

IT'S ALWAYS ABOUT
"THE PEOPLE"

by Timothy J. Muise

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If you ever met Eleanor McCullen you would be immediately impacted by the power of spirit in this four-foot nothing example of human kindness. Her gentle spirit and caring demeanor shine through from the first words exchanged. Like many citizens in this "In God We Trust" nation, Eleanor is a person of faith. She believes in something higher and all knowing; and under our hard won freedoms that is her right.

Mrs. McCullen is not one to get in a debate over abortion; the "right to life" Vs. "the right to choose" is not who she is. She does have her own position, and for the most part she keeps it to herself, but she was very concerned that young girls who were undecided if they wanted to bring pregnancies to term did not have enough options. With that in her heart she worked with other concerned people to form a network of citizen counselors who could offer these women a place to live and services to help with their pregnancy concerns. She was not a "pro-life" protestor, she was someone who wanted to offer young women a choice; a real choice.

When Eleanor went to Planned Parenthood to pass out her assistance literature she found she could not practice her "free speech" as there was a huge buffer zone, complete with painted yellow line and all, keeping citizens away from the doors of the clinic. Eleanor could not understand why the state would allow such "laws" to be employed? She was not a criminal and felt she had a right to speak to these young women. Like everything else in her life Eleanor put her heart, and most importantly her actions, into solving this problem. These actions became McCullen Vs. Planned Parenthood and the case made it all the way to the United States Supreme Court!

At two points in the Supreme Court arguments Justice Scalia admonished the Assistant Attorney General representing the "buffer zone" for calling Eleanor a "protestor". Justice Scalia told counsel for the defendants that Eleanor was a "counselor". Sometimes the High Court gets it right! The years of battle on this issue had culminated in our four-foot nothing Saint amassing a huge legal team and standing before the highest court in the land; the most powerful court in the world! This citizen, this representative of the "People", prevailed in front of the Supreme Court and the buffer zones were ordered to be eliminated. They violated the "free speech" of "The People".

Let us never forget that the cases that make it to the high court are always about the people. Politics, religion, abuse of power, and freedoms are the issues, but the issues are the People's issues and the high court must protect those who reside in this great land. Eleanor McCullen is a shining example of those residents; those all important citizens. She did not argue the politics of religion. She argued her right to help other citizens as a duty from on high. This is what The Supreme Court of the United States of America is there to serve. It is always about the people. Let us never forget that.

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