

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Wednesday, July 18, 2001

My condolences to Katharine Graham's family and to The Washington Post family. America has lost a woman of immense ability and genuine charm. She truly had the common touch in an uncommon world. We shall miss her.

JOAN BALDWIN CHAPMAN
Cheshire, Conn.

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The death of Katharine Graham is a loss, not just to her family and to The Washington Post but to all those throughout the country who believe in a free society and in the critical role of the press.

There is no doubt that the role of the press was greatly expanded and enhanced by Mrs. Graham's principles and steadfastness during the 1970s. She served as a leader and role model and dispelled forever the notion that toughness was not a trait to be found in women.

WILLIAM JOHN KEARNS JR.
Willingboro, N.J.

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In celebration of the life and legacy of Katharine Graham, the flags at the Women's Museum in Dallas are being flown at half-staff. Mrs. Graham was an early supporter of the Women's Museum and she is honored in the museum's exhibit "Milestones in Women's History."

When the museum held its official launch in 1998, she remarked, "As we move into the new millennium, women are poised to achieve even greater success than those of the past 100 years. The Women's Museum is critical to our past and to our future, a unique place to tell the stories of individuals and groups who have brought us to this breathtaking vantage point, and a place to encourage young people to dream of their own possibilities."

We at the museum are pleased that Mrs. Graham's story is one that we can share. Her legacy is one of pushing the envelope to achieve more than anyone — even yourself — dreamed possible.

JACQUELINE BELL
Dallas

The writer is director of marketing for the Women's Museum.

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My condolences to Katharine Graham's family and her colleagues at The Post. I had just moved to Washington when the Watergate scandal broke, and I will never forget what The Post accomplished under her leadership during that time.

I have always admired Mrs. Graham for what she achieved at a time when women were not in as many positions of leadership as they are today. Her influence in the community will be greatly missed.

RUTH BOSEK McKEOWN
Beltsville

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I write to express my deepest sympathies to The Washington Post family for the loss of the wonderful Katharine Graham.

Although I never had the privilege of meeting her, Mrs. Graham was, in my mind, one of the most outstanding women in the world. She became such an impressive example of courage and strength, both in her personal and professional life. She managed to change her own life, and the lives of so many others, for the better.

Mrs. Graham truly helped make the world a better place. She was a shining light, and she will be missed.

ROZ MANDELCORN
Los Angeles

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As a graduate student at Columbia University's business school in the early '70s, I was privileged to have met and discussed journalism with Katharine Graham at Lou Cowan's media management seminar at the journalism school.

Even as a young student, I was much impressed with her intelligence, grace, style and inner strength. It is therefore with great regret that I heard of her passing. It is a loss not only to her family but to the American public. She was a remarkable lady.

MICHAL DAWIDOWICZ
St. Prex, Switzerland

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I had just started to write news releases and engage in "corporate journalism" when I read Katharine Graham's book, "Personal History." Every mention of a newsroom or editing struggle made me miss newspaper reporting.

At sewer district meetings, murder scenes, fires and town councils, I was often the only female in the room and was treated as a perky little pest ... until I started asking questions. Mrs. Graham's place at the table made it easier for all of us to grab a seat and start firing away.

Covering school board meetings in southern Indiana doesn't compare to publishing the Pentagon Papers. But Mrs. Graham's respect for the business made me proud to be a part of it. I've been freelancing since reading the book and never got a chance to thank Mrs. Graham for reminding me of what I love about newspapers and the people who work for them.

AMANDA TEMPLE
Arlington

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I want to express my sympathy to the staff and readers of The Washington Post at the death of Katharine Graham. More often than not I disagreed with The Post's editorial board, but that's okay. She had more class than those who supported both Bill Clinton and Al Gore.

My condolences.

JACK MEYER
Havelock, N.C.

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I have read and re-read Katharine Graham's Pulitzer Prize-winning autobiography. For all of her wealth and power, she was a completely relatable woman who felt the insecurities and inadequacies that we all do. She dealt with an unspeakable tragedy with the loss of her husband and still managed to make a great difference in this world.

She was truly an inspiration.

STEFANIE HOLMES
Memphis

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In a world where heroes seem largely to exist only on celluloid, Katharine Graham was a woman who stood by her convictions. She took risks, looked far down the road and in a planet of pragmatism, used ethics to guide her decisions. She was a living demonstration that intellect and determination, guided by the highest principles, can indeed make a difference and lead to a life extraordinarily worth living.

I have few heroes. Mrs. Graham was, and still is, one.

RONALD E. KIRBY
Corvallis, Ore.

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The world has lost a great lady. Katharine Graham's achievements include the nervousness of President Nixon's smile upon their post-Watergate meeting, the quality of some of the best American journalism today, and, not least, some iota of press freedom.

She had been called a "veteran journalist," but Mrs. Graham remained a great vintage. Her passing will certainly be mourned in Britain.

STEVEN BEE
Cambridge, United Kingdom