

Tribute by Bob Novak

Bob Novak was a truly great newspaperman. Here is a portion of his speech at Phyllis Schlafly's 80th Birthday Gala on September 18, 2004.

“The first I ever heard of Phyllis Schlafly was in 1964 when she published *A Choice Not an Echo*. I read the book and I thought it was one of the best-written, most interesting, fascinating pieces of political advocacy that I had ever read in my life. And I wouldn't say I disagreed with everything in it, but damn near everything. Now, I am in the process of writing my memoirs and I came across a copy of the book in the process and I sat down and read it all the way through. I couldn't stop. And you know, forty years later, I agree with almost everything in it.

“I tell people that I have had a long journey to the right and I say I get a little more conservative every day. I agree with Phyllis on almost everything now, but not everything. I'm working at it. And I hope I'll get there. She has been very important in guiding me to the right, which has been incremental and not sudden.

“One of my favorite things over the years has been covering Republican Platform hearings...and watching Phyllis Schlafly in action at these hearings. It is awesome! Here is a person who holds no public office, usually not a party position, doesn't work for a big lobbying firm, doesn't represent a big corporation or a special interest group, and she instills awe, fear, respect, and she has influence. I really do believe that the Republican party remaining a pro-life party would not have been possible all these years if it had not been for the work at these Platform hearings and sessions of Phyllis Schlafly. Because, Presidential candidates, even incumbent presidents – we won't name names – wanted to bail out on that issue, on many occasions, I can guarantee you...the last hearing – the last session of the Platform committee at the Jacob Javits building in New York – she was really awesome. Phyllis has principles. And she, I believe, has not only influenced the draft of the Platform, but she influenced how the changes were made. She was the only force from the outside that had any influence...because all the Platform committee members wanted to do was get along with the White House.

“But I believe it is part of the conservative movement and part of being an American that you don't salam when the people in power say you have to do something, and Phyllis Schlafly has led the way on that.”