

Freedom Matters

A News & Opinion Paper

Dane County, Wisconsin

Preserving Property Rights

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Our republic limits government to securing individual unalienable rights to life, liberty, and property. These rights are eroded by legislatures, and by courts complicit with them. To encourage wise jurists and journalists to help, Freedom Matters dedicates itself to the fight to restore that republic.

Freedom Mattered to Them

by Mike Byrne

Throughout the course of history certain Americans have carved for themselves a place in our memories. This month of October brought sad news to all Republicans as well as conservatives, moderates, and liberals. Two gentlemen passed away who were exemplary not only in their personal lives but also in their public lives. Lyman Anderson and William Hitzemann, Sr. were leading members of a generation that emerged from World War II and also a generation that presided over the most rapid technological advances in the history of our country and our world. Both men were avid students of American History and tried to live their public political lives according to principles they felt were supremely important to maintain. These principles were brought forth from medieval Europe and were central to the Revolutionary American thinking that was responsible for the creation of the United States of America. It was also these principles that, as Lincoln said, "endured through a great Civil War." This most precious thinking propelled America through two World Wars and has continued to keep us glued together to this very day.

Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and most of all, freedom, were words I heard both of them refer to many times. As a student of United States history myself, I have tremendous memories of discussions with both of them about America. Both of them were true gentlemen, scholars, intellects, and above all, leaders. They shared a common agricultural heritage that they were proud of. It was their deep appreciation of all things agricultural that caused them to be ready at a moment's notice to defend this vocation when modern political or social forces were oppressing it.

And it was not only an agricultural lifestyle they defended and protected, it was all things little and defenseless. Many, many times they rose to speak about the importance of keeping individuals safe from oppressive regulation and the strangulation and tyranny of the modern day political mob. Many times they were casting votes that were initially in the minority but ultimately, after great rhetoric, on the prevailing side. At nearly 80 years of age, not long before he passed away, Lyman Anderson, who spent over 40 years in public service, reminded me to never let go of my love of freedom or my duty to advance it. And William Hitzemann, who

towered over me not only intellectually but also physically, never failed to smile at me, touch my shoulder, and exhort me to stand leaning into the political wind as he did, because it was the right thing to do.

I can honestly say I can't remember a Republican party function in Dane County that I attended when these two men were not present. I believe we can all attest to the tremendous commitment and energy they brought to our meetings, our campaigns, our very presence on the political stage. And we also saw many times that they were respected and influential with even their political opponents.

Their leadership will be missed and so too the wry humor and razor sharp insights delivered with effective sarcasm that was not cynical. At the Dane County board meetings when they rose to speak everyone listened because you just knew it would be wise advice and important considerations. Sometimes they taught us in advance of a deliberation, such as when someone would say "what will Lyman or Bill say to this or that," or "that will never get past their smell test."

A great depression and two world wars incubated these political characters, seasoned their personalities, softened their sensitivities and hardened their principles. We will all miss them and frequently refer to their experiences.

Those of us to whom Mr. Hitzemann has passed the wand want to assure you that we will not give up this fight, not yield any ground willingly, and above all not give up our belief that freedom matters and will not be denied.

We know that throughout history tyranny has crept up on innocent men almost imperceptibly. We accept that freedom may only be desired when it is lost. We encourage you the readers to remind yourselves, your neighbors, your friends and family, and even strangers you meet that freedom is the American birthright, it is supreme and absolute, and without it this country will suffer.

Stay the course my friends, honor those who have died protecting this country in the battlefields, in the halls of government, in the courts, cafes and press rooms. Pick up the banner that our dear friends Bill and Lyman had to lay down. Never relent and never give up on their conviction that freedom matters.

Readers' Bulletin Board. e-mail us your comments. Include your name, for publication by *Freedom Matters*

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