

April 23, 2007

RANDOM THOUGHTS ON RANDOM SUBJECTS

Here is a suggestion for all the self-important talking heads on television and newspaper editorial writers across the country: Take the time and space that have been devoted to harrumphing about Don Imus and blabbering over Anna Nicole Smith and spend it on Professor Liviu Librescu, the 76-year-old Virginia Tech professor who gave his life blocking that nutball from entering his classroom and thereby sparing even more young lives. Professor Librescu was an Israeli who survived the Holocaust and later escaped from Communist Romania. Both President Bush and Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue paid this hero homage, as well they should. However, look for the story of his bravery to die away quickly as special-interest groups use the Virginia Tech massacre as political fodder and the media get back to banalities. ...

One of the people most influential in my career died recently. Dr. Worth McDougald was my broadcast professor at the Grady College of Journalism at the University of Georgia, and a good man. Dr. Mac remained my friend long after graduation. I treasured our friendship and I will miss him. ...

On a more pleasant note, you make this job very rewarding at times. I received a huge amount of mail regarding my trip to Normandy with grandson Thomas. The letters ranged from inspiring to emotional as you told me about the experiences of your loved ones who participated in World War II. You confirmed once again that theirs was the Greatest Generation. Your letters are being reproduced and will be given to Thomas, with the hope that he will read and re-read them over the years and remember from whence come his freedoms. Thank you. ...

I wonder if the governor and House leaders know how ridiculous they look posturing over their disagreements with the state's midyear budget. Typical was the statement by Gov. Perdue's mouthpiece, Dan McLagan, ridiculing the House of Representatives' vote to override the governor's veto. Said McLagan, "It looks like a sixth-grade mock Legislature voting on fake laws. While they are at it, maybe they will vote to extend recess and eliminate homework." An angry Speaker Glenn Richardson responded: "I'm sad the governor has resorted not just to nursery rhymes, but he's acting like a child. It's a sad day for this governor to show his backside like this." I think the whole crowd is headed for the time-out chair if they don't grow up. ...

Meanwhile, Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle keeps looking better and better. He has run political rings around the House of Representatives in this session, brought the state Senate into some semblance of order, stayed out of all the name-calling and, barring something unforeseen, could be our next governor. Not bad for a guy who was supposed to have served as cannon fodder for Ralph Reed in the last election. ...

Three times in my life I have acted like a giddy teenager when meeting one of my personal heroes. The first time was when I introduced myself to former Brunswick state representative Charles Gowen, whom I had long admired from afar. The second was when I met Glen Davis and Doc Blanchard, two Heisman Trophy winners who played in the same backfield at Army in the 1940s. The third time was a couple of weeks ago when I spotted Jessie Dixon standing in the lobby before a Gaither Homecoming gospel concert at the Gwinnett Arena. If you are not aware of Jessie Dixon, you have missed the coolest gospel singer this side of heaven. The man can lift you off the ground with his singing. Charles Gowen. Glen Davis and Doc Blanchard. Jessie Dixon. My cup runneth over. ...

Finally, I recently referred to Ted Kennedy as a "fat tub of lard." That crack rankled a couple of readers, but it really made pigs mad. Pigs think giving their lives to become a tub of lard is a noble calling. They told me that associating them with Fat Albert was very hurtful. I should have thought of that. Sometimes I can be so insensitive.