

“Charlie Kirk Built His Career With Words and Courage”

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By Joel Pollak

LOS ANGELES, Calif.—Charlie Kirk wrote to us at Breitbart in 2012 as a highschool student, and we proudly published his first foray into political commentary.

A friend ever since, Charlie had been inspired by Andrew Breitbart, who had passed away just weeks before, and wanted to know if we could help him stand up for conservative views at his high school.

In the spirit of citizen journalism, upon which Breitbart was founded, we encouraged this young high-schooler to write down his thoughts and submit them for publication.

Charlie never looked back. He built his career that way: with words, and with courage.

It took incredible bravery, and mental sharpness, to debate people with opposing views on college campuses, taking on all comers and all questions.

His mind was clear and uncorrupted by what our universities have become. He understood that civil discourse was the way, which fueled his ability to debate anyone, anywhere.

Charlie proved to be not only an exceptional debater but an exceptional organizer, fundraiser and administrator, launching Turning Point USA, which changed youth politics in America.

He reached young voters, but his influence extended far beyond that.

My 10-year-old son told me today that he had enjoyed watching Charlie’s videos on YouTube—that he knew our family was Republican, but it was only after watching Charlie that he understood why.

This is a sentiment that I’ve heard from other parents throughout the day after Charlie’s assassination.

I admired Charlie, even though I disagreed with him at times. I thought he was too didactic in his approach to social issues.

He was right, but when he told young people to stop partying and get married, I thought it better to say: Marriage is when the party really starts.

But that was Charlie: You could disagree with him and still respect him, even love him, and he would love you back.

He found love and happiness in his young family. You could say that his most effective argument was not a clever turn of phrase at the podium or on social media, but simply the way he lived.

He was not afraid to lead; he was not afraid to share his faith; he was not afraid to take a chance on an unpopular view.

In doing so, he inspired millions.

I am furious about his assassination. Despite having little information about the assassin, I believe the left has created a landscape that normalizes violence against the right.

And I believe that the left has never had to answer for its violent rhetoric—not after the shooting of a Republican baseball practice in 2017; not even after the assassination attempts against President Trump last year.

There was no soul-searching; there were no investigations; there were no calls for civility.

Much of the left simply went back to talking about Trump and his supporters as it always had—in ways that ultimately could lead to violence.

But I have to put that anger aside—not because his enemies deserve mercy, but because of who Charlie was and how he died.

He was assassinated doing what he loved and what he did so well: He was exercising his right to free speech and encouraging civil dialogue among any who would participate.

He wanted his opponents to be as free as he was—even when they were hateful and wrong.

I knew a happy warrior once, who changed my life. His name was Andrew Breitbart.

Charlie Kirk was likewise a happy warrior who changed the lives of so many.