

We Should Let Our Loyalty Be Known

THE FIRST loyalty oath to what became the United States of America was signed July 4, 1776. It was the Declaration of Independence.

Just above the signatures of these courageous men were these words: "And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor."

Where are such loyal Americans today? There are many but such dedication to principles of freedom often is obscured by claims of individual rights. Me first, everything else afterward.

The firing of an eastern Oklahoma teacher for refusing to sign a simple loyalty oath was upheld in a hearing, but the teacher maintained that he didn't like the idea that someone could use loyalty as a test of his patriotism or ability to do his duty.

If a person is loyal to an institution or another person why should he or she be reluctant to make it known? Why should one be averse to

stating that he may be depended upon and trusted?

Disregard for "loyalty oaths" is evident throughout our society. To the degree that "unloyalty" exists, our social structure is weakened. Thousands of young men have refused to sign up for the draft to say they would loyally defend our freedom.

In many homes children are not taught ethical values and they do not develop strong feelings of family loyalty.

Thus, it is not surprising that millions of couples are following permissive patterns set by movie stars and entertainers of living together without marriage. They do not want to take a loyalty oath to each other.

Probably every church has members who range from the deeply dedicated to the indifferent, but on the whole they may be counted loyal to their faith. Membership in almost any religion involves some sort of declaration of loyalty.

Businessmen have a right to expect employees to be loyal to the companies that provide their in-

comes, but this is not always the case. Disloyalty may be shown by shirking, absenteeism, theft and embezzlement, and by strikers tearing up their workplaces.

The American Civil Liberties Union has filed numerous lawsuits that challenge the propriety of individuals pledging allegiance to our country and its flag. The ACLU argues that loyalty ought not to be required of anyone to anything.

Half-hearted displays of loyalty may be seen at sports events where our national anthem is played or sung in opening ceremonies. Often its music is distorted by an entertainer who wants to attract attention to himself by giving it his own twist.

Athletes and spectators look bored, talk and show little evidence of interest, while peddlers hawk their wares in the stands. Part of the crowd stands respectfully at attention.

A loyal person is one who is faithful to a cause, an ideal, a friend or a custom. We ought not to be ashamed of our fidelity.