





# Profiles in Courage



**COURAGE IN POLITICS**

**THE TIME AND THE PLACE**

**THE MEANING OF COURAGE**



# Courage in Politics



## I CAN FORGET THAT I AM CALLED A TRAITOR

- “Necessity compels me to speak truth rather than pleasing things. I should indeed like to please you; but I prefer to save you, whatever your attitude toward me.” - Daniel Webster
- “I shall stand by The Union with absolute disregard of personal consequences. What are personal consequences in comparison with the good or evil, which may befall a great country in a crisis like this? Let the consequences be with them will, I am careless. No man could suffer too much, and no man can fall too soon, if he suffer or if he fall in defense of the liberties and Constitution of this country.” - Daniel Webster
- There is one force in American politics more powerful than money, influence or spin: Conscience.

## I LOOKED DOWN INTO MY OPEN GRAVE

- “There is no such thing as inevitable war. If war comes it will be from failure of human wisdom.” - Bonar Law
- Only the strength in progress and peaceful change that come from independent judgment and individual ideas, can enable us to surpass that foreign ideology that fears free thought more than it fears hydrogen bombs.
- Great crises produce great men, and great deeds of courage.
- “I would rather go down in my political grave with a clear conscience than ride in the chariot victory as a congressional stool pigeon, the slave, the servant, or the vessel of any man, whether he be the owner and manager of a legislative menagerie or the ruler of the great nation. I would rather lie in the silent grave, remembered by both friends and enemies as one who remained true to his faith and who never faulted in what he believed to be his duty, than to still live, old and aged, lacking the confidence of both factions.” - George Norris

# Courage in Politics



## THE MAGISTRATE IS THE SERVANT NOT OF THE PEOPLE BUT OF HIS GOD

- “If the senator allows himself to be governed by the opinions of his friends at home, however devoted he may be to them or they to him, he throws away all the rich results from the previous preparation and study, and simply becomes a commonplace exponent of those popular sentiments, which may change in a few days. Such a course will dwarf any man’s statesmanship and his vote would be simply considered as an echo of current opinion, not the result of mature deliberations.” - Lucius Lamar
- The liberty of this country and it’s great interest will never be secure if it’s public men become mere menials to do the biddings of their constituents instead of being representatives in the true sense of the word, looking to the lasting prosperity in future interest of the whole country.
- “I shall carry with me into retirement the principles which I brought with me into public life, and by the surrender of the high station to which I was called by the voice of the people Virginia, I shall set an example to my children which shall teach them to regard as nothing any position or office which must be attained or held at the sacrifice of honor.” - John Tyler
- It is then that his belief in the rightness of his own course enables him to act on his best judgment according to his conscience.

## I DESPISE THE BUBBLE POPULARITY

- In the days ahead, only the very courageous will be able to take the hard unpopular decisions necessary for our survival in the struggle with a powerful enemy – an enemy with leaders who need give little thought to the popularity of their course, who need little tribute to the public opinion they themselves manipulate, and who may force, without fear of retaliation of the polls, their citizens to sacrifice present laughter for future glory.
- “I have no desire to hold public office if I’m expected blindly to follow in my official actions the dictation of a newspaper combination.” - George Norris



# The Time and The Place



## LIBERTY OF THE INDIVIDUAL IS TO THINK HIS OWN THOUGHTS

- “What happens to the country, to the world, depends on what we do with what others have left us.” - Robert Kennedy
- Intolerance of ideas brings death.
- “It is our duty as patriots to cast out this un-American doctrine and rebuke those who have raised the torch of intolerance. All believers of any faith can unite and go forward in our political work to bring about the maximum amount of happiness for our people.” - George Norris
- “If a majority can exclude the whole or part of the minority because it deems the political views entertained by them hurtful, then free government is at an end.” - Charles Evans Hughes
- Let us not be blind to our differences – but let us direct attention to our common interests into the means by which those differences can be resolved.

## TODAY I MUST BE TRUE OR FALSE

- Bear the burden of a long twilight struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself. All of this will not be finished in the first 100 days. Nor will it be finished in the first 1000 days, nor in the life of this administration, nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But let us begin.
- “Whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passions, they cannot alter the stated facts and evidence. The law will not bend to uncertain wishes, imagination and wanton tempers of men.” - John Adams
- It is when the politician loves neither the public nor himself, or when his love for himself is limited and is satisfied with the trappings of office, that the public interest is badly served.

# The Meaning of Courage



## ONE MAN WITH COURAGE MAKES A MAJORITY

- “Each one of us must find a gift we have to give.” - Caroline Kennedy
- “The hottest places in hell are reserved for those who, in time of great moral crisis, maintain their neutrality.” - Dante
- “The courage we desire and prize is not the courage to die decently but to live manfully.” - Thomas Carlyle
- The courage of life is often a less dramatic spectacle than the courage of a final moment; but it is no less magnificent mixture of triumph and tragedy.
- “He may live long, he may do much, but he can never exceed what he does this day.” - Edmund Burke

## TRUTH IS OMNIPOTENT AND PUBLIC JUSTICE CERTAIN

- This is a book about the most admirable of human virtues – courage. “Grace under pressure” as Ernest Hemingway defined.
- Politics merely furnishes one arena which imposes special tests of courage.
- We all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children’s future, and we are all mortal.
- “There are few things wholly evil or wholly good. Almost everything, especially of government policy, is an inseparable compound of the two, so that our best judgment of the preponderance between them is continually demanded.” - Abraham Lincoln
- “It happens very often that one tries to do some things and fails. He feels discouraged, yet he may discover years afterward that the very effort he made was a reason why somebody else took it up and succeeded. I really believe that whatever use I have been to progressive civilization has been accomplished in the things I failed to do rather than in the things I actually did do.” - George Norris



# The Meaning of Courage



## DEMOCRACY

- In a democracy, every citizen, regardless of his interest in politics, holds office; everyone of us is in a position of responsibility; and in the final analysis, the kind of government we get depends upon how we fulfill those responsibilities.
- We, the people, are the boss, and we will get the kind of political leadership, be good or bad, that we demand and deserve.
- Freedom has many difficulties and democracy is not perfect, but we have never had to put up a wall to keep our people in.
- The true democracy, living and growing and inspiring, puts its faith in the people – faith that the people will not simply like a man who will represent their views ably and fully, but also like a man who will exercise their conscientious judgment – faith that the people will not condemn those who use devotion to principles that leads them to unpopular courses, but will reward courage, respect honor and ultimately recognize right.

## THE UNIVERSAL VIRTUE

- Courage, the universal virtue, is comprehended by us all.
- It is when his regard for himself is so high that his own self-respect demands he follow the path of courage and conscious that all benefit.
- To be courageous, requires no exceptional qualifications, no magic formula, no special combination of time, place in circumstance. It is an opportunity that sooner or later is presented to us all.
- In whatever arena of life one may meet the challenge of courage, each man must decide for himself the course he will follow.
- The stories of past courage can define that ingredient – they can teach, they can offer help, they can provide inspiration. But they cannot supply courage itself. For this each man must look into his own soul.

