

McCain embodied wisdom, service

Posted: Tuesday, August 28, 2018

“McCain, with his irascible grin and fighter-pilot moxie, was a fearless and outspoken voice on policy and politics to the end, unswerving in his defense of Democratic values and unflinching in his criticism of his fellow Republican, President Donald Trump,” Nancy Benac wrote in Sunday’s Daily News. “In the politics of the moment and in national political debate over the decades, McCain energetically advanced his ideas and punched back hard at critics.”

First, although I did not agree with McCain on several issues, I always respected the way he conducted himself as an elected official and as a human being. He appreciated the inherent nature of the deliberative process as envisioned by the framers; to be genuinely productive, resolving political differences requires mutual respect and discourse that is truly civil.

Second, McCain understood the importance of doing your homework. Unlike many of his contemporaries, before he cast a vote in the Senate, McCain actually read and carefully considered the implications of the legislation he was being asked to support. He believed that adherence to a set of clearly defined principles is more important than winning a negotiation.

Third, McCain did not feel the need to attack and denigrate those who disagreed with him. Sure, he could be fierce in his advocacy of the issues and concerns he deemed relevant to preserving the American way of life, but he did not demonize those who did not share his particular vision. If you doubt this, Google his 2008 presidential concession speech. It’s a textbook case of how to handle defeat while putting country ahead of party.

“We must not confuse dissent with disloyalty,” Edward R. Murrow once famously said. McCain embodied the wisdom of this simple maxim in a way that eludes almost everyone who resides in Washington D.C. these days.

RIP Sen. John McCain.

Aaron W. Hughey
Bowling Green

www.bgdailynews.com