

Charting the Trump legacy

As Donald Trump fights for his political life and for a second Presidential term it's incumbent upon all of us who support him to look back over these last four years and examine what his Presidency has meant for America and for all Americans.

Normally, we talk about legacies as something we leave behind us, but not all legacies are viewed in the past tense or are seen in life's rear view mirror. Legacies can be living things that affect us in the here and now, and such is the Trump legacy. Four years ago, on a cold November night in 2016, Americans tapped the real estate mogul and businessman to be our 45th President, something half of the country was vehemently against while 62 million others rejoiced in. I was one of those 62 million that proudly cast my vote for a non-politician - a third way candidate - as I and the co-author of my book, "Breaking Republican," called him.

It was time to replace traditional Washington-bred politicians with a man who could, as Trump put it, "drain the (DC) swamp" and release us from the curse of such professional politicians. A larger than life, and often outlandish figure, Trump was controversial and inspired a different kind of 'hope and change' that characterized the then sitting President. Many Americans had simply had enough of eight years of Barack Obama's repeated attempts at social engineering and his echo chamber of empty rhetoric. His words failed to solve America's problems or meet her challenges. Enter a deal-maker, a disrupter, a manager with a real resume that we could get our arms around.

He didn't speak like a politician; in fact, he spoke in short often repetitive sentences that were frequently peppered with hyperbole and exaggerations. Such was the Trump lingo. His appeal harkened back to Ronald Reagan's time when America was portrayed as a shining city on a hill, and while his rhetoric was considered sophomoric to many, it resonated with millions of us who hungered and thirsted for a leader that would return America to a place where our friends respected us and our enemies feared us. It was a simple message. Stand with us and we will succeed, together. Oppose us and you will surely regret it.

He promised us a freer America, a safer America, a peaceful America, free from foreign wars, a stronger military, a more prosperous America, and an America that would stand FOR something, like the promises and protection offered to us in the Bill of Rights and the Constitution. He told us that we should be proud of our accomplishments not that we didn't build or achieve them like his predecessor did. The contrast with the 'wordsmith-in-chief' was bold and unmistakable as was his respect for us Conservatives which was a far cry from his opponent who called us a 'basket of deplorables.'

The odds-makers told us he couldn't win and the entrenched DC establishment told us he *shouldn't win*...but, thankfully, he did. From the outset, he was opposed by all the special interests who (justifiably) feared he would dilute their power and return it to the people. Massive protests were organized from the very day of his inauguration and millions of dollars poured in to special interest groups to oppose him at every turn. The media mounted a concerted and continuing effort to destabilize his presidency and attack him personally, but he countered them by 'going public' on social media and soon began to call out their tactics and their fake news reporting. They kept up the pressure and together with the Congress accused him of being a 'Russian agent,' a puppet of Vladimir Putin. The drumbeat continued until they finally voted, along party lines, to impeach him, but he remained undeterred and worked to reverse many of the failed policies of the Obama/Biden years.

His accomplishments were many and covered all aspects of American life like making us energy independent by reversing onerous regulations and stimulating investments in key industries; by exiting bad trade deals and forging better ones; by slapping tariffs on international cheaters; by strengthening our southern border and offering immigration solutions.

His actions reduced unemployment to historically low levels and by doing provided new opportunities to America's minorities and women. All the while working on our behalf, Congressional leaders like the Speaker of the House did everything in its (and her) power to stymie his efforts. Their disrespect for him was unabashed and vocal AND incessant. They ridiculed him, called him a racist and a misogynist, a homophobe and Islamaphobe, a traitor, a buffoon and finally, during the Presidential debate a few short weeks ago, an ex-vice-President who could soon be President called him a clown and a fool and told him to 'just shut up.' The Democrats' disdain knew no boundaries, and their anger was reaching a fever pitch which they happily showed the rest of us at every turn. Even his wife was ridiculed for her accent. Had he owned a dog, I'm sure that it, too, would have been the subject of their ire.

One of Mr. Trump's foremost accomplishments that has served to burnish his legacy was appointing three outstanding Constitutionals to the Supreme Court and over 200 other fair-minded judges to lower courts. His opponents obstructed them, too, and used the same kind of sleazy underhanded tactics to destroy their reputations - the same ones they had employed on Trump, himself. Fortunately, for all of us, they failed.

It is said that "a giant leaves big footprints," and that "you can't make an omelet without breaking a few eggs." No one would argue that at times, Mr. Trump was his own worst enemy due to his brash and sometimes crude comments, but we, his supporters, forgave him. Why? Because he was a mortal man with failings just like all of us. We also forgave him because he produced for us, and if there's one thing that Americans respect it is results.

As we see his hope of winning a second term now in imminent danger as he fights for his political life, we must remember that in politics everyone will lose at some point. There are no exceptions, and Trump is no different. While he might well lose this battle to a man who has never managed anything more than his own checkbook and who has had a 47-year history of dubious political value, we must take stock of what he has given us these past four years. He helped us re-gain our self-respect, our dignity and our belief in ourselves and in the greatness that is inextricably intertwined in the American dream.

He has also showed us by his willingness to fight for what he believes in - even when that fight seems hopeless like it is this election week - that giving up or giving in is not an option nor should we should embrace it, especially when it comes to America's survival. Thank you, Donald Trump for everything you've done and for the sacrifices you've made on our behalf. We're in your debt.

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