

Opinion



Free Press Viewpoint

President Reagan giant among leaders

The passing of former President Ronald Reagan marks the end of an era as surely as the fall of the Soviet Union.

Mr. Reagan came to prominence with “The Speech,” an accounting of the rise of communism and the threat it posed to freedom.

The Speech catapulted the ex-actor into prominence in Republican party circles and among conservatives around the nation.

That notoriety in turn led him to run for governor of California, where despite cries that he had no political experience, he won the race against a legendary veteran pol, Assembly Speaker Pat Brown.

Amassing a credible record as governor, Mr. Reagan became in turn a viable candidate on the national scene. He eventually won the Republican nomination and went on to win the presidency.

A creature of the Cold War, he was at home pushing a huge defense budget and at the same time talking with Soviet leaders. While some were surprised at the fall of communism, the end of the Soviet empire and the demise of the Berlin Wall, perhaps Mr. Reagan was not.

His detractors said he was too old, too slow-witted and too conservative. Though he campaigned for a balanced budget, he ran up some huge deficits.

But on his watch, the free nations did prevail and the Dark Empire faded away.

His contemporary, Margaret Thatcher, former prime minister of Britain and a fellow conservative, said of him, that Mr. Reagan has a better claim than anyone of having led the Free World to victory in the Cold War.

The Iron Maiden was one of his chief allies in that struggle, which she noted, ended in victory without a shot being fired.

Some said Mr. Reagan simply spent the Russians into bankruptcy. Others implied that the communist system, which once seemed so formidable, had rotted from within and would have fallen no matter who had been president.

He was the only union president — he led the Screen Actors Guild — ever to occupy the White House, though the AFL-CIO may not have supported him much.

In later years, the ex-president lived in increasing obscurity as his Alzheimer’s grew steadily worse.

From the vantage point of the next century, his name harkens to a simpler time when Americans knew who the enemy was and who the good guys were, a time when Republicans stood for strong defense and smaller government and movie heroes could realize the American dream.

For a “B” list actor, Ronald Reagan played pretty well. Few on the stage today could match his stature.

Steve Haynes
Nor’West Newspapers

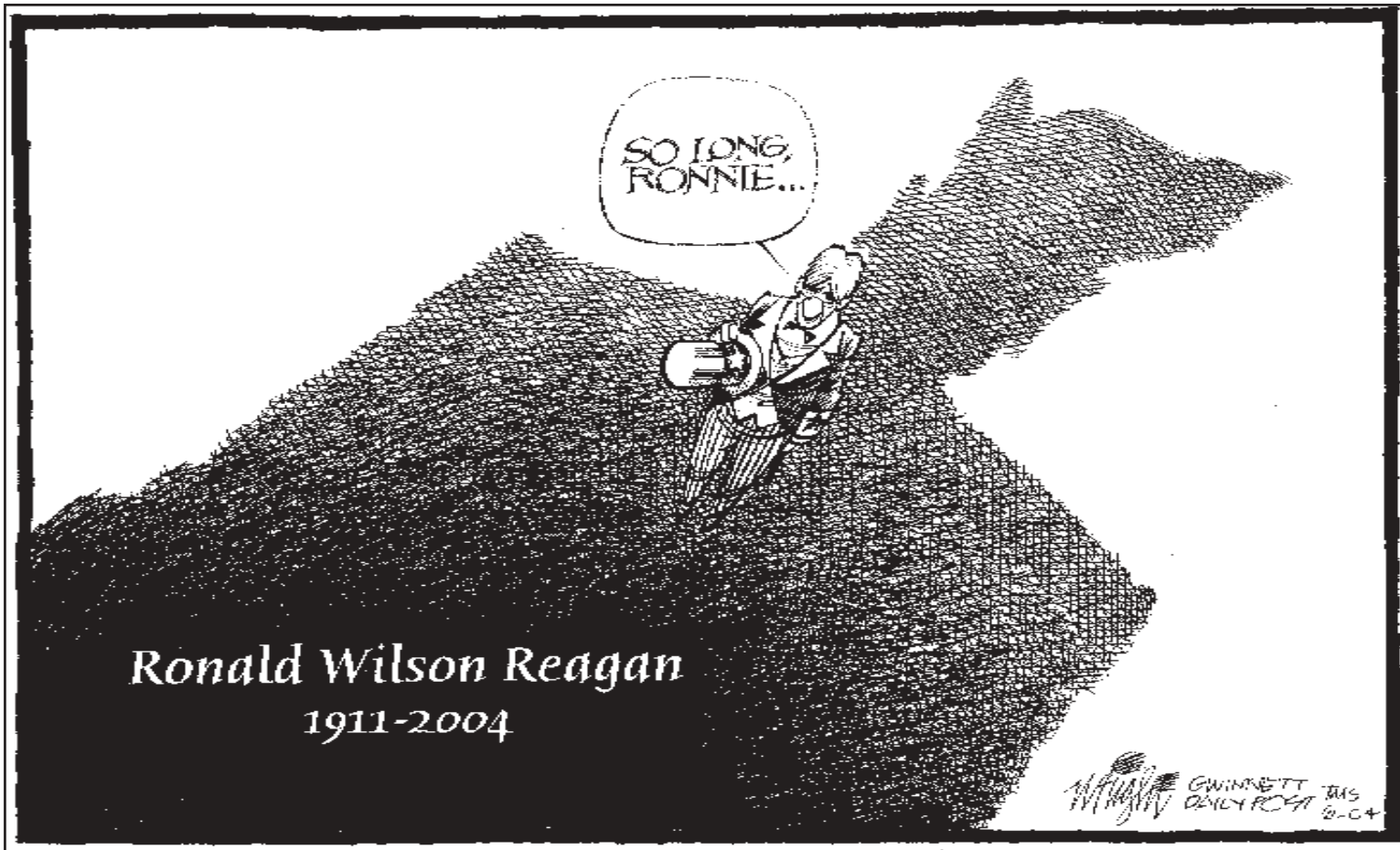
Where to write

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From Adam to exercise

A conversation between Adam and Eve (if they were around today):

Eve: “It’s been a long and trying day, dear, so could you maybe take me out to someplace expensive?”

Adam: “No problem at all, honey.” So he took her to a gas station.

IF YOU have any designs on seeking office remember that noon Thursday is the deadline to file for the Aug. 3 primary. We will have a complete rundown on who filed for what in Friday’s edition. There are races forming in our immediate breathing place — Thomas County. And there is still a need for precinct committeemen and women and township posts also in both the Republican and Democratic parties. Get involved, file!

IAM outraged at the irresponsibility of some of the television networks giving all that free air time to O.J. Simpson on the 10th anniversary of the murder of his wife, Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ron Goldman. Although acquitted by a jury in criminal court, he bled from the pocketbook in civil court. To listen to him talk, the murderer is still free (he’s right if you believe like I do). Kind of a shame that we seek out someone like O.J. and give him a pulpit on which to put his best spin on the anniversary of such a tragic event. That is an anniversary that should have come and gone...without fanfare. And what those interviews have done now is reopen the wounds, and the hate, and refanned the flames for a new war of words between Simpson and Nicole’s and Ron’s families. But that, my friends, is how they (the networks) do things. They care little about anything but ratings — and don’t let them tell you otherwise. They are trash television and, quite frankly, are a step or two lower than the supermarket tabs.

Thumbs down.

I, LIKE many of you, wanted so badly for



Tom Dreiling

• My Turn

Smarty Jones to win the Triple Crown. If I had been a betting person, however, I would not have bet on Smarty Jones to turn the trick. Just wasn’t in the cards. These special horses — Derby, Preakness, Belmont — like people, feel stress. They know their purpose. And the last race of the Triple Crown, is longer than the first two. And had the distances been equal, Smarty Jones would have won. I think. Back to the drawing boards.

827.

PRESIDENT Reagan always knew how to calm the turbulent waters. Political, that is. And in death he again was able to control the situation. President George W. Bush and Democratic presidential contender Sen. John F. Kerry have put holds on their campaign activity during this week of mourning the death of President Reagan, one of the truly nice guys in the political arena. And how nice it is to hear the tributes paid to President Reagan instead of the political hogwash.

JUST a reminder that there will be no regular mail delivery or retail service at Kansas post offices on Friday as the Postal Service and its employees honor the memory of former President Ronald Reagan. Friday has been declared a National Day of Mourning.

HOW old is the Grandpa in the following little story? He identifies with the terms in bold face.

Read on:

Aids were helpers in the principal’s office. **Chip** meant a piece of wood. **Hardware** was found in a hardware store. **Software** wasn’t even a word.

He came from the last generation to actually believe that a **woman needed a husband to have a baby**.

He belongs to the group they call **old and confused** and say there is a **generation gap**.

How old do you think the Grandpa in this little story is? If you have an old man in mind, you are in for a shock!!

He would be only 58.

LEAVE it up to Mella. Here, for the exercise conscious, is her weekly workout (see if you can keep up with this):

Monday — Beat around the bush, jump to conclusions, climb the walls, wade through the morning paper

Tuesday — Drag my heels, push my luck, make mountains out of mole hills, hit the nail on the head

Wednesday — Bend over backwards, jump on the band wagon, run around in circles

Thursday — Advise the President on how to run the country, toot my own horn, pull out all the stops, add fuel to the fire

Friday — Open a can of worms, put my foot in my mouth, start the ball rolling, go over the edge

Saturday — Pick up the pieces!!

Sunday — Kneel in prayer, bow my head in thanksgiving, uplift my hands in praise, hug someone and encourage them.

Whew! What a workout! It’s enough to tire one out for a long time!!

GOD Bless & have a WONDERFUL day!

HAVE a good evening!

Tom Dreiling is publisher of the Free Press. His column appears Wednesdays and Fridays.

Good-bye, Mr. President

As I write this on Saturday afternoon, the talking heads on television are telling us all about the life and legacy of Ronald Reagan, who has just died at home from complications of Alzheimer’s disease.

“The Great Communicator,” as he was called, had a profound impact on the course of our nation as well as the course of a high school senior from Great Bend who joined the Navy the same month he was elected.

It is sometimes forgotten that he had a rocky beginning in office. Stagflation, an unheard of combination of high inflation and a stagnant economy had the country in its grip. 52 Americans were in captivity in Tehran and our military was short on everything, including soldiers and sailors.

He survived an attempted assassination not only with stoicism, but also with humor, telling his wife that he forgot to duck and his doctors that he hoped they were all Republicans.

He frightened a few people who thought him a warmonger, but instead we found him to be a man of peace who was willing to fight to keep it. He confronted communism. I remember cheering as he said, at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall.”

I also remember watching the Berlin Wall come down in 1989 while I was still in the Navy. It was a momentous event for a young man who knew nothing of a world without the specter of global war between superpowers capable of destroying the entire human race many times



Jay Kelley

• Speaking MyMind

over.

There were military failures as well. Beirut changed all of us. But, so did the victory in Grenada.

For the first time in a number of years, the American people believed in the cause of freedom and were willing to sacrifice to make it come true.

It is the legacy of Ronald Reagan that countries like Poland, Latvia, Estonia and most of the rest of the old Eastern Bloc are now free. Recently, one of the young boys at church sang a little song he learned to help him remember the now free countries that used to make up the Soviet Union.

He will probably never understand the emotion that song brings to those of us who fought in the Cold War. Russia and her former satellites still have problems, but they are the problems of free people.

He was willing to send troops and ships to the far corners of the globe in defense of freedom, but he was also willing to sit down with the

leader of the Soviet Union and agree to unprecedented arms reductions.

He was able to comfort us when we endured tragedies such as the loss of the shuttle Columbia with all hands because he was mourning too and we knew it.

Cynical politicians could never understand the hold he had on the American people, but it was really very simple. He believed in us and he believed in the American dream.

He believed we could accomplish anything. His leadership didn’t stem from some great understanding of politics or economics.

Certainly, he surrounded himself with competent people who knew how to give good advice, but that wasn’t the secret of his greatness. He was first and foremost a servant of the people.

It was said he would never take his coat off in the Oval Office because to work in shirtsleeves would demean the presidency and that would demean the people.

It was that belief in America, her people and her principles which guided him through his life and made him great.

He said, “There is nothing wrong with America that together we can’t fix.”

He was one of a kind. We could use a few more like him now.

Good-bye, Mr. President.

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Doonesbury

• Gary Trudeau



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