

# **Rush Limbaugh: Misunderstood, Adored, Irreplaceable Champion of Freedom**

America has been blessed by the work and presence of many fine and brave warriors throughout our history. Few, however, have had such a powerful and personal impact on the lives and freedom of all Americans as has Rush Limbaugh.

1988 seems like yesterday. I remember sitting in my office at Concerned Women for America, listening to a new national sensation: Rush Limbaugh. Life, for conservatives, was good: Ronald Reagan had been president for nearly eight years, and Limbaugh had hit the national scene like a ballistic missile and was growing ever more popular by the hour. Literally, by the hour.

It's no mistake that the lives of these two giants coincided. Without Reagan, Limbaugh never would have had a path to become a national champion for all that is good and right. Without Limbaugh and his "golden microphone," Reagan's now-lasting legacy as a champion for goodness never would have been fully realized. God knew that America needed both men at that precise time in our nation's history.

It was Reagan, who in 1987, ended the dictatorial and oppressive so-called, "Fairness Doctrine" that required the broadcast airwaves to give exposure to varying points of view, regardless of how stupid or un-American they were. Of course, that archaic policy meant that Americans were forced to listen to enormous amounts of drivel for every hour of content they chose to enjoy. It meant that there was no such thing as a free market when it came to radio programming. But Reagan ended all of that. And, when he did, it paved the way for an obscure radio host in California to launch onto the national

scene with his messages of freedom and personal responsibility, and in so doing, to take America by storm.

As previously said, without Reagan, there would have been no Rush Limbaugh. Without Limbaugh, there would be no Sean Hannity, or Mark Levin, or Hugh Hewitt or the hundreds of other freedom fighters who spread truth through the wonderful miracle of "talk radio."

Every weekday, for three hours a day, Limbaugh preached freedom to a population, joyous over what they were hearing about the real progress Reagan was making, but who were still reeling from the malaise daze of the Jimmy Carter years. Few others told the truth about what is possible when our country adheres to the United States Constitution. Limbaugh waxed eloquently about America's first principles and Reagan's policies, but the eloquence was defined not by lofty words and pious prose; it was instead raw, down to earth and from the gut. Limbaugh expressed what my dear dad felt every time he watched the crafty CBS news or read the nonsensical *New York Times*, virtually the only sources for news prior to the advent of Limbaugh: Rage at the lies.

Limbaugh quickly became the most listened-to man in America. Before him, Paul Harvey, another great radio freedom fighter, had been listened to far and wide, but only in brief commentary snippets. Harvey proved that Americans were hungry for programming that was, well, pro-America.

For over three decades, Limbaugh was the most listened-to man in the world. He launched as No. 1 and stayed at No. 1 throughout his brilliant career, with tens of millions of regular listeners hanging on to his every word.

Reagan launched the modern-day freedom movement, and Limbaugh fueled it. Because of their undying commitment to truth, the cry for freedom is still alive and well, even as Limbaugh's golden microphone falls silent. Make no mistake: The

socialists and liberals of today seek to silence all of the other microphones that belong to the many talk radio heroes that remain with us. Next time, they won't call it the "Fairness Doctrine," but they will try to control what you listen to through a pleasant-sounding term such as "localism." In honor of Limbaugh and of truth, we must fight them every step of the way.

On a personal note: For the last 12 years I've had the stunning privilege to work with the remarkable man who has done more over a longer period of time to advance freedom than anyone in our lifetime. Limbaugh believed in the power of the individual and that hope springs eternal for all of us when we are free. He loved America, not because it is perfect—but because it is established on bedrock principles that enable us to work toward a "more perfect" nation every day.

Limbaugh was a fount of wisdom, a lot of fun, a perfect gentleman—and, despite his radio persona—incredibly humble. He was largely misunderstood by those who based their opinions on quotes taken out of context by others whose goal is to remake America into something other than a free nation. But he was adored by the millions who actually listened to his show.

The question I've been hearing seemingly everywhere since Limbaugh bravely first announced his illness is: "Who will be the next Rush Limbaugh?" The answer is simple: No one. No single person will ever take his place. Ever. Thanks to Limbaugh's incredible generosity in sharing his microphone and his determination to build up other radio voices, many will continue to rise and advocate for freedom on the airwaves. Limbaugh made that possible. But there will always, always be only one Rush Limbaugh.

Limbaugh was generous to everyone he met. In fact, he gave me the iPad I'm using right now. Many times when I met with him at his studio, he would say, "Rebecca, do you have the latest iPhone?" I would hold up my phone, smile and say, "I still

have the last one you gave me.” He would then open his closet where he kept his stash of tech products and hand me the latest model. Or an iPad. Or both. He insisted that I needed the pink “rose” colored version of an iPhone in one meeting, but he was a little upset when he realized he didn’t have one in stock. So, about 10 days later, a beautiful rose-colored iPhone arrived in the mail. I’m sad to say that it recently fell out of my pocket when jumping aboard my boat. However, I still have the beautiful “pink” iPad he gave me, and I’m guessing that I’ll never, ever replace it now.

Thank you, Rush, for keeping the flame of freedom alive. I’m so grateful that your last days were spent abiding in the love of Christ, and that He allowed us to know you. We will continue your work—which is God’s work—born out of love for all people and for our magnificent country. {eoa}

**Rebecca Hagelin** *owns a boutique radio advertising company.*

*Follow breaking news like this and more in our new platform,*  
CHARISMA PLUS