

COLLEEN HOLCOMB: MY EAGLE FORUM STORY



I was introduced to Phyllis Schlafly at the most unlikely of places, radical liberal Senator Ted Kennedy's office where I was completing an internship through the feminist bastion of Wellesley College.

Growing up in a working-class suburb of Cleveland, Ohio, I naively thought that the best way to pursue my goal to be a pro-life conservative activist would involve attending a prestigious east coast college in order to break into politics. I had no idea at the time how hostile universities, especially in the North East were to my goals and values. Ironically, however, it was there that I learned about a woman named Phyllis Schlafly. Phyllis was perceived as a villain among the feminists. I began reading her writings and was absolutely amazed! Her writings that helped me defend my conservative positions.

I was in awe of Phyllis' brilliant, yet easily understood articulation of American exceptionalism. I was also thrilled by Phyllis' and Eagle Forum's non-elitist conservatism, and her unique understanding of how devastating feminist policy and ideology truly are to women. Phyllis also not only taught but showed that conservatives can win by coming together around their principles instead of compromising those principles, as the Establishment always demands.

Following law school, I knew I wanted to be a part of Eagle Forum, so from time to time I would write to Phyllis asking how I could get involved. After nine years of making periodic inquiries, I finally got a response. I had the privilege of being hired as the executive director of Eagle Forum's Washington D.C. office, which was and still is, my dream job.

While there, I was consistently amazed by the respect with which I was received on Capitol Hill and among other conservative organizations because legislators, other conservative leaders, and their staff knew that I represented Phyllis and the faithful and effective leaders she trained and led.



One of my favorite aspects of the job was accompanying Phyllis to conservative gatherings throughout the country where, one after another, people would approach her saying that her book, *A Choice Not an Echo*, changed their lives and brought them into the conservative movement.

It was especially exciting to see young people at events like CPAC flock to Phyllis begging to get a picture with her, girls declaring they wanted to be just like her, boys declaring they wanted to marry a girl just like her. My favorite was the college student who unapologetically declared that he had a crush on her. (Gracious as always, she let him down gently.)

As inspiring as Phyllis' life and legacy, are the leaders she attracted and the faithfulness she inspires.

Just a few weeks after coming onboard with Phyllis, I attended Eagle Council, Eagle Forum's annual gathering of activists from across the country. There I got to witness Phyllis' beloved "Eagles" in action. I'll never forget receiving "breaking news" during a speaker's presentation about hidden funding for liberal causes in a bill on which



Congress was set to vote the next week. Afterwards, inspired but overwhelmed, I headed for bed. But before I could even get to my hotel room, these unstoppable activists had already mobilized their troops by sending email alerts to their network of activists clearly setting forth the problem and providing instructions on how to stop this terrible bill. I learned that Eagles don't sleep when there is more work to be done to defend freedom!

During a radio program, Phyllis was asked about the concept of success. She explained that she did not think much about success, but rather, pursued faithfulness. The rest, she explained, was up to God. For this reason, she signed all her letters with the humble close, "Faithfully, Phyllis."

Eagle Forum leaders are a rare breed of exceptional talent, intellect, character and they embody the faithfulness that Phyllis advocated and inspired. The excellence and devotion Phyllis and the Eagles chose as a way of life cannot help but inspire others to join the fight!

Whatever motivates you, whether it's fighting for the unborn, protecting children and our military from damaging liberal experimentation or fighting to maintain America's exceptional commitment to freedom and individual liberty, Eagle Forum can equip you to be a secret weapon. **Please join us in Arlington, Virginia, September 14-17, 2017 for Eagle Council XLVI, where you will be trained, equipped and inspired to carry on fight for freedom.**