

Henry Hyde – A Force of Nature for Good

BY Tim Goeglein

Editor's note. The following are remarks delivered at the Proudly Pro-Life Awards Dinner. Mr. Goeglein is special assistant to President George W. Bush

Thank you. This is always one of the best nights in Washington because you are always in the presence of people who know that their vocation is also their avocation. Although we are in different foxholes, we are all part of the culture of life mission.

Henry Hyde has been a force of nature for good for a very long time. I thought of this just yesterday when I was reading a copy of a speech that had been delivered in New York City 50 years ago. The person who was delivering the speech was telling the story of the great Russian novelist, Leo Tolstoy, going to the furthest reaches of Russia, the furthest reaches in a country spanning 11 time zones.

He went in to the company of a tribe of people whom he had thought were completely unaware of Western history. One of the leaders of the tribe said to the great Leo Tolstoy, who, by the way, had no idea who Tolstoy was, "Tell us of great men." Tolstoy thought this was a remarkable opportunity. He began with Alexander the Great. (I have to say, being Macedonian, I was proud to read this story.)

Tolstoy began to tell of Napoleon. But before he could get his words out, there was a person who was sitting in the back of this troupe. She said, "Tell us of Lincoln. Have you heard of Lincoln?" And Tolstoy thought, "Alexander the Great, Napoleon Bonaparte. All this way, and they've heard of Abraham Lincoln!"

I had a similar situation when I traveled to Vietnam. I was there on Palm Sunday in Saigon. I was privileged to experience what Leo Tolstoy must have experienced. Because, Congressman Hyde, I had a woman come up to me and the only American who she wanted to know about was "a man called Henry Hyde. Have you heard of him?"

So it's good that we're here tonight to praise famous men. I think it is fair to say that you are to the right to life movement what William Wilberforce was to the anti-slavery movement.

It is a very important thing that we are surrounded by heroes and noble men, that we take the opportunity like we do tonight, to truly raise our glasses and voices to a truly great man. It is humbling to be in your presence. In a city like Washington, D.C., I'm sure that can be an overstated statement.

When a person is in the presence of greatness, I think it is important to stand down, and realize that the contribution of Henry Hyde is unparalleled.

As I was coming into the hotel tonight, a man asked me, "Why do you think that Henry Hyde is gifted with such a silver tongue?" I said I think it's possible that the Lord himself knew that he was going to bring into existence a man who would eloquently and unapologetically and consistently speak up for those who could not speak for themselves. So, it's true, that in the early days of the pro-life movement—and I know I say this is the presence of David O'Steen and Darla St. Martin and Wanda Franz and so many who were in that very small group like you—that you were few and you were right and history will vindicate your achievement.

So let me close by saying that when you speak for the least of these, you are speaking for the Greatest One of all.

On behalf of President George W. Bush and all of us in the Bush-Cheney Administration, with the historians we

raise a glass to say that you, Henry Hyde, among all of the men or women who have ever in the history of our constitutional republic served in the great House of Representatives, that you truly are one of the greatest.

God bless Henry Hyde and God Bless the United States of America. Thank you so much.