

Red Skelton - The Pledge of Allegiance

>From the Red Skelton Hour, January 14, 1969

"Getting back to school, I remember a teacher that I had. Now I only went, I went through the seventh grade. I left home when I was 10 years old because I was hungry. (laughter) And .. this is true. I worked in the summer and went to school in the winter. But, I had this one teacher, he was the principal of the Harrison school, in Vincennes, Indiana. To me, this was the greatest teacher, a real sage of..of my time, anyhow. He had such wisdom. We were all reciting the Pledge of Allegiance one day, and he walked over. This little old teacher ... Mr. Lasswell was his name. He said:

> "I've been listening to you boys and girls recite the Pledge of Allegiance
> all semester and it seems as though it is becoming monotonous to you. If I
> may, may I recite it and try to explain to you the meaning of each word? I
>
> me, an individual, a committee of one.Pledge
>
> dedicate all of my worldly goods to give without self-pity.Allegiance
>
> my love and my devotion.To the Flag
>
> [of the]our standard, Old Glory, a symbol of freedom. Wherever she waves,
> there's respect because your loyalty has given her a dignity that shouts
> freedom is everybody's job.United
>
> that means that we have all come together.States
>
> [of America]individual communities that have united into 48 great states.
> 48 individual communities with pride and dignity and purpose, all divided
> with imaginary boundaries, yet united to a common purpose, and that's love
> for country.and to the Republic
>
> For Which It StandsRepublic ... a state in which sovereign power is
> invested in representatives chosen by the people to govern. And government
> is the people and it's from the people to the leaders, not from the leaders
> to the people.One Nation
>
> One Nation ... meaning, so blessed by God.Indivisible
>
> incapable of being divided.With Liberty
>
> which is freedom, the right of power to live one's own life, without

> threats, fear, or some sort of retaliation. And Justice
>
> the principle or qualities of dealing fairly with others. For All
>
> For all ... which means, boys and girls, it's as much your country as it is
> mine.
> And now boys and girls let me hear you recite, the Pledge of Allegiance."
"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the
republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and
justice for all."

Since I was a small boy, two states have been added to our country, and two
words have been added to the Pledge of Allegiance - "under God." Wouldn't it
be a pity if someone said, "That is a prayer," and that would be eliminated
from schools, too?"

-Red Skelton