

Ethan Rush – “My Eagle Forum Story”



The values promoted by Eagle Forum were instilled in me at a young age. I was blessed to be born into a family that possessed a very strong belief in America and American values. My mother is a Christian and my late father was Jewish. (My mom was also 30 years younger than my dad.) My mother was from Jefferson City, Missouri, and my father, a World War II combat veteran, grew up in a small town in Georgia. While their backgrounds, and ages, would seem to make them an unlikely

pair, they shared one thing in common: Values. They were also extremely patriotic and had a very strong love of politics. It was always about politics in my house!

Since as long as I can remember, my parents were strong supporters of Phyllis Schlafly and members of Eagle Forum and the Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation. Literature from these organizations was always on top of everything else on our coffee table. From an early age, I started reading these newsletters and recognized that they reflected my beliefs and values, in such logical and concise terms that I could find nowhere else. I learned a valuable lesson when discussing political issues with others: State your position; clearly and concisely present your facts; and do so graciously, without any animosity toward the other person. This came in handy when, in the sixth grade, I remember having an “intense discussion” about Watergate with a fellow classmate. I’m not sure I understood everything that was going on with the Watergate situation, but I knew the basics. As my classmate descended into name-calling and demonization of me, I employed what I felt was the “Phyllis Schlafly approach.” In the end, I convinced my classmate (and perhaps more importantly, those around us) that maybe I wasn’t such a bad guy after-all and maybe my opinions deserved at least some consideration.

A few years ago, Phyllis Schlafly was my landlord when I had an office at 7800 Bonhomme. On one occasion, I walked into Phyllis’ office, with quite a bit of trepidation, to tell her about an idea I had for a Missouri constitutional amendment. She listened intently and then asked how SHE could help me. Here I am, in the presence of a conservative icon, and this woman is focused on what I want to do and how she could help me achieve my goal. She made it clear that as long as I was pursuing a conservative principle, she was there to help me, and not the other way around. She recognized me as a grass-roots supporter, and a volunteer, and that was her focus. I believe that is what made Phyllis Schlafly an extremely effective and cherished leader. She was always very gracious and kind to me.

Prior to meeting Phyllis, I had gotten to know Phyllis’ daughter, Anne Cori. Anne obviously shared the same qualities as her mother, and I was honored when she asked me to serve as a director of Missouri Eagle Forum.

I am blessed to have a wife, mother, and sister, who share my values and beliefs. I also have three children, including a son who is an Army ROTC cadet at Rhodes College in Memphis, another son who is becoming a political dynamo in high school, and a 10 year-old daughter who, so far anyway, is more interested in riding her bike, playing with her dolls, and digging up worms in the mud (so I still have some hope for her). I hope to impart in all of my children the values Eagle Forum has instilled in me.