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Needed: Heroes Worth Following

EVERYBODY needs a hero, to admire as an example and to emulate on the road to success. Right now, we have a shortage of vibrant personalities to serve in this capacity.

The debunkers have smeared the reputations of many who have led this country in war and peace, men of military might, political prowess, thinkers who could express challenging thoughts in resounding oratory, scientists, teachers and pioneers who blazed trails for others to follow.

By scraping around, the muck-rakers have found that none of these individuals was perfect. Any quirk of character that could be turned up in the life of a respected personality has been magnified to overshadow whatever service, achievements or leadership may have been rendered.

As if that were not enough, many of our modern-day political personalities seem to have gone to great lengths to destroy themselves and the people's confidence in government. Scores of them have smeared their own brilliance and charisma

with stains of greed, gullibility, graft and just plain dishonesty.

Some of these persons retain a strange attraction for voters, in spite of their obvious lack of integrity, while others of much higher caliber fall victims to those who try to enhance their own status by destroying others.

"Show me the kind of man you honor, and I will know what kind of a man you are," the Scottish essayist, Thomas Carlyle, wrote, "for it shows me what your ideal of manhood is, and what kind of man you long to be."

It is not an endorsement on evil to acknowledge the good in men, while recognizing that each and every person has faults. Applauding the commendable qualities of our fellowmen is a way of encouraging the development of more of the good.

"No civilization or community can do without heroes," said Robert Nisbet in a Virginia publication last year, "but there are not very many spheres of activity which seem to yield to mass heroes."

Nisbet pointed out that one of the attractions of war is its peculiar capacity to make heroes, but he also noted that literature, scholarship and science have had "their due proportion of great creators who attained heroic stature in society at large."

America needs intelligent men of good character and solid integrity to offer themselves for public service and then needs to stand with them against the chicanery, deception, greed for power, thievery and waste that are destroying our ideals of a free country.

The people must learn to discern between the honest man and the crooked politician, and to choose the honest man—every time. Make him into a hero, if you please, because we need a leader we can follow. He must stand above the crowd, where he can be seen and heard.

If we do not produce some genuine and worthy heroes, in a hurry, we may find some bogus ones offered to us. Unless we recognize true greatness and respect our heroes, who will be our leaders in the future?