Michael Kryzanek, Founding Editor: An Appreciation

William C. Levin

Bridgewater State University

Jun-2010

Recommended Citation

Available at: http://vc.bridgew.edu/br_rev/vol29/iss1/4

This item is available as part of Virtual Commons, the open-access institutional repository of Bridgewater State University, Bridgewater, Massachusetts.
Michael Kryzanek, Founding Editor of Bridgewater Review

An Appreciation

William C. Levin

Dr. Michael Kryzanek, Professor of Political Science at Bridgewater State College, has been Editor of Bridgewater Review since he helped found the magazine in 1983. Mike is moving on to a new position as the Director of Global Studies in the college’s newly established Center for Global Engagement. It is entirely consistent with Mike’s career at Bridgewater that in his thirty-seventh year as a faculty member, he has chosen to take on a new challenge. His restless energy, creative intelligence and hard work have made for a long list of accomplishments, including his eight scholarly books about Latin American and American politics (some of which have been published in multiple editions) and his many papers published in academic journals or delivered at professional meetings. There is not enough space here to do justice to his many achievements. However, I would like to take this opportunity to express my admiration not just for the hard work he has done as Editor of Bridgewater Review, but for the uncommon character with which he has done it.

In the third edition of Bridgewater Review, Mike wrote the first of his Editor’s Notebook columns, and in his twenty-seven years as Editor, has produced more than forty of these essays. A reading of these Notebooks has revealed to me a remarkably valuable and committed citizen of all the communities he inhabits. In many of his Editor’s Notebooks, Mike makes clear that he takes seriously his American citizenship, but certainly not in the lapel-flag sort of symbolic way. I think of his sense of citizenship in both the way the Greeks meant the term, and also as the kind of citizenship exhibited by devoted members of “Red Sox Nation.” He roots earnestly for America, but is consistently pained by our national shortcomings.

In his first Editor’s Notebook Mike wrote about presidential politics, ending with the wish for America that “It would be nice someday to be as excited about the presidential elections as we are about the coming of spring and the beginning of the baseball season.” In September of 1988 he asked “Are We Still #1?” Not so much, as it turned out. Citing data on life expectancy, home ownership and use of opiates, Mike concluded not only that we had fallen behind other nations in many ways, but urged that we “recognize that development means more than millionaires and nuclear warheads.” Over the years he has argued consistently that America can only regain its place as a great democracy if it delivers on its fundamental promises. Typically, his remedies have been practical and focused at the individual level. Vote, think of the well-being of others as well as your own, pay your taxes and value good government. In short, be a responsible and grateful citizen of the United States.

His reliable and humane values have led him to regret the rise of a passive culture of television in America, the loss of “Main Street” to the huge chain stores and the increase in homelessness during a time of American plenty. But after reading all of Mike’s editorials the citizenship that he clearly holds dearest, and works the hardest to perfect, is that of family member. Readers could follow the story of Mike’s life as husband and father of three daughters in his recounting of family visits to the Wisconsin of his childhood, college selection road trips, the occasion of the last daughter moving out of the house and, most recently, becoming an exceptionally proud grandparent (just last year).

In his last Editor’s Notebook, Mike reveals himself to be an honorary “Millenial” (those Americans born between 1980 and 2001) in his admiration for that generation’s belief in public service and optimism about the future. He is clearly as young as any Millenial in energy, creativity and appetite for the challenges of responsible citizenship. Though his track record makes clear he does not really need it, his colleagues at Bridgewater Review wish him luck in all his new endeavors.

—William Levin is Professor in the Department of Sociology and Editor of Bridgewater Review.