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OUR VIEW

Ron Richard: A life of public service

A life can be measured in a lot of ways, but in the end the measuring stick that means the most is service. For all of his honors and accolades, some of which we'll get to in a minute, Ron Richard's was a life of service — service to people of Joplin, the region, and the state of Missouri.

Decades of service.

The announcement of his death Friday was heart-rending for many of us in Southwest Missouri who knew him as a man of honesty and integrity.



Ron Richard

Nick Myers, chairman of the state Republican Party and a longtime leader of Newton County Republicans, noted Ron's role in the party, but spoke for a lot of us when he added: "... but he transcends the party."

Indeed.

That was obvious from the tributes that poured in from Democrats as well as his fellow Republicans.

Republican Gov. Mike Parson said: "Missouri has lost a strong leader and dedicated public servant with the passing of Ron Richard."

Former Gov. Jay Nixon, a Democrat, said: "Honest and tough can still get you a long way in America. Ron Richard got to the pinnacle of power living that way. A leader for the ages."

Richard's greatest public achievement was political, a former Joplin mayor who became the only lawmaker in Missouri history to be elected both House speaker and Senate president pro tem.

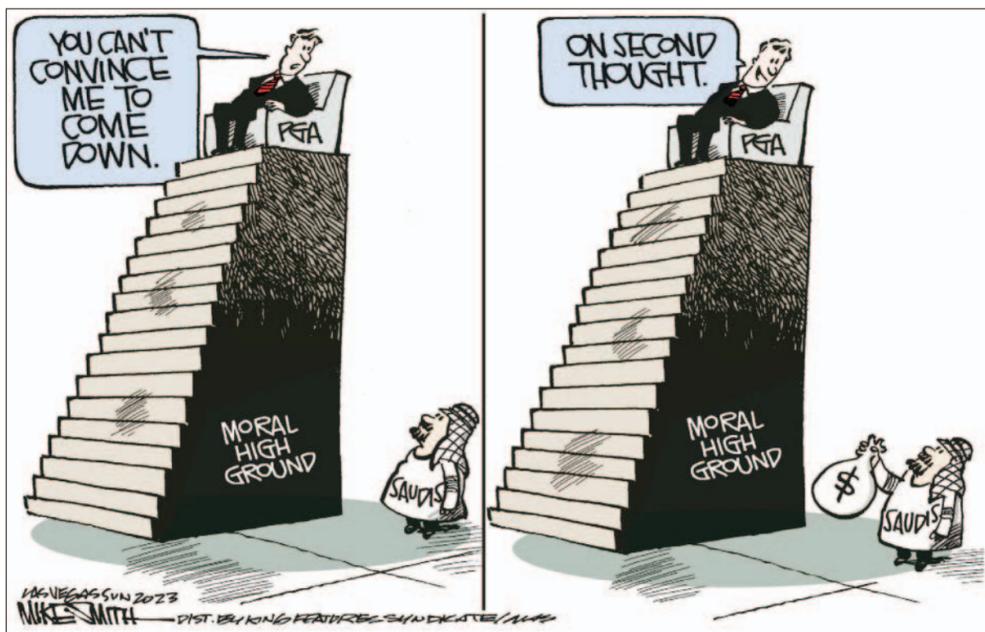
But for Richard, politics was not a weapon but a way to help others, whether it was advocating for economic measures at the state level, or fighting for Missouri Southern State University.

"He is a tireless advocate for the university," former MSSU president Alan Marble said of Richard when the university in 2016 awarded him its inaugural Richard M. Webster medallion.

Never one to give long speeches, Richard, in accepting the award, reminisced about his days on campus as a student and acknowledged that he was a member of the Young Democrats, insisting it was because of the potential for fun rather than political philosophy, calling Republicans "all horn-rimmed glasses and pocket protectors."

We won't see his like again in politics, but we consider ourselves fortunate that his life of public service happened in our time.

Rest in peace, Ron Richard.



YOUR VIEW

Two justice systems now in evidence for the U.S.

I believe it to be fairly well established at this point that the Democratic establishment will do about anything, and weaponize any court of justice, whether it be state or federal, in order to make certain that Donald Trump does not win a second term as our president. Additionally, they will not rest until he is imprisoned.

On several occasions I've mentioned that I have a strong conviction that there is no longer a single justice system in this country, but two. As pertains to our political system, it's just depends upon the initial behind your name. Nothing better illustrates this than the first impeachment of Trump, and now the subsequent aftermath.

You will recall that on July 25, 2019, President Trump conducted a phone call with current Ukrainian President Zelensky (the same president we now support with military aid in outsized proportion to our NATO partners) in which they discussed a multitude of issues. One of the topics was a request on the part of Trump for Ukraine to look into certain nefarious activity by former Vice President Joe

Biden with regard to Burisma, a Ukrainian energy company. Biden had arranged (it appeared, and has since been admitted to) for his son a position on the board of directors of that company in return for compensation of \$83,333 per month.

Bear in mind, Hunter Biden had no experience at all in the energy sector. Additionally, the vice president very publicly threatened to withhold aid to Ukraine until they fired a prosecutor, Victor Shokin, who was at that time investigating accusations of wrongdoing at Burisma. A quid pro quo, if you will.

I'm convinced at this point that Trump was in possession of the FD1023 record the FBI has been in possession of for going on five years now, without any action being taken. That nonclassified record still has not been released for the public to view, but will now be seen by all members of the House Oversight Committee by way of a threat to hold Christopher Wray in contempt of Congress.

President Trump, in his attempt to get to the bottom of this very questionable activity, was impeached by the Democratically controlled House of Representatives, but was not convicted in the Senate.

Biden? Never questioned by our corrupt media about his activities.

Two systems. One for "R" and one for "D."

Perry Davis
Carthage

Trolley system needs restored, new routes should be added

If and when the Sunshine Lamp Trolley system is running again, which will happen if and when appropriate wages are offered to attract professional CDL drivers, several additional routes should be considered.

One would be the length of Seventh Street from the state line to the Greyhound bus station.

Another would be from 32nd Street and Range Line Road to King Jack Park in Webb City.

A third would run from 32nd Street and Range Line to Diamond and left turn into Carthage.

Not only does the defunct trolley need to be restored, the reality of living in a "multiplex" of three important city centers needs to be addressed.

Finally, Joplin's failure to restore bus service since the week before last Thanksgiving brings to mind that perhaps Jasper County should take over, or, alternatively, a private company with a country contract.

Michael Lively
Joplin

New film recalls the letter, events that changed the course of history

In this the year 2023, such information would be communicated by email. Even as I write, there are those in high places of our government and the military debating the pros and cons of artificial intelligence.

But that was not the case in the fall of 1939.

A matter of days after Nazi Panzer divisions had invaded Poland, starting World War II, three physicists, Leo Szilard, Eugene Wigner and Edward Teller, had encouraged Albert Einstein to write a letter to the president of the United States, Franklin Roosevelt, informing the president that recent scientific breakthroughs by Italian physicist Enrico Fermi, who created the first self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction, and Leo Szilard made a strong case that a weapon of usual destructive force could be built with government support.

Einstein's letter read: "This new phenomenon would also lead to the construction of bombs, and it is conceivable — though much less certain — that extremely powerful bombs of this type may thus be constructed. A single bomb of this type, carried by boat and exploded in a port, might very well destroy the whole port together with some of the surrounding territory. However, such bombs might very well prove too heavy for transportation by air."

Delivering the letter and reading it to Roosevelt was economist Alexander Sachs. Both men belonged to the patrician class; they spoke the same language.

Over a couple of bourbons on the rocks, Sachs read the Einstein letter to the curious Roosevelt, who needed very little convincing with Europe now at war.

Szilard deserves special recognition. He had an epiphany after



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GRIFFITH

Columnist

reading the Times of London the thoughts of a politician who referred to atomic energy as balderdash. Forty years later, the Jewish physicist reflected upon the moment in his memoirs: "I didn't see at the moment just how one would go about finding such an element, or

what experiments would be needed, but the idea never left me. In certain circumstances it might be possible to set up a nuclear chain reaction, liberate energy on an industrial scale, and construct atomic bombs."

The combination of urging from the preeminent scientific mind of the day, Einstein, and the scientific genius of Szilard convinced Franklin Delano Roosevelt to draw up Executive Order 8807, the Manhattan Project.

Heading up the scientific aspects of the program was the Harvard-Cambridge educated chemist-physicist Julius Robert Oppenheimer.

Reading about the man is like looking into the sun on a cloudless day, his brilliance radiates so. The University of California, Berkeley, professor met Maj. Gen. Leslie Groves — who oversaw security and represented the military's interests — in October 1942 and realized the urgency of developing a nuclear weapon before the Nazis did. Neither man fully realized the world-changing significance of what they were about.

Both men agreed that the absolute secrecy was imperative. The remote place they selected was

Los Alamos, New Mexico, north of Albuquerque on the Pajarito Plateau. This is the site where atomic theory would be applied and the bomb constructed.

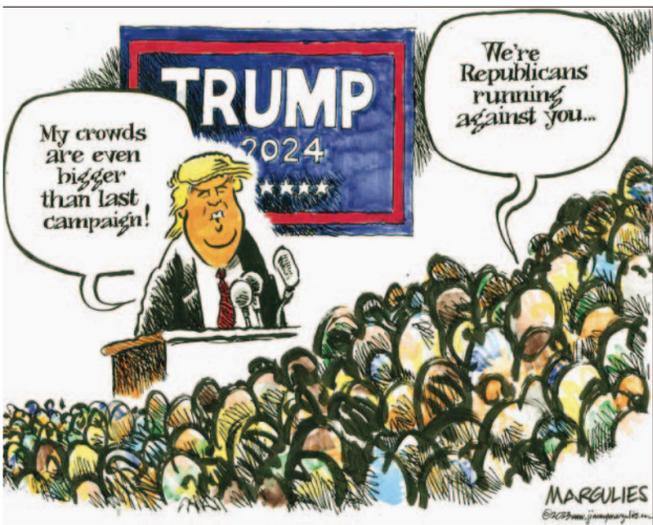
JULY 16, 1945

In the early morning darkness, elation and jubilation after the first successful test of a nuclear bomb at Alamogordo, New Mexico, had changed to anxiety and fear. There amongst the cottonwood trees and Yucca plants on terra cotta colored ground, New York Times reporter William Lawrence stood along side Harvard physical chemist George B. Kistiakowsky in a slit trench 3 feet deep and witnessed the first test of the atomic bomb. It was Kistiakowsky who prophetically best described what he had witnessed to Lawrence. In the chemist's words, "I am sure that at the end of the world — in the last millisecond of the earth's existence — the last man will see what we saw!"

The Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki would be obliterated. In Hiroshima alone, 75,000 human beings incinerated like the head of a sulfur match igniting. And the great irony of those fateful events, the crew who assembled the weapon at Los Alamos came to oppose the proliferation of nuclear weapons to the man.

This July, film director Christopher Nolan brings to life those fateful, history-changing events on the high plains of New Mexico in a film titled simply "Oppenheimer." It is a must see. You won't be disappointed.

JEAN GRIFFITH lives in Carthage and has taught at both Pittsburg State University and Missouri Southern State University.



INFO POLL

The number of "nones" — those who do not identify with any religion — continues to rise. Do you consider yourself unaffiliated with any of the major religions? Go to JOPLINGLOBE.COM to cast your vote.

Verse

'For he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.'

Romans 13:4

Follow the money to understand why issues get attention

In the nonelection timeframe spanning Jan. 1, 2021, to Dec. 31, 2022, members of the Kansas Senate took more than \$1 million from political action committees, special interest groups, large corporations or businesses, and out-of-state donors.

Only 11% of all 40 senators' campaign contributions came from individual residents living in Kansas.

As cited in legally required ethics reports, Republicans took in \$766,514 from these organizations, while Democrats accumulated \$248,723.93. One independent member accepted \$6,350. These contributions were made about the same time that some House Republicans aimed to suppress campaign finance violations investigations, pave the way for limitless campaign contributions and oust the chairman of the Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission, Mark Skoglund.

The four top recipients are members of the Republican Party:

- **STATE SEN. J.R. CLAEYS**, R-Salina, reported 100% of his contributions came from PACs, corporations or other types of businesses.
- **STATE SEN. BEVERLY GOSSAGE**, R-Eudora, reported that 99.7% did.
- **FORMER STATE SEN. RICHARD HILDERBRAND**, R-Galena, reported 99%



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of all his reported contributions came from these organizations.

• **STATE SENATE PRESIDENT TY MASTERTSON**, an Andover Republican who received more than \$80,000 total, reported 99% of incoming donations were from PACs, wealthy businesses and large corporations.

Democrats with high rates of contributions from groups other than Kansas residents include:

- **STATE SEN. OLETHA FAUST-GOUDEAU**, of Wichita, reporting 96% of her donations as coming from these types of organizations.
- **STATE SEN. PAT PETTEY**, of Kansas City, reporting a rate of 95%.
- **STATE SEN. TOM HOLLAND**, of Baldwin City, who attributed 94% of his funds as stemming from these groups.
- **STATE SEN. MARCI FRANCISCO**, of Lawrence, with 88% of total contributions coming from PACs, special interest groups, and large corporations or businesses.

It is interesting to note that while Senate Minority Leader Dinah Sykes, D-Lenexa, took the

most in total campaign contributions at \$85,064.00, these kind of contributions accounted for 81% of all her donations. This is considerably less than the percentage for Republican leadership.

Only two of our 40 Senate members reported less than 60% of contributions from these sources. State Sen. Ethan Corson, D-Prairie Village, and State Sen. Brenda Dietrich, R-Topeka, listed such contributions as 55% and 58% of their total funds for the reporting cycle. The remaining percentages of money from powerful entities to Kansas state senators ranged from 72-100%.

More than half of all the contributions reported on legislators' reports came from in-state PACs and corporations, including State Farm Insurance and Blue Cross Blue Shield, Everydy, Delta Dental, casinos and liquor interests, and groups such as the Kansas Bail Agents Association and the Kansas Hospital Association. The Stray Dog PAC, Kansas Cable PAC, Kansas Automobile Dealers Election Action Committee and the Kansas Hospital Association PAC are just some of the political action committees listed throughout reports of Republicans and Democrats alike.

Almost 40% of the total of all contributions come from out-of-state organizations, such as Anheuser-Busch, the Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, payday loan companies, and large telecommunications corporations, such as Comcast, T-Mobile and AT&T. Out-of-state money from ONEOK, a large natural gas provider in Oklahoma, teledentistry company Smile Direct Club, CVS and Walmart was also frequently cited.

About \$16,000 in contributions came from individuals living out of state.

A considerable portion of that amount came from employees of the Beneficent Company Group, a Texas business led by businessman Brad Heppner and supported by Masterson, the Senate president. This company is under fire for creating a pawn shop for the rich while promising rural economic development in Kansas. Efforts to support initiatives proposed by Heppner and his company were overwhelmingly backed by the Kansas Legislature.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled campaign contributions are considered free speech, and the contributions to our senators fall within the legal guide-

lines of Kansas ethics laws.

However, the people living in Kansas should be paying attention to where money is coming from and what issues are given the most attention during legislative sessions.

We should especially be paying attention to attempts by our legislators to gut the ability of the ethics commission to monitor campaign donations.

Please ask yourself: Am I comfortable with bills passed by lawmakers largely funded by wealthy political entities, some of whom do not even live in Kansas?

Instead of attempting to remodel the ethics commission to open pathways for more money from powerful political forces or push legislation that will benefit the already privileged, perhaps the Legislature should focus more on the true needs of the people who live and vote here.

The people of Kansas deserve to have a voice in their Legislature, regardless of their ability to fund political campaigns and activities.

AMBER DICKINSON holds a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Kansas and is a co-host of Inspire on KTWU. This column first appeared in the Kansas Reflector.

Another worry for Black parents living in Missouri

The ability to obtain a drivers license has for a long time been a rite of passage and a doorway to freedom for young adults and parents alike.

As we get closer to this time where a visit to the DMV will leave our children driving to and from school, church and sporting events, Black parents are concerned about two things.

First, their safety while driving. Second, the safety of children when they are detained in a traffic stop.

Every year since 2000, the Missouri attorney general issues a report on the make-up of traffic stops in Missouri. This includes the race and gender of the driver along with the outcome of the stop. Every year, we watch as the disparity numbers do not improve.

Every year, there are debates over whether there is an explanation other than bias for why Black drivers are arrested at a rate almost three times higher than we should expect based on population statistics.

I'm not going to debate any of that today. Instead, I want to point out an alarming fact that was brought to light in the most recent report.

White drivers are released from a stop with only a warning or no action 83.9% of the time.

Black drivers are released from a stop with a warning or no action only 66.1% of the time.

Think about that for a second. Black drivers are almost 20% more likely to leave a traffic stop with a negative outcome. That can't be accounted for by driving habits or any other neutral reasoning. It means that after a car has been pulled over, when the officer has interacted with the driver, they are significantly more likely to let white drivers go on about their day. Black drivers, on the other hand, are given a new legal problem to deal with and are detained longer.

Even a speeding ticket can be an expensive and time-consuming inconvenience, and, according to these numbers, Black drivers are significantly more likely to experience that inconvenience.

There is a push to increase safety on the roads through banning texting while driving. I want parents and children to be safe while driving. I don't want folks out there texting and driving. I also don't want to give officers any more tools to increase the burden on Black folks.

If this trend continues and there are even more options for issuing tickets or finding probable cause to pull a driver over, it means a whole new crop of young and old Black drivers are facing a life where they are 20% more likely than white peers to have points on their drivers license, have to pay hundreds of dollars in traffic tickets, and face missing work or being late because the officer wants to search their car.

Before we start passing new traffic enforcement laws, we should address the issues with enforcement.

We know there is a problem. We should take into account how the laws will be used and how they will affect our Black and brown neighbors before we pass something that sounds good on the surface but results in a harsher imposition of fees and other consequences on the basis of skin color.

Ask your mayor and police chief what the solution is.

Ask your governor and attorney general to enforce equal protection under the law for all Missourians.

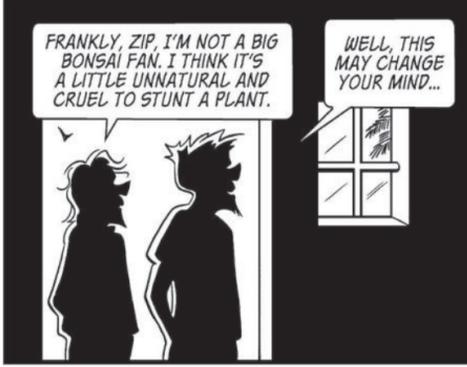
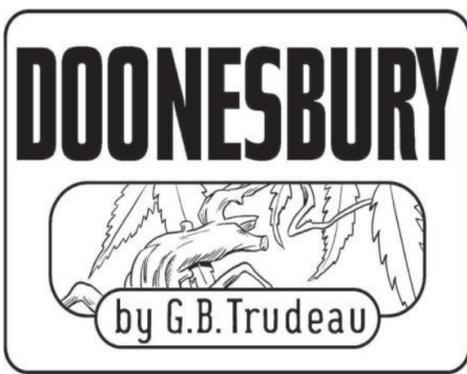
Ask your kids and family members to remember that there is a NAACP Travel Advisory in Missouri and give them "the talk" as it applies to driving while Black in Missouri.

NIMROD CHAPEL JR. is the founder and owner of The Chapel Law Group, president of the Missouri State NAACP Conference and life member and President of the Jefferson City NAACP. This column first appeared in the Missouri Independent.



NIMROD CHAPEL JR.

Columnist



Chris Christie highlights 'big' and 'small' choices before us in 2024

For the first time in the history of this column, I begin not with an opening dialogue, but with what is known in these not so pleasant of times as a "trigger warning." Before you read any further, I must inform you that there will be references to former President Donald Trump and the acronym MAGA.

I do this out of an abundance of caution after an online encounter last week where I'd commented to a follower: "Would I vote for Trump again in '24 if he was on the general ballot? Absolutely. What Biden has done in just 30 months is already a disaster and even a Trump back in the WH would be worth the chaos to bring sense back to the border, energy policy and reign in the administrative complex."

And I noted about the hard right, "If all these 'patriots' were truly serious about MAGA they'd realize MAGA isn't just one man, it's all of us. And if all of us don't unite behind the greater goal of earning real political power at



GEOFF CALDWELL

Columnist

the ballot box in '24, Dems will win again and what's bad today will be even worse for decades of tomorrows."

That triggered an onlooker response of: "First, you say you would vote for Trump if he were on the ballot. Next you say 'MAGA isn't just one man, it's all of us.' Wow," and then continued with, "They are the Proud Boys, the Oath Keepers, the KKK, the White Supremacists, and other anti-American, unpatriotic groups that are insults to the ideals of our nation. I am sorry to see that you are part of that."

Wow, is right. So effective has been President Joe Biden & Co.'s "extreme MAGA Republicans" propaganda campaign that a vote for Trump policy over four more years of Biden failures triggers a firestorm of emotion that loses all touch with reality.

Now visualize such exchanges happening millions of times each and every day.

Tens of millions of Americans never hear, see or read anything other than "MAGA equals NAZI" and that on Jan. 6, 2021, a mob of misfits came within a hair's breadth of overturning the government of the most powerful nation on the planet.

Is it any wonder we're divided? At a New Hampshire town hall announcing his candidacy for the presidency, former governor of New Jersey Chris Christie noted the one question that had been nagging him for months: "It was about our country and our future, and I wondered what our choice was going to be. Were we going to be small, or were we going to be big? ...I've watched our country over the last decade, and it seems to be getting smaller and smaller. And smaller in every way. Smaller in the way we talk to each other. Smaller in the way we look at each other ...smaller in the issues that we cared enough to get angry

about, the issues that we cared enough to get involved in, and I thought to myself, why do I continue to get this feeling that America for the first time in its history is getting smaller? And what I concluded is that we had leaders who have led us to being small."

He continued: "Barack Obama made us smaller, by dividing us, and trying to make sure that his party was divided into smaller pieces so that he could lead the small pieces that he wanted to. And Donald Trump made us smaller by dividing us even further and pitting one group against another.... and now Joe Biden is doing the very same thing.... He ran promising us that he was going to bring the country together, that he was going to unite us, that he was going to bring a new sense of unity to the United States. And instead what he decided to do was to take his groups and divide them even smaller and actively pit them against Republicans."

He then used the Founding Fathers, Abraham Lincoln,

Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, John Kennedy and Ronald Reagan to compare the "big" leaders of our past with the "small" leaders of today. You can view the full talk on C-Span <https://www.c-span.org/video/?528446-1/chris-christie-announces-presidential-campaign-hampshire-town-hall>, and I highly recommend it.

The absolute worst this nation could do is to force once again a choice between two of the smallest candidates in its history, but at this time that's where we're headed. Yes, if I am forced to choose between four more years of Biden failure or the sound energy policy, border security and JFK-style "rising tide lifts all boats" economy of Trump, it has to be Trump no matter how "small" a man he is.

And if that triggers you? I can only say welcome to reality. And yes, it sucks.

GEOFF CALDWELL lives in Joplin. He can be reached at gc@caldwellscorner.com.