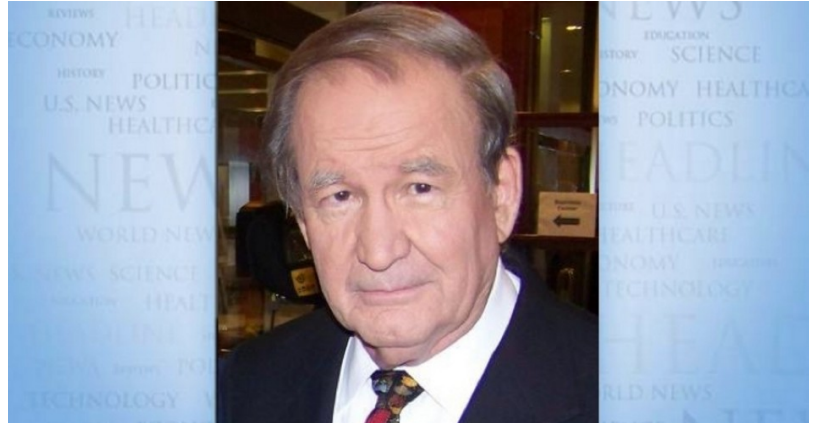




Pat Buchanan's Retirement

It was with disappointment — but not surprise — that I read of the recent retirement of Pat Buchanan from writing his regular syndicated column. Sadly, I knew that day had to come. I can remember how much I used to look forward to getting my daily newspaper, then called *The Daily Oklahoman*, out of the yard, largely to read either his column or that of the late Joseph Sobran. Unfortunately, the *Oklahoman's* publisher at the time, Edward L. Gaylord, has since passed away, and his children sold the newspaper. After changing hands a few times, it is now part of the *USA Today* network — and it shows.



Bbsrock/Wikimedia Commons
Patrick Buchanan

No longer does the *Oklahoman* carry the columns of Pat Buchanan, or anyone else very conservative. Instead, we are fed a steady diet of either progressives no doubt approved of by *USA Today*, or neoconservatives offering only a slightly different version of the same left-wing praise of Big Government, globalism, and woke ideology.

Buchanan did not fit that mold, for sure. Not only did Pat's columns support America's national sovereignty and oppose the globalist ideology that dominates American political discourse today, the way he put words together in his prose was almost like poetry. I have often said, "If I could only write like Pat Buchanan."

But it was his courage to take stands that opposed the march toward global government — often unpopular — that were truly great. I can still remember reading his column one morning (in the aforementioned *Oklahoman* newspaper) in August 1990. Saddam Hussein had just sent Iraqi troops into neighboring Kuwait, and already the neoconservatives were clamoring for direct American intervention. Buchanan's knowledge of history was unmatched, and he often used that to provide a guide to present and future action, as he did in this case.

Going against the winds of interventionism, Buchanan warned against sending American troops into the Middle East to fight a land war. He said, with typical Buchanan prescience, that once America became directly involved in the Middle East with soldiers, we would probably never leave. As the years have passed, I have often thought of that prediction.

It has often been said that if you want a friend in D.C., get a dog. I would say the next-best thing would be Pat Buchanan. When many Republicans were abandoning Ronald Reagan in the Iran-Contra Scandal, and in Buchanan's words, "heading for the tall grass," Buchanan was almost alone in publicly defending him.

I have read several commentaries, both pro and con, about Buchanan since his announced retirement, and in reading them my deep admiration for him has only deepened further. Scott McConnell, the self-described ex-neocon who wrote *Ex-NeoCon: Dispatches From the Post-9/11 Ideological Wars*, gushed with praise for the influence of Buchanan in *The American Conservative*, a magazine for which he is a



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founding editor.

McConnell wrote, “One cannot go today to a mainstream conservative event and not hear praise for Pat Buchanan. And yet, the country seems content to let its foreign policy remain steered by the same kind of assertive globalism that prompted the Iraq war. The southern border is far more open than it was in 2000.”

It was in 2000 that Buchanan left the Republican Party, defeated Donald Trump for the Reform Party nomination, and took on the Democrat-Republican establishment in the presidential election. It was, as McConnell wrote, an election Buchanan “hoped to turn into a referendum on trade, immigration, and foreign policy — and the nearly identical views held on them by Bush and Gore.”

McConnell did not support Buchanan in the early 1990s, and at the time, he believed Pat was “wrong” in opposing the first Iraq war. But, McConnell admits that Buchanan was “right in foreseeing where the impulse for an American-run ‘new world order’ would eventually lead.” Eventually, it became apparent to McConnell that Buchanan was “pretty much right, and that all of my political and intellectual associates” were pretty much wrong.

What Buchanan managed to do in the ‘90s, McConnell wrote, was to create “almost single-handedly a counterpoint to an establishment conservatism that was not conserving anything.”

Even many of those who are the epitome of that establishment conservatism recognized the impact of Pat Buchanan in their commentaries, written upon the announcement of his retirement. *National Review’s* Michael Brendan Dougherty wrote of Buchanan, “He’ll be remembered as one of the most consequential conservative voices of the past 50 years.”

Writing in *The New York Times*, Nicole Hemmer commented that Buchanan knew that “the greatest vacuum in American politics is to the right of Ronald Reagan.” Hemmer recalled Buchanan’s campaigns for president in the 1990s (against President George H.W. Bush, Senator Robert Dole, and Texas Governor George W. Bush), in which Buchanan raised issues that few seemed all that interested in at the time.

“I am calling attention to a national disgrace,” Buchanan told a crowd of supporters on the nation’s southern border in 1992. That “disgrace” was the failure of the national government to protect the borders of the United States. As Hemmer noted, he called for a “Buchanan fence” to block migration from the south.

She credited — or blamed — Buchanan for the election of Donald Trump in 2016, and certainly Trump’s themes of “America First” were little different from the themes trumpeted by Buchanan years earlier: opposition to the globalism that was promoting so-called free trade and military adventurism around the world.

The *Intelligencer* was even more critical, arguing that Pat “pursued a variety of extremist opinions,” adding that “now that Buchanan has put down his pen as a writer after just over 60 years of scribbling, it’s a good time to recognize his evil influence and unholy prescience.”

And what was this supposed evil influence? “From the very beginning, Buchanan incessantly supported the idea Republicans should repudiate not just the moderate GOP of the Dewey-Eisenhower-Rockefeller era but the entire post-World War II bipartisan legacy of mild liberal internationalism at home and abroad.”

“We must not trade in our sovereignty for a cushioned seat at the head table of anyone’s new world



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order,” Buchanan warned, adding that “our Western heritage is going to be handed down to future generations, not dumped onto some landfill called multiculturalism.” He insisted that we move toward “a new patriotism, where Americans begin to put the needs of American first.”

In 1992, the *Union-Leader* newspaper in New Hampshire, in an endorsement of Buchanan over incumbent Republican President George H.W. Bush in that state’s first-in-the-nation primary, the late publisher Nackey Loeb wrote, “He wants to protect Americans from a government that continues to increase our tax burdens and decrease our ability to manage our own affairs. He believes that America should be first and that it is the primary responsibility of the Presidency to see to it; and that we should remove ourselves from all foreign entanglements except for those that directly benefit the United States.”

It has been reported that the 84-year-old Patrick Buchanan is working on a final memoir. I for one am looking forward with great anticipation to reading it.

Since the 1980s, I have been the editor of *The Oklahoma Constitution* newspaper, and at an event honoring our paper, my partner Ron McWhirter and I were described by a state representative as the “William F. Buckley’s of Oklahoma.” I thanked him for his kind words, but offered a mild correction.

We wanted to be known as the Pat Buchanans of Oklahoma. I would still wear such a title very proudly, but I am not sure there will ever be another Pat Buchanan.



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