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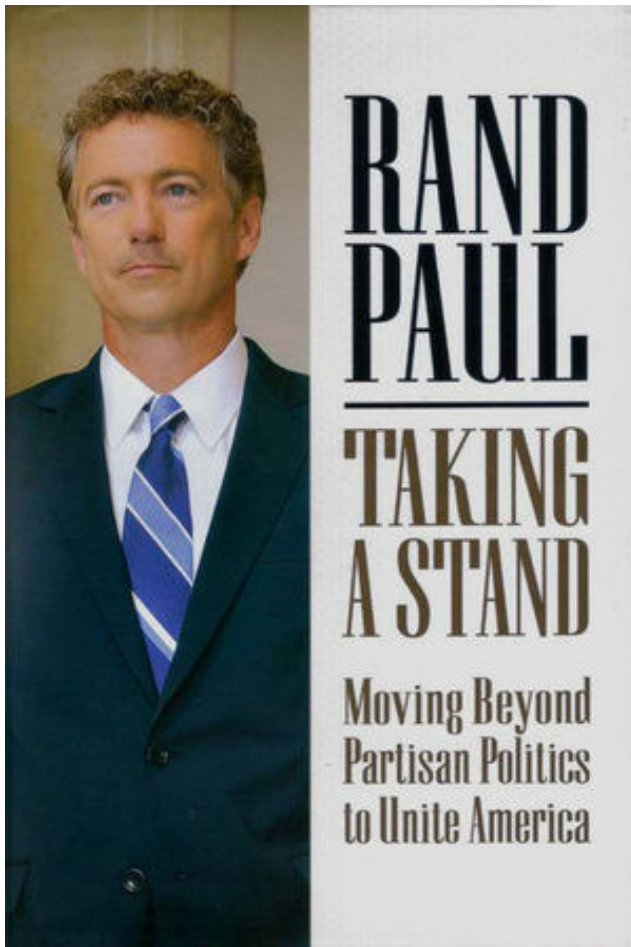
DAILY NEWS

Pauls offer something for everyone

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"Taking a Stand: Moving Beyond Partisan Politics to Unite America," by Rand Paul. New York: Center Street (Hachette Book Group), 2015. 312 pages, \$27.

"True and Constant Friends: Love and Inspiration from Our Grandmothers, Mothers, and Friends," by Kelley Paul. New York: Center Street (Hachette Book Group), 2015. 143 pages, \$25.



"It is a noble aspiration and a moral obligation to make sure our fellow man is provided for, that medical treatment is available to all," Rand Paul argues in "Health Care: A Doctor's Opinion," the third chapter – and one of my personal favorites – of "Taking a Stand: Moving Beyond Partisan Politics to Unite America," his new book on how to get America back on the road to greatness.

"But compassion cannot be delivered in the form of coercion," he continues. "In the current system, there are two problems. Government is the only 'insurance' you can get, and the system is estimated to be \$35 trillion in the hole over the next few decades."

I was initially skeptical of Paul's plan to make affordable health care available to a larger percentage of our population. Most of what I know about his political ideology has come from his proponents, his rivals and the pundits who are never at a loss to fill in the gaps whenever there seems to be a lack of detail regarding his proposals.

After taking time to actually read and reflect on his various recommendations in his own prose, however, I have a somewhat more palpable view

of both the man as well as his positions. Even though I do not agree with him on a whole host of concerns related to our collective future, I did find his approach to be philosophically consistent and intellectually defensible. Paul is not naïve when it comes to understanding and appreciating the fundamental issues confronting this country, nor is he overly optimistic about how quickly they can be judiciously addressed.

Paul was elected to the U.S. Senate from Kentucky in 2010. He attended Baylor University and has a degree from Duke University School of Medicine. A practicing ophthalmologist in Bowling Green since 1993, his previous books include "The Tea Party Goes to Washington" and "Government Bullies: How Everyday Americans Are Being Harassed, Abused, and Imprisoned by

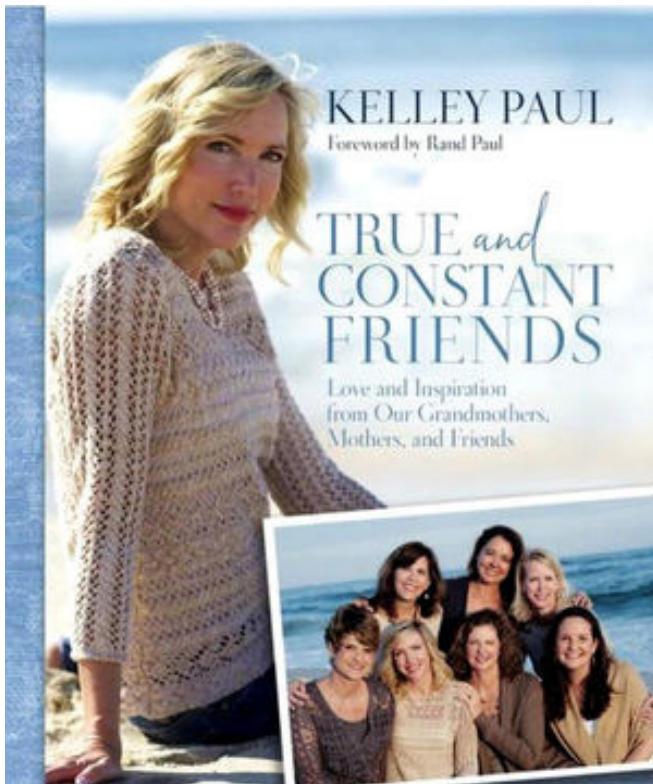
the Feds.” He is the son of Ron Paul, former Texas congressman and perennial presidential candidate.

“Taking a Stand” consists of 17 relatively succinct chapters and can easily be digested in one or two sittings. Moreover, the conservative treatise is suitably researched given its overall orientation, with seven pages of source notes at the conclusion of the main narrative. Paul’s literary style is accessible to a wide audience; the basic concepts and their proposed applications are fairly straightforward and articulated in a clear-cut, no-nonsense manner.

As a devout libertarian – a label he wears proudly even though it often puts him at odds with his fellow legislators, including Mitch McConnell, the other high-profile U.S. senator from Kentucky – Paul is unapologetic in his denunciation of the seemingly ever-expanding intrusion of government on the everyday lives of ordinary citizens. What tends to separate Paul from many of his contemporaries, however, is the frank and unambiguous way he presents his outlook. Agree or disagree, at least you know where he stands on some of the most significant challenges we face. To illustrate, consider the following excerpt from “Government Overreach,” the ninth chapter: “Each year, federal and local law enforcement agencies team up to confiscate billions of dollars from people they suspect of criminal behavior. You don’t have to be convicted of a crime to lose your property. The government can take your truck, your house and your cash even if they never charge you or even if you are found innocent.”

“Here’s what I believe,” he continues. “Our criminal justice system is built on the immutable fact that the burden of proof should always be on the government. That statement has no wiggle room, and it applies equally to all Americans. There is a simple answer to government overreach. It is called the Constitution.”

One of the most important things we can do in life is keep our minds open to alternative points of view. If you truly want to know where Paul is coming from – in his own words – then pick up a copy of his latest release. You won’t be disappointed.



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And now, as Monty Python used to say, for something completely different.

Whereas the senator’s tome is essentially a political manifesto, his wife Kelley Paul’s effort is more a testament to the undeniable power of family and friendships.

His contribution inspires intense debate on what the appropriate role of government should be in a democratic society; and she speaks more to the heart. If pressed to identify a common theme uniting the two books, it would probably entail self-reliance accentuated by the supreme importance of family.

“In spite of these hardships, my grandmother had a great hopefulness about her that never wavered,” Kelley Paul explains in “Grandma Julia, My Irish Blessing,” the second chapter of “True and Constant Friends: Love and Inspiration from Our Grandmothers, Mothers, and Friends,” her inspirational book

chronicling the importance of the relationships that have sustained her throughout her life. “Many immigrants of her generation expected life to be hard and full of struggle, so they kept their dreams

modest, their lives focused on saving and preparing themselves for whatever loss or difficulty lay around the corner. ...

“But my grandmother, even into her old age, kept a joyful expectation of surprise about her,” Kelley continues. “I know her strong faith in God’s goodness was a big part of that. She always had a beautiful strand of rosary beads nearby that I found fascinating and mysterious, having been raised a Baptist. Her Catholic faith was an integral part of her inherent optimism, a source of both joy and sustenance for her.”

OK. If you are not headed out the door to pick up a copy of this exquisite primer on what is truly important, then you may want to take some time to seriously re-examine your priorities in life. I found the book difficult to put down; each page had something poignant and revealing to share. Eventually, I gave up trying to find a suitable stopping place and just ended up finishing the entire volume in the wee hours of a Saturday morning.

“True and Constant Friends” is made up of 10 exquisitely-written chapters, each dedicated to a different virtue (hope, courage, friendship, etc.); it is storytelling in its truest sense. Kelley Paul is a masterful writer; she literally transports you to the scenes she describes in an almost magical way few authors I have run across have the ability to do. Much of the chronicle is an historical and heartfelt account of the people, places and events that helped mold her into the woman she is today.

The essays Kelley Paul features are beautifully illustrated with an assortment of pictures, drawings and paintings that both complement the text as well as enhance its aesthetic qualities. As noted in the introduction, much of the artwork was done by women associated with the HomeFront Family Preservation Center in Lawrence, N.J., which provides a supportive and nurturing environment for homeless mothers and their children. I spent a considerable amount of time studying these amazing portraits; it is obvious most were inspired by the unimaginable hardships endured by the artists who produced them within a therapeutic context.

Kelley Paul attended Rhodes College and worked as a political consultant for The Strategy Group for Media. She is currently a fundraiser for charities aimed at helping wounded veterans. One of the most endearing and emotional episodes included, at least for me, comes from “Loss,” the ninth chapter. Here, Blair, Kelley Paul’s roommate from Rhodes College, tells of the passing of her father and the impact it had on everyone in her life – especially her mother.

“In January 1982, when I was in the middle of my freshman year at Rhodes College, my handsome, energetic and outgoing father suddenly died at only 41,” Blair recounts. “I was in the midst of what was the happiest, most exhilarating season of my young life – I had done well in my first semester classes and was excited about pledging a sorority. Best of all, I had already made friends at college, real friends.”

It was the elegant description of her mother’s resolve after this tragic event, however, that really got to me: “She has lived alone since 1982, in the same house I grew up in. Her loyal group of friends has lost a few members to illness through the years, but they continue to support one another through good times and bad. My mother is always the first on the phone for any of them in times of need, asking what she can do, dropping off groceries and casseroles, giving rides to the airport or the doctor’s office, whatever is required. She is much loved and she gives much in return. I have often taken her strength for granted, never really thought that she was that remarkable until I was older, and a mother myself. Now I am in awe of her bravery, independence, and sense of adventure. She did not allow loss to rob her of joy.”

Blair’s mother sounds a lot like mine was in many respects, which is perhaps why I found her steadfastness in the face of adversity so moving. I suspect many readers have, or have had, parents or other relatives who exhibit the same qualities, which makes it easy to relate to the delicate snippets of life Kelley Paul has captured so well.

Even though I took some grief from a few of my more liberal friends for attending their joint signing event at our local Barnes & Noble a few weeks ago, I am glad I got the opportunity to meet the man who wrote “Taking a Stand” and the woman who penned “True and Constant Friends.” As the old adage goes, there really is something here for everyone. I recommend both books without reservation.

— *Reviewed by Aaron W. Hughey, Department of Counseling and Student Affairs, Western Kentucky University.*

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