

## GAYLE RUZICKA – My Eagle Forum Story . . .



It was over 40 years ago when I was sitting in the women's Relief Society meeting at my church and our leader told us about something called the Equal Rights Amendment. It sounded good to me until she explained what it actually meant. That was the beginning of many life changing events for me.

I grew up in a home with politically active parents so I had been taught that when there was work to be done for God, Family and Country, you rolled up your sleeves and went to work. I had a house full of children and another one on the way, but it was important that the ERA not become law. I lived in Idaho where the legislature had quickly passed the ERA before they understood the consequences. Thankfully, as we all began to understand the full impact of the legislation, the Idaho legislature voted to rescind their ratification of the ERA.

It was during this time that I learned about Phyllis Schlafly. I was in awe of this amazing woman and never dreamed at that time that she would become a very important person in my life. We moved to Arizona where there was a very active Eagle Forum organization and I became involved, serving on the Arizona Eagle Forum board, and in that capacity, met and got to know Phyllis. When we moved to Utah she asked me to be the Utah Eagle Forum President. That was almost 30 years ago.



It was my privilege to be mentored by Phyllis Schlafly. She was truly the Esther of our time. Under her direction, we have been able to build a large and influential organization in Utah. I have always had wonderful board members with at least 25 chapters all around the state. Phyllis made several trips to Utah to help us with our organization and to teach us what we

needed to do to be successful. It was a joy to be able to spend so much time with Phyllis and to enjoy a special friendship that went beyond politics. She was like family to me and I miss her so much.



My entire family has been involved in my political activities. My children served as interns at the Utah Capitol for Utah Eagle Forum. They have been involved with Teen Eagles, attended the Eagle Forum Collegians in Washington D.C. for several years and always attended Eagle Council with me. When they were very young, some as young as 4, they came with me to the Utah Capitol. My husband has always supported me and we never left our children behind while we participated in political activities. Now, I have grandchildren who are involved and I hope to bring them to Eagle Council this year in Washington D.C.

At Phyllis's request, my husband and I have run and been elected as National Republican delegates and have attended the National Republican Convention six times as delegates. We have never attended a convention without taking some of our children or grandchildren, and some of them have also served as delegates.

I am so grateful for the many years I had the opportunity to work with and learn from Phyllis Schlafly. I love and miss her.

