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Seeing the Duke in a Whole New Light

Posted By [Mary Claire Kendall](#) On June 11, 2009 @ 11:53 am In [Entertainment](#), [Politics](#) | [2 Comments](#)

For navel-gazing Republicans, in the throes of a full-blown identity crisis, the 30th anniversary of John "Duke" Wayne's passing this June 11th, couldn't come sooner, reminding us of what it was like when giants were in our midst.

The Duke, still ranked Americans' all-time favorite film star, whose popularity only increases with time, was an "extremely close friend" of Ronald Reagan, said their close mutual friend, longtime Paramount Executive, A.C. Lyles.



[1]

Both "Duke" and "Ronnie" shared a clear moral vision concerning America's greatness—only using force to liberate not conquer, as President Reagan characterized it five years, almost to the day, after Duke's death, in his poignant tribute to the "[2] [Boys of Pointe du Hoc](#)" on June 6, 1984, commemorating D-Day, in which, Lyles said, "he just spoke from the heart."

"Here, in Normandy," said Reagan, "... the Allies stood and fought against tyranny, in a giant undertaking unparalleled in human history."

"When people saw (Duke) on the screen" in movies like *The Longest Day*, about the Normandy Invasion, Lyles said, "they always wanted to be on his side because they knew that under (his) leadership... they were going to be on the winning team. He was Americana." Like Reagan, "he made us all proud to be Americans."

Sadly, Duke Wayne, who stumped on the campaign trail for his friend, helping him reach the pinnacle of American politics, left the stage before Reagan assumed the presidency.

There Reagan would effect in the present what Duke re-enacted in motion pictures.

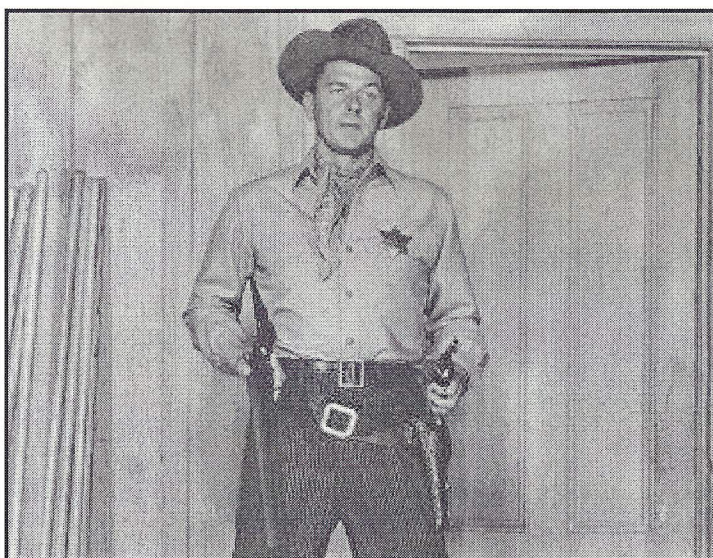
But, he didn't do it alone.

Reagan soon became friends with someone who cut an even larger figure on the world stage with whom he shared the same simple, yet large values, based on safeguarding the dignity and rights of man, which Fascism and then Communism had brutally undercut.

His friend-none other than Pope John Paul II-became, according to Nancy Reagan, his closest friend, sharing with him the same vision of defeating Communism without firing a shot. Indeed, as Martin and Annelise Anderson reveal in their new book, *Reagan's Secret War*, his ultimate goal was to rid the world of the nuclear threat, which is now more relevant than ever.

While Duke's artistry brought to life hard-fought victories over Fascism, Reagan and the Pope engaged in this epic battle against Communism as history was unfolding.

Amazingly, Reagan-having helped liberate oppressed peoples behind the Iron Curtain-died almost 25 years to the day after Duke passed away.



[3]

Both represented a continuum of values evoked by Reagan's words, speaking of the "Boys at Pointe du Hoc," many in the audience, that "It was faith and belief, it was loyalty and love" impelling them to scale those Normandy cliffs.

"All of you loved liberty," continued Reagan, and "God was an ally in this great cause."

They were willing to die to "protect and defend democracy" knowing "God would grant them mercy on this beachhead, or on the next."

"Do not bow your heads," Reagan said, repeating Colonel Wolverton's plea to his parachute troops the night before the historic Invasion, "but look up so you can see God and ask His blessing in what we're about to do."

Now that America confronts an enemy every bit as daunting as that President Reagan faced, the question is, which Republican-and there can only be one-will look up and provide that continuum of morally clear, strong leadership today and in 2012?

Who, indeed, will speak from the heart?

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[2] Boys of Pointe du Hoc: <http://rrv3stg.i2x.net/reagan/speeches/speech.asp?spid=20>

[3] Image: <http://bighollywood.breitbart.com/files/2009/06/130-090ronald-reagan-posters.jpg>

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