

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	our standard, Old Glory, a symbol of freedom. Wherever she waves, there's respect because your loyalty has given her a dignity that
[of the]	shouts freedom is everybody's job.
United	that means that we have all come together.
States	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
[of America]	that's love for country.
and to the Republic	Republic ... 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.
For Which It Stands	
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