

The Pledge of Allegiance Recited by Red Skelton

from The Red Skelton Hour, CBS TV, January 14, 1969
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(To see Red Skelton recite the Pledge of Allegiance on YouTube, use the following URL:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kfz2XDXaegc>)

On January 14, 1969, Red Skelton touched the hearts of millions of Americans with his "**Pledge of Allegiance**", in which he explained the meaning of each and every word. Red Skelton's recitation of the "**Pledge of Allegiance**" was twice read into the Congressional Record of the United States and received numerous awards.

It begins:

"I remember this one teacher. To me, he was the greatest teacher, a real sage of my time. He had such wisdom. We were all reciting the *Pledge of Allegiance* and he walked over. 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 is respect, because your loyalty has given her a dignity that shouts, Freedom is everybody's job.

of the United

That means that we have all come together.

States

Individual communities that have united into forty-eight great states. Forty-eight individual communities with pride and dignity and purpose. All divided with imaginary boundaries, yet united to a common purpose, and that is 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 quality, 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?"

Sadly, Red Skelton was prophetic - the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals did exactly that. On June 26, 2002, the Pledge of Allegiance was banned from the public schools. The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals has ruled that, since the pledge contains the phrase "under God," it is an unconstitutional establishment of a religion. The court, shocked by popular outrage, put a stay on the order until the entire 9th Circuit Court could review it. As of March 28, 2003, the 9th Circuit Court had done so -- and upheld the original judgment. Attorney General John Ashcroft condemned the decision and said the Justice Department will "spare no effort to preserve the rights of all our citizens to pledge allegiance to the American flag." On June 15th, 2004, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled unanimously that the phrase "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance would remain intact as a patriotic oath in public schools, despite efforts by atheist Michael Newdow to remove the phrase as a First Amendment violation. The 8-0 ruling (with Antonin Scalia having removed

himself) came ironically on Flag Day, and exactly 50 years after Congress added the phrase "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance. As a result, the Pledge of Allegiance, in its entirety, will continue to be recited by public school students as an oath to their country. However, the court effectively ruled on a technicality -- since Mr. Newdow did not have primary custody of his daughter, in whose name he sued, he had no right to bring legal suit in the first place. The Supreme Court did not rule on the constitutionality of the phrase "under God" nor on the supposedly constitution "separation of church and state."