

Preston's Point-of-View

A few thoughts about Andy Rooney, Master of the written word...

Andrew Aitken "Andy" Rooney - January 14, 1919 – November 4, 2011

November 5, 2011

It's always sad to lose someone who touched so many people and who we felt we all knew despite the fact he was on network TV. And I think many of us were shocked when he passed last Friday (11/4) because he had just retired a month earlier promising to return from time to time. The last time I remember a beloved figure passing so quickly after retirement was the legendary "Bear" Bryant of Bama football fame, just a few months after he left the gridiron.

Andy's career spanned 70 years but his work will live forever. From WWII correspondent for Stars and Strips – the military newspaper then, he had a syndicated newspaper column but will forever be remembered for his iconic, Sunday evening run with the finals words on CBS's *60 Minutes*. "Fill your paper with the breathings of your heart," said William Wordsworth and that's exactly what Andy Rooney did. He was a writer's writer. The TV and radio just happened, but he was one of the grandest wordsmiths of modern times! As for Andy's verbiage talent, simply put, he said and wrote what we all thought.

When you write, you write to communicate to the hearts and minds of others what's burning inside you, and Andy was a master at that. He wrote about everything from the complicated, to the controversial, to the mundane and did so with ease, and read it during his *60 Minute* segments, sincerity and simplicity.

He was not complicated, he was real and a true curmudgeon, particularly as he became an octogenarian and beyond. He retired at 92 and passed shortly thereafter...what a ride! He captured Americana so consistently. He was not without controversy with his criticism of the gay movement, a suspension at CBS for those words and later, he apologized; he was not perfect, he was human. He was honest, he was cynical, he was funny, he was opinionated, and he was honorable.

"A writer and nothing else: a man alone in a room with the English language, trying to get human feelings right," said John K. Hutchens of the *New York Herald Tribune*. To those of us who make an effort to put pen to paper, that says it all. I fear our numbers are dwindling what with newspapers disappearing and libraries closing for lack of funds...these age-old bastions of inner-self and man's plight transcribed, what a shame. Yet, in my heart and in the finest tradition of Andy, I know there will be small minions who will forge on trying to preserve the art of visual, emotional, and yes, spiritual stimulation of civilization through the written word.

I know Andy is happy. He's with Walter and Edward R. and Harry and so many of his friends who have captured history for us and made us all aware...touching our hearts, our soles, and our minds, using the essence of communication – the written word.

And that's the way it was...Good Night, and Good Luck...tick,tick,tick,tick,tick...
And Good Night Mr. Rooney...where ever you are!