

## The Jack Kemp I knew

Many have commented on the life and legacy of Jack Kemp — the former Buffalo, N.Y., congressman, former vice presidential candidate, former HUD secretary, former professional football star and a friend for life to all those who knew him.

I knew Jack and his family well. Our children grew up together. We belonged to the same church.

Next to Ronald Reagan, Jack Kemp was probably the most optimistic Republican I knew. He was also a conservative advocate for civil rights long before many other Republicans would address that issue. This was because, as he said, it was difficult to oppose people you had showered with as an athlete.

Kemp believed civil rights was a conservative issue. After all, don't conservatives value people before government and don't they want to liberate individuals from those things that limit their ability to succeed? Kemp saw racial discrimination as one of those limiting things and he tirelessly campaigned against it. He even supported voting rights for the District of Columbia, though it would ultimately mean more Democrats in Congress.

New York Times columnist Bob Herbert wrote that Kemp's attempt to get his Republican Party to accept blacks and other ethnic minorities was "futile," given the GOP's "Southern strategy" in the 1960s and since. Kemp advocated economic independence and strong families. Herbert suggested that Kemp's strategy should have been to embrace Democratic objectives — i.e., bigger and ever-growing government — to help blacks overcome discrimination and poverty. The Herbert and Democratic Party approach has deepened dependency on government handouts. The Kemp approach sought to make the poor self-sustaining and independent of government.

In 1988, I attended a reception hosted by Kemp during the Republican National Convention in New Orleans. There may have been more African Americans at that event than in the entire GOP at the time. Kemp's civil rights activism was not for the purpose of attracting black votes — though he openly appealed to blacks that they would find a better home and a better future in the Republican Party.



Cal Thomas

Rather, his civil rights activism flowed from his belief that when the Declaration of Independence says all are created equal, it actually means all.

Kemp was way ahead of Republicans and Southern Democrats on race. He would visit housing projects like the notorious Cabrini-Green in Chicago, a nest of poverty and gang activity that even Chicago police officers were afraid to enter. It is now in the process of being torn down and its residents relocated. Whatever replaces it should include a plaque with a tribute to Kemp.

Kemp was an idea man, not caring who got credit so long as people's lives were improved. He disliked those who demonized people on "the other side." He saw all Americans on the same side and this put him at odds with certain people in his party who made enemies out of those who held different beliefs in order to raise money and attract votes. Some had a divide-and-conquer approach. Kemp's approach was to unite for the benefit of all.

This attitude was most evident during his 1996 vice presidential debate with Al Gore. Kemp began his remarks by promising no personal attacks and pledging to conduct himself with civility. The approach angered some on the Right, who wanted blood, but Kemp was true to himself.

Kemp regarded the football teams he played against as opponents, not enemies. His politics displayed the same attitude, which is why his opponents admired him on and off the field. It is also why his funeral Friday will be held at Washington's massive National Cathedral (the service was moved from his church to accommodate the large crowd that's expected). The cross-section of attendees will be a testimony to the value of his approach to politics and to life.

Jack liked people and if there was anyone who didn't like him, he worked overtime to change their opinion.

As Republicans hold public forums on how best to rebuild their party, they could do a lot worse than consider the ideas and attitude of Jack Kemp. His approach to problem solving, not destroying opponents, ought to be the GOP's strategy for building a better future ... and a better America.



## Letters to the Editor policy

GALLUP — The Independent encourages letters to the editor, which are published twice weekly — Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Letters must include writer's name, address and phone number although only the name and community of residence will be published.

Letters may not exceed 500 words. Letters may be edited for space and clarity. The Independent may choose not to print any letter for any reason.

Anyone may submit a letter, and there is no charge for publication.

Letters may be mailed, delivered in person, faxed or e-mailed to: Editor, The Independent, P.O. Box 1210, Gallup, New Mexico 87305, (505) 722-5750 (fax); editorialgallup@yahoo.com (e-mail).

## Illegal Council activities?

To Editor:

It is my information that the tribal secretary, Mrs. Mary Felter, has introduced her eight-month plan to the tribal employees. I am not surprised that this power grab have taken place as all the indicators were there.

H-007-09 did not just happen. The General Counsel drafted this resolution to carry out what had already been decided. Unfortunately, he was simply a tool used by these individuals and the secretary. One fall out is that his professionalism is now a question. Is he working for the best interest of the Hopi people or is he working for a few council individuals and the secretary?

I was on the legal Tribal Council in 2007 and 2008. Therefore, I have observed how a few of these Council individuals and the tribal secretary operate. My observation leads me to believe that this secretary is a shrewd manipulator of Council members. The key to her control is that she receives all the information that flows into the Tribal government and she does it out to her advantage. Even the former chairman had a problem with this. Now that she had appointed her self the CEO of tribe, which is also illegal, she controls the tribal government for the next 8 months. Nowhere in H-007-09 does it authorize that the tribal secretary be the CEO.

Unfortunately, we are now seeing how a small number of Council individuals and the secretary can take control of the government. All of this is absolutely illegal because it violates the Hopi Tribal Constitution, specifically Article V. Section 3 "Vacancies occurring for any reason in the offices of Chairman and Vice-Chairman or in the office of any other officer shall be filled for the rest of the term in the same manner as those officers are ordinarily chosen." This is the law of the Hopi Tribe and no resolution like H-11-79 can supersede it.

As a result, when the Council members approved H-007-09, they violated their oath of office to defend the Tribal Constitution.

The members of the Hopi Tribe wanted to elect their top officials instead of the Tribal Council, and this was approved by the assistant secretary of the Interior on August 1, 1969.

Now, this right is being denied to the members of the Hopi Tribe. As a member of the Hopi Tribe, I have the absolute right to vote and elect who the chairman and vice-chairman shall be, so when a group of Council individuals and the secretary of the Council keep me from executing this right, I know that it is wrong.

To me an oath is a very serious matter, but it is now clear that it does not matter to these council individuals. As a scripture said "Their hearts have turned into shame."

Caleb H. Johnson,  
Kykotsmovi, Ariz.

## Trying to make a difference

To Editor:

When we walk into a store to make a purchase or fill up our vehicles, we really don't worry about the process that occurred to get that item or gasoline to us. All we care about is that the product is there and we can consume it. Do we really know what American companies are doing outside the United States to get these items to purchase here?

As a non-governmental organization, Earth Rights International, mission is to defend earth rights by the power of the people and law. They seek to protect human rights and the environment in the communities in which they work. ERI exposes and publicizes abuses through campaigns, reports and articles. They are at the forefront of the movement to hold corporations accountable for fair human rights, labor, and environmental practices no matter where they do business. ERI litigates in U.S. courts on behalf of people around the world whose earth rights have been violated by governments and transnational corporation.

Colombia, one of the world's leaders in banana exports, is a country that had a U.S. company come in and fund terrorists groups to help keep control over the banana plantations to keep their dominance in the banana market. As a result, thousands were killed including banana workers, trade unions, and political organizers. ERI has filed a lawsuit to bring this to light, but many have not heard or have knowledge of this suit. Not only in the food industry does this occur, it is also happening in the world of oil production.

In Burma, in Southeast Asia, another U.S. company has invested in this country which is run by the Burmese military regime. Incidences such as land confiscation, forced

## Letters to the editor

labor, rape, torture and extrajudicial killings have been reported accusing the regime of these crimes. Again, ERI served as counsel in lawsuits against the U.S. company but compensation cannot stop this widespread human rights abuse.

What if you knew exactly how the items you consume got to you? Would it make a difference if it came either through a fair way where the people involved were treated well, with good working conditions, and compensated for their work or in bad working conditions, poor pay, and were treated less than human? Would you pay for the items if they were brought to you in a humane way or not so humane way? If the situation was reverse and American workers and people were treated inhumanely, would that answer be different? The only way to find out if people really care about others in foreign countries who don't have the freedoms we do in the U.S. is to get these atrocities and unfair treatment into the limelight, to see if we are really willing to spend more to get these items from other countries.

There are many NGOs trying to make a difference in our world. We are not soliciting for these NGO but we all need to support those who are fighting for the rights of humans and our environment. We don't suggest that you research every product you are going to purchase but keep your eyes and ears open.

Marcia Williams and 3 others  
Gallup

## Council should work for the people

To Editor:

I am compelled to take issue with Navajo Council Delegate Orlanda Smith-Hodge's statement in her motion to recall a resolution destined to eliminating the 12 percent set-aside from the Permanent Trust Funds.

Smith-Hodge said: "The people entrusted us with leadership to become legislators. As legislators you look for all positive and good things for your community members and you try to advocate on their behalf, and I do believe that is what we are doing here today. Although a lot of comments were made about how we misspend money, we don't. All of the money that Council has ever appropriated has gone back to the people. We here are just legislators and we just foresee and recommend and vote in their best interests. We are in the right direction ..."

Contrary to the statement of Smith-Hodge, I have listed some of the past issues which directly go against the wishes and statement of Smith-Hodges:

1. The Navajo Council depleted the Undesignated Unreserved Funds without community inputs and used the funds for committee meetings, travels, expenses, and handouts. The expenditures will continue to be viewed as "misspent" until audits are initiated and completed. The Nation is currently in a state of fall-out from the recent national economic downturn, which is certainly an emergency situation.

2. The council, spearheaded by Smith-Hodge, Katherine Benally and the speaker, voted to purchase gold rings for each sitting Council delegate. This action is a clear violation of people's trust. The community at-large certainly did not benefit from this action. The people would not have allowed this action if each delegate chose to discuss the proposed action with their constituents first.

3. The people have entrusted the Council to foresee and vote in their best interest; however, the council limits themselves to taking drastic actions/reactions rather than proactive and lack serious planning foresight as evidence by continuing failures at almost every turn.

4. The Council attempted another self-serving legislation, which would have kept members seated for two more years beyond their mandated terms. Again, the delegates never took the initiative to discuss this matter at the chapter meetings. I view this failed action as another behind-the-scenes legislation destined for quick action without us knowing about it.

5. Majority of the people have sincere desire to downsize the number of Navajo Nation Council from the current 88 to 44 or 24. Apparently, the majority of the delegates have done everything possible to block any action. The people of the Navajo Nation want an effective law-making body to be filled by real and competent leaders and I think the people are tired of the current number and make-up of the Navajo Nation Council.

I hope others may join and carry the list further.

Alfred J. Bitsuie  
Fort Defiance

## Corruption used to be worse

Newspapers aren't running out of scandals to report. If it seems that New Mexico's ethical drains are hopelessly backed up, just remember: It used to be far worse.

"New Mexico in the 1950s was not a place you could be proud of," said David Myers, a history professor at the College of Santa Fe.

The Democratic Party, which controlled state government, was corrupt, and Gov. Ed Mechem, a Republican, wasn't much of a counterweight during his four terms. "The need for reform was clear," Myers said, but, presented with recommendations from a reform commission, Mechem took a pass.

Myers spoke during a recent conference of the Historical Society of New Mexico, which was celebrating its own 150-year history.

To clean up Dodge, it took three men with political clout — Fabian Chavez, Bruce King and Jack Campbell.

Fabian Chavez, then Senate Majority Leader, "was a critical person in the process," Myers said. Campbell, a lawyer in Roswell, became House Speaker in 1959 and governor in 1962. Chavez was a liberal; Campbell and King were moderates.

Reformers drained four cesspools — state personnel, justices of the peace, racial discrimination and liquor sales.

Political patronage was rampant. New Mexico had no civil service system until 1961. Governors served two

## All She Wrote

Sherry Robinson



mission.

New Mexico fancies itself a tolerant place, but back then the state had Jim Crow laws on the East Side, discrimination against African-Americans was blatant, and outdated apportionment made it difficult for Hispanic candidates to get elected. Anglos dominated government.

"New Mexico was one of the most poorly apportioned states in the country," said Seckler. "Fourteen percent of the state could elect a majority of the Senate and 27 percent could elect a majority of the House. Rural interests ruled." There was great resistance to the U.S. Supreme Court-ordered reapportionment.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, New Mexico really changed, said Seckler. She credits governors Campbell, Cargo and King. It also helped that governors terms increased from two to four years and that legislative sessions began convening yearly and not every other year. "In 1967 government was a huge mess," Seckler said, with 263 separate agencies and no cabinet. "The governor was basically trying to keep the puppies in the box," she said. A series of reorganizations delivered the present structure.

Finally, reformers took on the liquor industry. New Mexico had the nation's highest price markups because a few people controlled the industry and the liquor lobby was powerful.

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The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.

-Isaiah 35:1