

A Tribute to Patrick E. Haggerty

October 20, 1980

I first met Pat Haggerty on the evening of March 8, 1974. He was the principal speaker at a dinner that the IBM Corporation and Frank Cary held in honor of the 1973 Nobel Prize laureates in physics. I had of course known Mr. Haggerty's name as the CEO of one of the nation's great technological industries. I was impressed to hear, in his remarks, the depth of his concern for intellectual adventure in America, for the responsibility of the private corporate sector for nurturing the creative spark in American life, and the essentiality of firmer support for the entire spectrum of scientific investigation as the bedrock of economic and technological advance. I had a brief correspondence with him at that time, most of which was answered by his book "The Productive Society" the Benjamin Farliss Memorial Lectures for 1973. In these writings he articulated a political and social philosophy that of course embraced the deepest concern for individual initiative within the free enterprise system, I say of course insofar as Texas Instruments has been one of the most successful manifestations of the application of these principles in an industrial economy.

Pat Haggerty also wrote that

In spite of the dangers (and they are real as these examples ~~illustrate that~~ government intervention in the mixed economy will eventually lead to overcentralism and finally become the road to serfdom, I see no alternative to a strong role for government in today's world. The real dilemma faced by men everywhere in world society is that their needs are so great that they really have no choice except to opt for modes of organization of society that assure high productivity. Further, while an organization of society that encroaches on personal freedom will be tolerated, one that cannot provide an adequate and increasingly higher level of material existence, adequate education, good health, and long life will not be tolerated if it is perceived as such.

(from the Counter Culture)

To the extent that the warnings with which I began these discussions alert us to the ways in which a blind and unthinking pursuit of growth can be counter-productive and depress our quality of life, they are useful. But when such critics see the only route to the alleviation of these pressures as the abandonment of growth, their recommendations become counter-productive and simply will not have a significant influence on the choices of the great masses of population of the world.

Additionally, there is the very real danger that the emotional appeal of these criticisms will result in irrational extensions of centralized government, introduce unnecessary restrictions on individual and local freedom, and finally so enlarge the regime of regulation with one regulation leading to another and another as to thrust us all unwittingly into Solzhenitsyn's "tomorrow of mankind."

I don't believe it has to happen if we choose wisely enough from among the variety of routes that a strong role for government can follow.

In that last remark Pat Haggerty was articulating two of the strongest and by no means contradictory elements of his character: an unswerving consistency of principle, and a realistic appraisal and readiness for pragmatic compromise with the actuality of the world as he found it.

After I assumed my present role at The Rockefeller University I of course entered into a much closer relationship with Pat Haggerty. At first I found him sometimes a forbidding character. His demands for establishing a strategic overview in the planning of the future of an institution were congruent with my own but he would often ask questions with a depth and vehemence that might make one apprehensive -- that is until I began to realize that he had an intellectual style not so far unlike my own, one in which every question was admissible but where actions followed more cautiously and thoughtfully. It is hard to imagine two people who by background of culture, geography, education or profession could have been more disparate than Pat Haggerty and myself. As time went on I came to realize that we were in fact bound by a commonality of responsibility and goal that went far beyond those disparate roots. I often wondered how it came to be that he and I were the only members of the Board to be so bemused as to sport a beard long after Julius Caesar's canonical age of 49.

I do not know how successful Pat Haggerty was, in conveying to a community with which he had too little opportunity for personal interaction, the depth of his feeling for individual aspiration, careers, domestic life, the problems that the disaminities of urban life would add to all of the general trials and tribulations of an academic career today. For my own part I will miss all those relentless probings and questions, the consistency of institutional purpose and the deeper integrity, if not superficial warmth, of his personal relationships. The Rockefeller University profited greatly from his stern guidance during a period of deep threat and troubles. He was not always part of the time hallowed traditions of academic cloister, privileges that we must sometimes recall we are obliged to earn as well as to enjoy; but we are all here deeply in his debt, and can proceed the more confidently to a challenging future, for the imprint he has left upon us.