



July 1, 2009

What Will Your Legacy Be?

I received the following message and was so struck by it that I called the author, Steve Harrison of Bradley Communications, to get his permission to pass it along to everyone I could.

“What will your legacy be?” is a very important question for you, for all adults, and for all of our local, state and federal political leaders. Please read this message and give it some serious thought.

Dear Friend,

Where were you last week when you got the news about Michael Jackson's passing?

Me?

I was listening to the radio while driving through rural Pennsylvania on Route 22 to Shartlesville.

I was on my way to a friend's farm for a relaxing three-day weekend with Laura and the kids.

It's strange, isn't it, that we never forget where we were when we first heard shocking news. People will often ask "Where were you when JFK was shot?" Or "Where were you when the planes hit?"

Death has a way of slapping us across the face and waking us up in a way we never forget.

When you hear the name "Michael Jackson," you probably have two different thoughts: "Incredible performer" and "Very strange person."

For better or worse, that is the legacy he left.

Personally, I tend to dwell more on the legacy of memorable songs, videos, and dance numbers that he left behind. Those are the things I continue to enjoy.

I really wish I'd had the chance to see him perform live when he was at his peak.

How about you? What kind of legacy are you leaving?

Lately, I've been asking myself that question more and more.

I was thinking about all the things I've failed to do as a father. But then on Father's Day, my 16-year-old son gave me a truly priceless gift: a three-page letter expressing his love and gratitude for me.

Things I thought I'd failed to teach him he'd somehow learned by observation.

But I still have a big list of unfinished business personally and professionally that I'm starting to tend to.

The Jackson story reminds me that the legacy we leave is a combination of both what we do and how we live our lives.

Everybody's talking about Jackson, Farrah, Ed McMahon and Billy Mays.

But very few people are thinking seriously about the legacy they will leave.

And even fewer are writing down goals and taking deliberate actions to achieve that end.

As a musician, Michael Jackson was surprisingly deliberate and proactive.

I learned the other day that while he was a member of the Jackson 5 he told several close friends that he wanted to break out on his own and become the biggest entertainer of all time.

Some will call that ego. But I prefer to think of it as simply an honest assessment of the gifts he'd been given and a compelling vision for his life and what he might be able to do with those gifts.

So he decided to anger his brothers and leave the Jackson 5. He began working with Quincy Jones. And of course the result was "Thriller," the biggest-selling album of all time!

As a singer, dancer, and songwriter, Jackson gave us all an incredible gift worthy of the endless replays that have been taking place on television and radio.

But here's my question: What if he had never decided to pursue his dream? What if he had never left the Jackson 5?

What if he had listened to his family, friends, and even all the well-intentioned logical voices that said, "Don't be so risky. Don't be so selfish. Who are you to think you can be phenomenally successful on your own?"

What kind of legacy would he have left then?

We'd probably barely remember him.

More importantly, what kind of legacy will you leave if you don't take action to make your dreams come true?

As we hear about Farrah, Ed McMahon, Billy Mays, and even those closer to us who have passed away recently, we're reminded that life is short.

Oliver Wendall Holmes said, "Most people go to their graves with their music still inside them."

What is the thing you know deep down you should do, but you've been too busy, lazy or scared to do?

Whatever it is, get started today.

It might be writing a new book, taking a trip, or doing some kind of community service. It might be mentoring someone, launching a new business, or healing a broken relationship.

Whatever it is, get started today.

It's painfully obvious that tomorrow may be too late.

All the Best,
Steve Harrison
Bradley Communications Corp.
PO Box 360, Broomall, PA 19008

Comment

Although I never really thought about it in terms of a personal legacy, I started The Real State of the Union because I am very concerned about the legacy we are leaving our children and grandchildren.

If we don't address the fundamental problems with our economy, our society, and our government, our children and grandchildren will not have the same opportunities we had when we were growing up.

This is a terrible legacy to leave future generations and I am doing what I can to help reverse our economic decline, reclaim our democracy and get our country back on the path of fulfilling its promise.

Join me in this effort by passing this message along to your friends and business associates.

It should be painfully obvious that tomorrow may be too late for everyone, so please do it today.

Thought for Today

As you celebrate Independence Day, think about how you would rate our federal democracy on a scale of 0-10 considering the following criteria: (1) being well-informed about what your government is doing and its finances; (2) having the right to vote and having your vote count; (3) being well-informed about what candidates will try to do if they are elected; (4) the extent of citizen involvement in government; and (5) how well our government serves the interests of its citizens and our country as opposed to serving the interests of politicians and their supporters.

Important Notes

- The next issue will be devoted to essential facts about healthcare. Don't miss ***Stop the Healthcare Madness!***
- Previous reports are available at http://www.rstu.org/economy_and_you/report.

***Work hard, play hard, help someone who needs it,
and remember to count the day lost that you don't learn something new.***

Regards,
Will Kaydos

The Real State of the Union, LLC **Save your country! Save your job!** www.rstu.org

7204 Penny Road, Raleigh, NC 27606 Office: 919-851-9679 Email: wkaydos@rstu.org