

All-District! The All-District girls basketball team for District 11-1A was named recently and included young ladies from Bronte, Robert Lee, and Blackwell. Madison Solis (top left photo), a senior at Blackwell High School, was named the MVP. Braylee Hood (top right photo), a sophomore at Robert Lee High School, earned the title of Offensive Player of the Year. Bronte High School senior E'lexia Davis (bottom right photo) and Robert Lee High School sophomore (bottom left photo) earned places on the All-District Second Team.



The Inheritance of Greatness

by James M. Decker

“A nation’s greatness lies in its possibility of achievement in the present, and nothing helps it more than the consciousness of achievement in the past.” - Theodore Roosevelt, “American Ideals: And Other Essays, Social and Political”

Right now, America needs calm and assertive leadership on every level—national, state, and local. Our society is currently grappling with the worldwide coronavirus pandemic and its wide-ranging effects on our lives. We’re tired of talking about it, but when it touches every aspect of our daily affairs - closing schools, postponing events and every single sport in America, disrupting businesses nationwide - it is impossible to avoid the discussion. We’re dealing with a lot of unnecessary fears, but we’re also facing numerous legitimate concerns.

Accordingly, we need leaders who can and will respond capably to the very real challenges looming for our economy, our healthcare infrastructure, and the fabric of our society. We need our leaders who will cut through the unnecessary static, speak truth to legitimate risks, and both uplift and unify our people.

When in doubt, I turn to Theodore Roosevelt. In the 1890s, he penned a series of essays on good governance and effective political leadership. They were published as the aforementioned “American Ideals” in 1897 and these timeless essays resonate incredibly well at this current juncture in our history. Roosevelt wrote that no single quality or virtue would be enough to guarantee a leader’s success. He saw vigor, honesty, and common sense as utmost necessities. He viewed that leaders must be simultaneously thoughtful and people of action. These ideals led Roosevelt to two men that he viewed as the greatest of all leaders: George Washington and Abraham

Lincoln.

Roosevelt wrote that every great nation owed its greatness to the men who not only won its wars and wrote its laws, but also who added to “the immense but indefinable moral influence produced by their deeds and words themselves upon their national character.” Roosevelt wrote that Washington made our nation and Lincoln saved our nation, but their influence was even deeper than those incalculable contributions.

Roosevelt looked at the courage of Washington in leading the Continental Army against dire odds and his incredible statesmanship as President. Roosevelt looked at the magnificent speeches of Lincoln, which held together a people who were fraying at the seams. In Washington and

Lincoln, Roosevelt two leaders who stirred people “towards things higher and nobler which can never be bestowed by the enjoyment of mere material prosperity.” Roosevelt observed that later generations inherited a nation from these men, but we also inherited “all that is best and highest in their characters and in their lives.”

So it is today. Our leaders on every level have inherited the mantle of Washington and Lincoln. Over the generations, some like Theodore Roosevelt capably filled the shoes of Washington and Lincoln. Others tried valiantly but fell short for one reason or another. Others pursued the wrong goals and failed both the people and the inheritance of Washington and Lincoln. I’m not here to grade our current leaders, but I

am here to tell you that our current generations are just as capable as Roosevelt.

As we get older, it’s easy to lament the resolve of younger generations. I hear it all the time. But remember: the “Greatest Generation” only became the greatest when faced with the Great Depression and World War 2. Plenty of frontier-era Americans doubted whether

subsequent generations would be tough enough to face the challenges of the future. The Greatest Generation proved them wrong. Every generation is doubted the same way and every generation is equally capable of facing its challenges.

Our country is gripped by coronavirus right now, but it is far from our only challenge.

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