

By Russ Pankonin, *The Imperial Republican*

Some weeks, there are a few more subjects than just one that need attention or need to be addressed—this is one of those weeks.

I start off this week honoring the legendary reporter and columnist Helen Thomas. The renowned Thomas died Saturday at the age of 92.

In a career that spanned more than five decades, Thomas covered 10 different presidents and was the only reporter with her name inscribed on a chair in the White House briefing room—a front row seat to history.

She was best known for her near badgering questions of presidents, seeking to make them accountable for their actions and find the real truth behind the veil.

In an interview, she said “people will never know how hard it is to get information, especially if it’s locked up behind official doors where, if politicians had their way, they’d stamp TOP SECRET on the color of the walls.”

She will be forever remembered for her crusading journalism and as a pioneer for women journalists.

President Obama said it wasn’t her tenure but “fierce belief that our democracy works best when we ask tough questions and hold our leaders to account” that made her the dean of the White House press corps.

Next, I want to shine the spotlight on two deserving projects—the third annual MobilePack™ event for Feed My Starving Children in Imperial and the ongoing Mercy Meals project in Wauneta.

Many of us don’t ever question where the next meal will come from or what it feels like to go to bed hungry. That’s not the case for many young people in Third World countries.

Because of these two efforts, children throughout the world will receive nourishing meals that helps them to grow and develop, giving them a real shot at a life.

My third shout-out goes to Jack Hoffman and Team Jack. We all remember the Huskers’ Spring Game when the 7-year-old brain cancer patient came on to Tom Osborne field and scampered around the right end for a symbolic 69-yard touchdown run.

The You Tube video of Jack and the Huskers’ heroics has counted more the 8 million hits and will be indelibly imprinted on the hearts of Huskers fans and Nebraskans alike.

To put the icing on the cake, Hoffman and his Husker compatriots were recognized by ESPN with an ESPY for the “Best Moment” in sports this year. Wow!!

The final shout-out this week goes to none other than the Nebraska Legend Tom Osborne. He will never be forgotten in the history of the University of Nebraska.

After taking the Huskers to their realm of glory with three national championships over a 25-year coaching career, he served this great state as a U.S. Congressman for the 3rd District for three terms.

It was also Tom Osborne who stepped in as athletic director to right a listing ship after the tenure of A.D. Steve Pederson and head football coach Bill Callahan almost destroyed a legacy program.

It was Tom who brought Bo Pelini to the football program and Tim Miles to head the basketball program. It was Osborne who helped foster Nebraska’s move from the Big 12 to the Big 10. And it was Osborne who helped spur improvements to the Huskers athletic facilities, from an expanded football stadium to a new basketball arena.

We are all the better for the accomplishments and deeds noted above. Let these examples serve as a standard of how we, too, can give back to our community, our state and our country.