifida, an abnormally small head, excess fluid on the brain, and a damaged kidney. The doctors and hospital staff advised the parents that the young infant would never be “normal,” that she would never walk, talk, know her name or who her parents were. The staff persuaded the parents to refuse surgery saying that the case was hopeless. This was reported in *The New York Times*. The president ordered me to find out about “Baby Jane Doe,” as she was called. We then attempted to obtain the medical records because we felt she was not receiving the best medical treatment that the law guaranteed her. The hospital staff as well as *The New York Times* denied us access to these records. We were blocked by liberal court orders and were not sure what would happen.

Four years later, an article ran about this girl in *Newsday*. She was then a happy, healthy, walking, and talking child. I read this article to President Reagan at a staff luncheon. After the media uproar about the case and the complaints that Ronald Reagan was abusing his presidential powers, the girl’s parents removed her from the hospital and took her to another hospital where the necessary surgeries were performed. There were no complications. As I read the news clip to the president and his assembled advisers, a single tear fell down Ronald Reagan’s cheek. This is a man who cares not only about the country but all of us who make it up as well. That is what makes Ronald Reagan a remarkable man. His is truly a great heart. – **Gary L. Bauer**, President, Family Research Council.

Ronald Reagan’s presidency marked a turning point in many dimensions of American public policy. His efforts helped secure the end of the Cold War, bring marginal tax rates down drastically, and begin the job of curbing the welfare state. While much of the Reagan agenda remains unfinished, Ronald Reagan provided a vision for conservatism that gives the movement an intellectual anchor that will endure for many years. – **John Berthoud**, President, National Taxpayers Union.

I miss The Gipper. – **Anita Blair**, Executive Vice President, Independent Women’s Forum.

He’s certainly the greatest president of my lifetime. He will turn out to be for future generations what FDR was for past generations: a symbol of the greatness and goodness of America. – **Anita Blair**, Executive Vice President, Independent Women’s Forum.

Ronald Reagan – the “Great Communicator?” Or simply a man who, as President, said what he meant and meant what he said. His quiet confidence – the confidence of a national leader who commanded the respect of the World. Ronald Reagan – a man with a positive vision and plan. A visionary, and yet, with strong traditional American virtues such as his belief in personal responsibility and Freedom for all, with belief in God planted firmly in his soul. – **David Cheney**, Editor, *Conservative America*.

My views are that he brought pride back to America, and he began to lay a foundation to stabilize our economic system so that we today can enjoy those benefits. – **Rep. Helen Chenoweth** (R-ID).

Margaret Thatcher said that “Ronald Reagan won the Cold War without firing a shot.” But he did more than that. His policies helped to revive the American economy and the American spirit after years of indefinable malaise. Also he made the world safe for capitalism and democracy. – **Dinesh D’Souza**, author of *Ronald Reagan: How An Ordinary Man Became an Extraordinary Leader*.

Conqueror of communism, sworn enemy of statism, leader of unshakable conviction and contagious optimism, embodiment and culmination of conservative hopes, Ronald Reagan is one of history’s heroes

and the greatest of our great contemporaries. He transformed conservatism from an intellectual movement into a political revolution – a running revolt that continues to this day. He exposed the bankruptcy of modern liberalism and proved that true liberty is still a fighting faith. He saw the momentum of freedom in the sweep of history, and through the power of his words and the determination of his deeds placed the last shovel of dirt on the grave of Leninism. In the end, he restored our confidence in the presidency itself, proving that Jefferson’s “splendid misery” could simply be splendid. – **Dr. Edwin J. Feulner**, President, Heritage Foundation.

I was never old enough to vote for Ronald Reagan but I am a Republican because of him. In the summer of 1984, I was a 17-year-old high school senior who found herself curiously moved by a man literally four times her age, from a different coast and of a different gender. The enthusiasm and angst President Reagan expressed at the Republican National Convention were mine as well; I recognized him as a fellow traveler on the road to an uncertain future. He faced the Evil Empire and the unrealized promise of the greatest nation on earth, while I confronted the uncertainty of leaving home for college.

For me the Reagan legacy is a collection of tiny lessons which I keep as guideposts. From Mr. Reagan I learned that vision is the ability to see something where no one else can; that being right sometimes means being unpopular; to take my work, but not myself, too seriously; to endure criticism but not engage it; to speak of the difference between Left and Right but to live the difference between right and wrong.

The single most sustaining lesson I cull from Ronald Reagan is one he never stated but always demonstrated: that winners are people who are willing to lose.

For the eight years of his presidency Mr. Reagan kept a plaque on his desk. It read, “There is no limit to what any man can do if he doesn’t care who gets the credit for it.” This is a powerful reminder of Mr. Reagan’s grace and humility at a time when politics seems more about division of spoils rather than division of labor.

On the occasion of his 85th Birthday let us all raise a glass to the man who restored honor to the office of the presidency and pride to the soul of America. God Bless you, President Reagan. – **Kellyanne Fitzpatrick**, President, The Polling Company.

Ronald Reagan holds a special place in my heart, not merely out of admiration and respect for the greatest president of modern history, but because of timing. You see, I was born the day Ronald Reagan was elected Governor of California. I can’t say if that has anything to do with why the daughter of Democrats grew up to be a Republican – but I believe in serendipity.

One day, while working as a speechwriter in the Bush White House, there was a special ceremony honoring President Reagan (a paltry tribute for an administration that rejected so much of Reagan’s great legacy). I remember going through the receiving line, and when I came to Reagan, I just wanted to shake his hand and move on. I always hated the folks who would hang onto the hands of important people, hog face time – it struck me as selfish. Besides, Reagan was old – and I didn’t think it was right to make him stand on his feet one more minute than necessary. The crazy thing was that when I shook his hand, it was he who wouldn’t let go. He wanted to know where I worked, and what area of policy I wrote about, and so on. And it wasn’t just me. This was a person who loved being a politician, I realized, as I watched him connect with person after person in the receiving line. Then I realized why Ronald Reagan was such an enduring and unique President, for here was a man who didn’t just love America, as some abstract ideal – he loved Americans. And they loved him back. – **Jennifer Grossman**, Director of Education Policy, Cato Institute.

The election of Ronald Reagan was a time when Reagan showed that we could actually bring the country together under a conservative banner, following conservative ideas, and pursue an affirmative series of policies to advance those goals. – **Heather Higgins**, President, Randolph Foundation

He was a man fully comfortable with himself and thus able to deal with issues honestly, openly and on their own terms. He actually enjoyed listening to others, and was not in love with the sound of himself. He drew strength from a marriage in which respect and affection abounded. He never minded giving credit to others. This alone made Ronald Reagan a rarity in a town and profession filled with people needing power and adulation to fill the empty spaces within themselves. For this reason alone, Americans trusted and loved him. I loved and trusted him, and working for him will forever be one of the joys and privileges of my life. – **Michael Horowitz**, Senior Fellow, Hudson Institute.

I think that Ronald Reagan was one of the great presidents of American history and that his legacy is really not fully understood because the press *hated* him so. I think they like him more now that he is ill and now that we're looking at his leadership in *hindsight* and appreciating that this man *practically single-handedly* brought down the Berlin Wall and *ended* our struggle with Communism with victory. So he's got to go down in history as one of the great Presidents of the United States.

I just wish that more African-Americans, since I am one, would appreciate that you had one of the largest *increases* in income to the African-American community, one of the largest *increases* of families going from low-income to middle-income, purchasing homes, during Ronald Reagan's administration than at any time in history. He's *not* given credit for that. The press *won't* give him credit for that because they don't *like* him and they don't want people who are in the liberal-leftist coalition as they perceive it to have any *reason* to like him.

So I appreciate Ronald Reagan as one of the great presidents of the United States and maybe as time goes on everyone will. – **Bishop Earl Jackson**, National President, Samaritan Project.

Ronald Reagan is one of my heroes. Ronald Reagan was just absolutely *awesome*. I ran in 1982 as a Reagan Republican when just about everybody else backed away. I said Reagan was right and he was one of the greatest leaders this country has ever had. He renewed the country. He made us strong both economically and in terms of our foreign policy. – **Rep. John Kasich** (R-OH).

Ronald Reagan did for Republicans, in essence, what [Franklin D.] Roosevelt did for Democrats. He didn't change the *world* but he changed the way people *look* at the world. Prior to Ronald Reagan there really was a belief that you could spend all the money in the world and solve every problem. After Reagan both parties discussed policy in the context of whether they could afford it or whether money would work. The whole way they look at things has changed because of Reagan.

Now it falls to the *successors* of Reagan or of Roosevelt to *implement* the vision that *they* managed to imbed in their party and in the country. Roosevelt was fortunate – he had Harry Truman, who was, if anything, an overly loyal steward of his vision. Ronald Reagan was not so fortunate – he had George Bush, who wasn't quite sure what that vision was and didn't move it forward. The result is that we have a situation where, with the other party in control, we haven't made the same kind of gains that we should have.

But the Reagan Revolution – the Reagan way of looking at things – is still alive in most people's minds so that even the Democrats have to pay attention to all of that. When you listen to *Clinton* you hear a lot of *Reagan*-like rhetoric, because Reagan changed the way people look at the world. – **David Keene**, Chairman, American Conservative Union.

I thought Ronald Reagan was the greatest president of the 20th century. In this I apparently disagree with Newt Gingrich, who dared to suggest that *FDR* was – but I think he’s wrong about that. – **Ambassador Alan Keyes**, President, Declaration Foundation.

Ronald Reagan stands head and shoulders above any President who has served in my lifetime. He is a man of high integrity and moral excellence who elevated the position of the office of the President. It was my joy to work with him through Concerned Women for America during his entire eight years of service. He was willing to listen to our insights as much as we wanted to hear his. America was blessed to have a President such as Ronald Reagan. – **Beverly LaHaye**, President, Concerned Women for America.

Ronald Reagan’s presidency helped America regain its rightful leadership role in world politics – temporarily. – **Major F. Andy Messing, Jr.**, National Defense Council Foundation.

The Reagan Revolution represents one of the most prosperous and significant periods in world history. Not only were people able to make gains financially, but freedom again became a realistic hope throughout the world. Those who point to Ronald Reagan as a President who ushered in an era of greed are either ignorant of the period, have never traveled abroad or are just lying for political purposes. During the Reagan Administration key moral indicators such as the number of unwed mothers, the number of abortions performed, teen suicide and teen crime took the only positive turn that we have seen since Bible and Prayer were removed from the public schools in 1962-63.

What is more, Americans prospered and the world learned. In 1992, I spent quite a bit of time in Russia, and Ronald Reagan was a hero there. The Russians felt that without Reagan they would never have had a chance to enjoy any degree of freedom. Liberals in our present society could learn much from the Reagan Administration if they would examine his record with an open mind rather than with a political agenda. In short, I feel that Ronald Reagan will be judged by history as one of the United States’ greatest leaders. – **Dr. Terry Moffitt**, Chairman, Family Policy Network.

Ronald Reagan provided tremendous *inspiration* to this nation and brought it from a period of mere *mediocrity* into a period of *confidence* that *loved* being America once again. We need *another* Ronald Reagan. I don’t think that President Reagan was necessarily in control of day-to-day events. He didn’t *have* to be. He knew the *vision* that he wanted for America. He was that *trusted* father *figure* which Americans *loved* to have as a president. It’s something they simply don’t have right now – they have right now a *nightmare* as president. Bill Clinton’s been called many things. Cal Thomas recently called him “food poisoning.” That’s a good word. Ronald Reagan, I think, is a man who has inspired others to look on the optimistic side, to look to the *greatness* of America and what it *can* be. Not dwell on the *problems*, but dwell on the *answers*. – **Steve Myers**, Editor, *Exegesis*.

If it were not for Ronald Reagan, we’d all be speaking Russian now and drinking vodka. – **Marvin Olasky**, Editor, *World*.

Ronald Reagan will always be very much a man who represents the American *hero* to me. He’s a man who loved not by *politics* but he loved by *principle*. He’s a man who wasn’t afraid to do what was *right* even when it wasn’t *popular*. And he was a man who without hesitation let us know that it was *principle*, *principle*, *principle* over politics. – **Janet Parshall**, host of *Janet Parshall’s America*.

I suppose that the seminal event for my generation was the presidency of Ronald Reagan. In a very real sense, it was a Hollywood presidency, but not as the left has charged. It was replete with drama, and for those of us in Washington, plenty of intrigue as well. There were clearly identifiable good guys and bad

guys and the central theme of right versus wrong was presented in a way to make it appealing and comprehensible. The Reagan presidency, both in its conduct and its policy, served to illuminate the greatness of the American ideal. This is not to say that the nation is, or was, perfect. There can be no perfect in this life. However, the Reagan appeal to make America “the shining city on the hill,” the beacon for all the world to see, is awe inspiring and calls each of us to be and do our best because the whole world is watching. Many in my generation, on both the left and the right, have taken that admonition to heart and it is a central touchstone for their lives. – **Peter Roff**, Political Director, GOPAC

Ronald Reagan had the power to inspire ex-liberals like me to become conservatives. His leadership was largely responsible for defeating Communism – and for permanently discrediting its close cousin, modern liberalism. He had his shortcomings, but I wouldn’t hesitate to call him one of the greatest presidents America has ever had. He belongs on Mt. Rushmore. – **Jeffrey Rubin**, Editor, Conservative Book Club.

Ronald Reagan is the most influential man of the 20th century. He stopped the rise of Big Government, he restored our faith in America as the greatest country on earth, and he won the Cold War without firing a shot. – **Phyllis Schlafly**, President, Eagle Forum.

Well, I was fortunate to have been probably one of the younger people in the Reagan administration. I often refer to him as my first love. I also know that he wasn’t perfect. He was a man and men are not perfect. But he led the way and I hope that at some point there will emerge another man of character like Ronald Reagan, and with genuine courage – not someone who’s just a shyster like Bill Clinton who will give anything to anybody, say anything to anybody to try and placate them and make them happy. – **Andrea Sheldon**, Executive Director, Traditional Values Coalition.

While Ronald Reagan was far from perfect, I believe the moral and pro-family tone that he upheld during his term as president had far reaching effects. His statesman-like manner commanded respect from both his friends and foes. His pronouncement of the Soviet Union as the “evil empire” demonstrated his uncompromising courage to expose evil for what it was – evil. If our president today would remove himself from “political correctness” and address the evils of our time, it may be we would see more evil regimes fall. – **Rev. Steven Snyder**, President, International Christian Concern.

After all the historians and political scientists have shut down their speculations on the intellect and character of Ronald Reagan, it is exhilarating to discover that there remain mysteries in politics. The mystery is that though his intellect was limited and his character had a chink or two, he was one of the two or three great political leaders America has had in the 20th century. Far greater than any of his critics. – **R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.**, Editor, *American Spectator*.

Ronald Reagan’s greatest contribution as President was to turn around the perception that victory by the Soviet Union was inevitable. He did so militarily, diplomatically and philosophically. In doing so he emboldened the freedom fighters behind the iron curtain who, in turn, helped the evil empire to crumble. – **Paul M. Weyrich**, President, Free Congress Foundation.

Ronald Reagan exuded the leadership and confidence that is necessary to be an effective leader. He emerged at a time when not only America, but the world as well, was in need of such leadership. – **John W. Whitehead**, President, The Rutherford Institute.

Tributes: **Adkins**, e-mail interview, 12/31/98; **Ashcroft**, e-mail interview, 9/30/97; **Barnes**, interview, 1/21/99; **Bauer**, letter, 9/4/97; **Berthoud**, e-mail interview, 9/17/97; **Blair**, telephone interview, 11/19/97; **Cheney**, e-mail interview, 10/9/97; **Chenoweth**, interview, 1/21/99; **D’Souza**, e-mail interview, 9/24/97; **Faulner**, e-mail interview, 8/19/97; **Fitzpatrick**, e-mail interview, 12/1/97; **Grossman**, e-mail interview,

8/4/97; **Higgins**, interview, October 23, 2000; **Horowitz**, e-mail interview, 8/26/97; **Keene**, interview, 1/21/99; **Jackson**, interview, 1/21/99; **Kasich**, interview, 1/21/99; **Keyes**, interview, 10/31/98; **LaHaye**, e-mail interview, 11/26/97; **Messing**, e-mail interview, 9/29/97; **Moffitt**, e-mail interview, 1/8/99; **Myers**, interview, 10/31/98; **Olasky**, e-mail interview, 8/20/97; **Parshall**, telephone interview, 8/4/97; **Roff**, e-mail interview, 1/6/00; **Rubin**, e-mail interview, 8/15/97; **Schlafly**, e-mail interview, 8/28/97; **Sheldon**, interview, 1/21/99; **Snyder**, E-mail interview, 1/18/99; **Tyrrell**, e-mail interview, 8/28/97; **Weyrich**, e-mail interview, 8/27/97; **Whitehead**, e-mail interview, 9/3/97.

Personal Comments

Personally, I will be forever moved by Ronald Reagan's spirit, the beauty of his heart and the majesty of his soul. Enough cannot be said about our 40th President of the United States. Here we close this chapter with a moving speech revealing the Gipper's character and compassion in his darkest hour.

My fellow Americans,

I have recently been told that I am one of the millions of Americans who will be afflicted with Alzheimer's disease.

Upon learning this news, Nancy and I had to decide whether as private citizens we would keep this a private matter or whether we would make this news known in a public way. In the past, Nancy suffered from breast cancer and I had my cancer surgeries. We found through our open disclosures we were able to raise public awareness. We were happy that as a result, many more people underwent testing. They were treated in early stages and able to return to normal, healthy lives.

So now we feel it is important to share it with you. In opening our hearts, we hope this might promote greater awareness of this condition. Perhaps it will encourage a clearer understanding of the individuals and families who are affected by it.

At the moment I feel just fine. I intend to live the remainder of the years God gives me on this Earth doing the things I have always done. I will continue to share life's journey with my beloved Nancy and my family. I plan to enjoy the great outdoors and stay in touch with my friends and supporters.

Unfortunately, as Alzheimer's disease progresses, the family often bears a heavy burden. I only wish there was some way I could spare Nancy from this painful experience. When the time comes, I am confident that with your help she will face it with faith and courage.

In closing, let me thank you, the American people, for giving me the great honor of allowing me to serve as your president. When the Lord calls me home, whenever that day may be, I will leave with the greatest love for this country of ours and eternal optimism for its future.

I now begin the journey that will lead me into the sunset of my life. I know that for America there will always be a bright dawn ahead.

Thank you, my friends. May God always bless you.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

Bio – <http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/rr40.html>

At the end of his two terms in office, Ronald Reagan viewed with satisfaction the achievements of his innovative program known as the Reagan Revolution, which aimed to reinvigorate the American people and reduce their reliance upon Government. He felt he had fulfilled his campaign pledge of 1980 to restore "the great, confident roar of American progress and growth and optimism."

On February 6, 1911, Ronald Wilson Reagan was born to Nelle and John Reagan in Tampico, Illinois. He attended high school in nearby Dixon and then worked his way through Eureka College. There, he studied economics and sociology, played on the football team, and acted in school plays. Upon graduation, he became a radio sports announcer. A screen test in 1937 won him a contract in Hollywood. During the next two decades he appeared in 53 films.

He has two children, Maureen and Michael, from his first marriage, to actress Jane Wyman. In 1952 he married Nancy Davis, also an actress; their children are Patricia Ann and Ronald Prescott.

As president of the Screen Actors Guild, Reagan became embroiled in disputes over the issue of Communism in the film industry; his political views shifted from liberal to conservative. He toured the country as a television host, becoming a spokesman for conservatism. In 1966 he was elected Governor of California by a margin of a million votes; he was re-elected in 1970.

Ronald Reagan won the Republican Presidential nomination in 1980 and chose as his running mate former Texas Congressman and United Nations Ambassador George Bush. Voters troubled by inflation and by the year-long confinement of Americans in Iran swept the Republican ticket into office. Reagan won 489 electoral votes to 49 for President Jimmy Carter.

On January 20, 1981, Reagan took office. Only 69 days later he was shot by a would-be assassin, but quickly recovered and returned to duty. His grace and wit during the dangerous incident caused his popularity to soar.

Dealing skillfully with Congress, Reagan obtained legislation to stimulate economic growth, curb inflation, increase employment, and strengthen national defense. He embarked upon a course of cutting taxes and Government expenditures, refusing to deviate from it when the strengthening of defense forces led to a large deficit.

A renewal of national self-confidence by 1984 helped Reagan and Bush win a second term with an unprecedented number of electoral votes. Their victory turned away Democratic challengers Walter F. Mondale and Geraldine Ferraro.

In 1986 Reagan obtained an overhaul of the income tax code, which eliminated many deductions and exempted millions of people with low incomes. At the end of his administration, the Nation was enjoying its longest recorded period of peacetime prosperity without recession or depression.

In foreign policy, Reagan sought to achieve "peace through strength." During his two terms he increased defense spending 35 percent, but sought to improve relations with the Soviet Union. In dramatic meetings with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, he negotiated a treaty that would eliminate intermediate-range nuclear missiles. Reagan declared war against international terrorism, sending American bombers against Libya after evidence came out that Libya was involved in an attack on American soldiers in a West Berlin nightclub.

By ordering naval escorts in the Persian Gulf, he maintained the free flow of oil during the Iran-Iraq war. In keeping with the Reagan Doctrine, he gave support to anti- Communist insurgencies in Central America, Asia, and Africa.

Overall, the Reagan years saw a restoration of prosperity, and the goal of peace through strength seemed to be within grasp.

Endnotes:

- ¹ Daniel Borchers, "Ronald Reagan, American," *BrotherWatch*, November 1997, pg. 3.
- ² Daniel Borchers, "Reagan, the People's President," *BrotherWatch*, November 1997, pp. 9-10.
- ³ "Ronald Reagan surprises tourists," Nando.net, November 18, 1997.
- ⁴ Editorial, *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, October 26, 1997.