

## THE CARLSON CHRONICLE

*By Chris Carlson*

### **So long, Cece**

When Cecil Andrus first ran for governor in 1966, his campaign manager was Leo Krulitz, a brilliant young attorney from Mullan, a graduate of Stanford and Harvard Law. He came up with what he thought would be the winning slogan: Cecil Andrus for Governor—“My kind of man.”

In today’s politically correct world Krulitz would probably come up with something else. The slogan did not resonate with the electorate even back then. Andrus lost the 1966 election not once, but twice.

In saying so long to the longest-serving, most successful, progressive governor in Idaho history it is important to understand the man behind the public figure.

Andrus was an extraordinary person who filled the multiple roles required with grace, character, elan and panache.

He genuinely liked people, and had a photographic memory for people’s names. If he met a person once then did not see them for years he would still instantly recall their name.

Despite his phenomenal political success he was at heart a humble man. “I put my pants on one leg at a time just like every other man,” he would state. He always drove his own car, and eschewed security details. He never was one to brag, either. He let success speak for itself.

He had a great sense of humor and took pleasure in telling self-deprecating stories. While speaking he once was rubbing his hand across his balding head saying that “grass doesn’t grow on a busy street,” A voice from the rear of the audience loudly piped up saying “neither does it grow on a rock.”

He was a natural teacher who always took time to explain the teaching moment whether it involved kneeling down to look a youngster seeking an autograph in the eye or underscoring a life-lesson in a matter troubling an aide. He cared about the person regardless of who or their station in life.

He was a religious man, but didn't wear it on his sleeve. He let his actions, his compassion, his caring speak for his adherence to the Gospel values. He participated in a monthly Bible group for years that few knew about.

Largely self-educated few knew he was a prodigious reader.

He was a devoted father who loved his daughters and knew the best thing a man could do for his children was to love and respect their mother. Like most dads he was a soft touch for his girls but he always had time for them to offer advice and counsel when asked.

He loved to hunt and fly fish in Idaho's great out-of-doors. A hold-over from his own hard-scrabble youth was a sense of the need to fill the freezer each fall with the deer and elk he shot, the ducks, geese and pheasants he brought home. He ate what he killed and was a genuine conservationist.

Because he loved hunting he kept and trained a hunting dog which always became a devoted companion that he and Carol would walk in the Boise foothills. His current bird dog, Maisy, was next to him when he died.

He wasn't afraid to show emotion and shed tears in front of others. Once, while visiting him at his home I walked into the living room quietly only to see him sitting in his recliner with big tears rolling down his cheeks as he was watching the tv. A Fish and Game ad he'd done several years earlier was running and the video was of him and the hunting dog he had then and deeply missed.

He understood the importance of one taking responsibility for his actions, of not being afraid to admit a rare mistake now and then. He never pretended to be perfect. Like the "gyppo logger" and saw mill

operator he was before being elected to the Idaho Senate and entering the industrial insurance business, he could get angry. Those who lied to him never had a second chance, and the only times I ever saw his eyes flash and thought he was about to punch someone was when his integrity was questioned.

In this monochromatic world where society seems to be striving to homogenize everyone and minimize gender differences, he stood out as an authentic man—a real man's man. He stood on life's stage as a giant, often surrounded by pygmies. It is doubtful Idaho will ever see the likes of him again.

Krulitz had it correct, after all. Cecil Andrus is and was my kind of man, your kind of man and Idaho's man for all seasons and all reasons. His trail ride is over but it was one heck'uv a ride. I will always believe he could have been president if he had wanted to be. He loved his family and Idaho too much to put them through the rigors of that pursuit. He will long live on in our hearts and in the many legacies he left us.

As he rides off into history you can almost hear him saying "I've been rode hard and put up wet a few too many times" but it was my honor to serve the people of Idaho.

Rest in peace, Cece.