

**PERSPECTIVE: Until We Meet Again**  
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Heroes are hard to come by, especially ones in the spotlight. I lost a hero the other day. He was a childhood hero. Roy Rogers died July 6.

It may sound trite to say that a Western folk singer and movie star was my hero, but he was. What was his attraction? The white hat, the fact that he always got the bad guy — without having to shoot him — or maybe that people used to tell me that he looked like my dad.

I think it was also his compassion. SGI President Ikeda always says that we should look at a person's behavior. Roy Rogers lived the way he believed — he was true to himself. His longtime sidekick, Pat Brady, once said, "Roy really believed in all those things,... truth, kindness, decency, and he lived that way as near as a man could."

As I combed the Web for articles about him, I found a few things that I didn't know. That he bought his first house in 1939, when he was finally beginning to make some money as a struggling musician. But he didn't buy it for himself; he bought it for his parents. And he refused to allow the movie industry PR machine to capitalize on that.

I found a few quotes from him that I hadn't heard before, like "When I was a boy, our parents taught us that hitting below the belt was a cowardly thing." And my favorite: "Today, there are some movies I wouldn't take Trigger to see." He prided himself on the fact that he made movies without sex or violence. In fact, he claimed that he never even kissed anyone on screen.

I still have, believe it or not, old pictures of Roy and Dale, their horses, Trigger and Buttermilk, and their dog, Bullet. But the picture I like best was of them with their children. They had nine altogether.

When he died at age 86, he was survived by six children, 15 grandchildren and 33 great-grandchildren. And many, many "Buckaroos" like me.

I was one of those who grew up watching television in the '50s, who was influenced by his behavior. I would save my money to send in and buy his autographed pictures.

I would look at the picture of his family, all sitting on the fence in their cowboy outfits. I would read how he and Dale had adopted a Native American child and a child with a Korean background. And I would think: "Someday, I'm going to have a family like that. I'm going to have a family like the United Nations!"

I followed that dream and adopted two children from Korea. But I stopped at two.

And fortunately, I found the Gohonzon and the SGI-USA, where I found a new family. Mysteriously, the district that I practice in has had, and still has, many students from various nationalities, backgrounds and experiences. Some of "my students" from 10 years ago still call me Mom, even though they are married with kids of their own.

I read something interesting recently in "Friends for Peace" (July 3 *World Tribune*). In answer to the question "What makes someone a hero?" it says that "Each hero makes a unique and lasting contribution to the lives of those who surround and follow him or her." Like it or not, Hollywood does influence our youth. I guess I was fortunate to have been influenced by one of its best.

We also have the power to influence others. Every day, we come in contact with people, members, their children and their children's friends. You never know the impact that you are going to have on someone's life by your behavior.

So, to Roy: Thanks.

Thanks for having the courage to remain true to yourself, for doing what you believed in. And...happy trails to you.

Until we meet again.

**WT**