



The Bunkhouse Chronicle

Craig Rullman
Columnist

To infinity

A man's life is certainly more than his curriculum vitae, but the late John Glenn's is nevertheless jaw-dropping and worthy of reflection.

Fifty-nine combat missions in World War II; 63 more in Korea, where he had three aerial kills in the last nine days of the war, and where baseball legend Ted Williams was his wingman. Test pilot. First transcontinental supersonic flight. First American to orbit the earth. A return to space at the age of 77, while still a sitting Senator, to make himself the subject of experiments on the elderly in space.

I suspect, given a chance, Glenn would tell us that his highest achievement was none of those things. I think Glenn would tell us it was marriage to Annie, his high school sweetheart, for 73 years. They were a tough

and inseparable pair. Annie famously suffered from a debilitating stutter, but never gave up to despair, and after enrolling in an intense three-week school, managed to overcome her disability. Glenn wrote that among her first words to him were: "John, I've wanted to tell you this for years. Pick up your socks."

But there is more. As a senator, Glenn was known for his tireless efforts in nuclear non-proliferation, and the cleanup of nuclear waste facilities. He had nine honorary doctorates; six Distinguished Flying Crosses; 18 Air Medals; and the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Glenn was a famously devout Presbyterian, but his experience in space and as a scientist created in him a broad perspective. He saw no conflict between evolution and a belief in God, and last year told the Associated Press he believed evolution should be taught in schools.

"I don't see that I'm any less religious by the fact that I can appreciate the fact that science just records that we change with evolution and time, and that's a fact. It doesn't mean it's less wondrous and it doesn't mean that there can't be some power greater than any of us that has been behind and is behind whatever is going on."

That's a wonderfully nuanced view that I would

humbly submit we could use a lot more of.

And Glenn will always be known for a speech he gave during the Ohio Democrat Senate primaries in 1974. He was running against Howard Metzenbaum, a self-made millionaire and up-from-the-bootstraps businessman. It was a close race, and Metzenbaum attempted to capitalize on anti-Vietnam War sentiment by deriding Glenn as "The Colonel," and by suggesting to the electorate that Glenn was unqualified because he had never made a payroll.

A few weeks later, at the Cleveland City Club, Glenn had his opportunity to rebut Metzenbaum's low political blows, and turned it into one of the finer examples of a natural leader speaking truth to power. Glenn had been afforded time to write and rehearse his response, and delivered it with exquisite Mid-western ferocity.

"The Colonel" stood at the lectern in front of a packed house, with Metzenbaum sitting at his right elbow. He said: "Howard, I can't believe you said I have never held a job."

"I served 23 years in the United States Marine Corps. I served through two wars. I flew 149 missions. My plane was hit by anti-aircraft fire on twelve different occasions. I was in the space program. It wasn't my check-book; it was my life on the line. It was not a nine-to-five

job where I took time off to take the daily cash receipts to the bank.

"I ask you to go with me, as I went the other day, to a veterans hospital and look those men, with their mangled bodies, in the eye and tell them they didn't hold a job. You go with me to any gold-star mother and you look her in the eye and tell her that her son did not hold a job."

"You go with me to the space program, and go as I have gone to the widows and orphans of Ed White and Gus Grissom and Roger Chaffee, and you look those kids in the eye and tell them that their dad didn't hold a job."

"You go with me on Memorial Day coming up and you stand in Arlington National Cemetery, where I have more friends than I'd like to remember, and you watch those waving flags. You stand there, and you think about this nation, and you tell me that those people didn't have a job."

"I'll tell you, Howard

Metzenbaum, you should be on your knees every day of your life thanking God that there were some men — some men — who held a job. And they required a dedication to purpose and a love of country and a dedication to duty that was more important than life itself. And their self-sacrifice is what made this country possible.

"I have held a job, Howard!"

Glenn received a 22-second standing ovation, went on to win the primary by 90,000 votes, and was eventually elected to the Senate carrying all 88 Ohio counties. He served four consecutive terms.

John Glenn's life was so remarkably well-lived that it seems almost disrespectful to give it such short-shrift in this column. But we are living through interesting times, the air is full of slings and arrows, and sometimes it is nice to just sit back and admire the life and career of a truly remarkable and selfless man.

Bend man charged with indecent exposure

BEND (AP) — A 32-year-old Bend man is under arrest on indecent exposure charges.

KTVZ-TV reports that police say David Walker Littlehale was booked into the Deschutes County Jail on five counts of first-degree indecent exposure.

Bail was set at \$50,000.

Police say Littlehale exposed himself to women and girls on at least five occasions around Bend in the past seven months. The most recent incident was on Wednesday at a video store.

Police used security footage from several stores to identify Littlehale as the suspect.

The sites included the Regroup Thrift Store, Blockbuster Video and a Dollar Tree store.

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