

Where Are America's Heroes Now?

AS president of the Men's Dinner Club, Dr. Dolphus Whitten once commented that a good part of the business and cultural leadership of Oklahoma City was represented by the 300 or more members present.

"It's sort of frightening, isn't it?" he asked facetiously.

One might have a similar feeling in reviewing a recent survey of "American decision makers," purporting to show "Who Runs America?"

The cast of most influential people includes people from business, finance, law, politics, health, agriculture, education, religion and communications, with politicians most abundant.

These individuals were mentioned because they are considered to be influential, not because they are heroes or something else.

The annual survey, made and published in a copyrighted article by U.S. News & World Report, named these as the 10 most influential Americans:

President Carter; Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.); Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill (D-Mass.); labor boss George Meany; Sen. Robert C. Byrd (D-W.Va.); G. William Miller, chairman of the Federal Reserve Board; Chief Justice Warren C. Burger; the president's foreign policy advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski; Sen. Russell B. Long (D-La.) and banker David Rockefeller.

Although the article said that "influential Americans hunger for decisive leadership from the White House," it indicated that a widespread feeling exists that firm leadership is lacking.

Nevertheless, President Carter received more points in the "influence survey" than his next five rivals combined!

That doesn't speak very well for the challengers and may reflect a dearth of strong, capable leadership to direct us back toward economic sanity and traditional American freedom.

It is just as vital to consider

where leaders propose to take us as it is to recognize their attitudes and motives.

Many of the strongest, most dominating leaders in history have led in directions contrary to the better interests of their followers. This appears to be true in some nations today.

The survey also ranked institutions according to influence they are believed to wield. Gaps between placements were not as wide here as they were among individuals.

The White House ranked No. 1, of course, followed by large businesses, U.S. Senate, Supreme Court, television, Federal bureaucracy, U.S. House, labor unions, banks, lobby and pressure groups.

Newspapers and Wall Street came next, while public opinion polls rated 16th place. Radio was 19th and magazines 20th.

The family was in 24th place and organized religion in 26th, a notch ahead of the Republican Party. Democrats ranked 14th.