Rush: On Top Because of Courage

by Phyllis Schlafly August 1, 2008

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Rush Limbaugh's 20-year domination of talk radio is a remarkable testament to the durability of conservative ideas as well as to Rush's skill and courage in explaining controversial conservative principles in an entertaining style.

Rush has been the top-rated radio talk show since rankings started 17 years ago, and nobody else is even close. Listeners realize his extraordinary talent for timing and relevance anytime he uses a substitute host.

One of the secrets of Rush's success is that he is not intimidated into appeasing the organized pressure groups that frighten so many others into platitudinous mush. He takes them all on: the radical feminists, the wacky environmentalists, the open-borders crowd, and even George W. Bush's deviation from conservatism.

From the get-go, even in the feminists' glory days of the 1980s when they were fawned over by the national media, Rush was not scared off. He is one of a handful of men in public life willing to stand up to the feminists.

When feminists make outrageous demands, Rush calls them feminazis. When feminists insist that he apologize for a remark contrary to their agenda, he makes a joke about it but does not apologize.

Former Harvard President Larry Summers is the poster boy for the futility of apologizing to feminists and trying to appease their outrageous demands. Despite weeks of self-flagellation after some feminist professors took offense at his perfectly accurate academic speech about gender differences, they continued to humiliate him from Massachusetts to California.

It's too bad that Summers didn't understand that apologizing to feminists is not only useless; it's a mistake. They never forgive and just use an apology as a sign of weakness that accelerates their demands for preferential treatment.

In the pre-Rush years, one clever writer published a newsletter featuring humorous current commentary molded into one-liners that could be inserted into speeches by politicians and businessmen. He didn't use old-fashioned jokes that ended with a punch line only after setting up an elaborate story.

I noted that every issue had at least one (often biting) joke at the expense of wives or mothers-in-law. I wrote the author that I'll accept wives and mothers-in-law as fair game, but we need some jokes about feminists.

But the writer was a coward. He never included a single joke ridiculing the feminists in the ten years I subscribed.

Then came fearless Rush Limbaugh who dared to poke fun at the feminazis and point out their silliness, intolerance, pompous self-importance, inconsistencies, and obnoxious whining about sexism. Rush even dared to say "feminism was established so as to allow unattractive women access to the mainstream of society."

When I lecture on college campuses, it's easy to identify the feminists. They don't laugh; they have no sense of humor.

Rush is the most important and influential conservative since Ronald Reagan. It's astounding that after 20 years on the air, he continues to draw an audience of 20 million people per week.

Without a script, Rush can hold an audience for three hours a day, five days a week. He entertains, informs and teaches with plenty of solid, fact-based arguments that, for many Americans, is the only conservative message they ever hear.

A college dropout, Rush is a completely self-educated and self-made man. He got his engaging personality from his mother Millie, whom I was lucky enough to have known as a friend.

Liberals can do well reading a speech from a teleprompter (look closely at Barack Obama's televised coverage and note the teleprompter placed inconspicuously in the corner of the screen). But very few liberals are sufficiently well informed and internally confident to talk for three hours on a live microphone without goofing, and even take random questions from callers.

Many others are afraid to criticize the media darling, Barack Obama, but Rush says, "I'm not going to bow to political correctness. I'm going to do it with humor. I'm going to focus on the issues. I'm going to react to what he says. Simple."

But it isn't simple. Before Rush, there wasn't interesting talk radio. There were only sour liberals who pontificated to a shrinking audience.

Rush turned AM radio into a lively genre where liberals are completely outclassed because they are boring, just regurgitating tired notions that are a proven failure and can't be intelligently defended.

Al Sharpton says that Rush is "the most dangerous guy we have to deal with on the right." Indeed, he is.