Legacy of Freedom: Wyoming Couple Stand for Liberty

It was a bit of a culture shock, but a welcome one, when Chuck and Betty Cundy abandoned the crowded Denver suburbs where they met and pursued their professional lives. They left for the rugged remoteness of Wyoming’s Green River Valley, a former rendezvous point for trappers and trailblazers that today still retains much of its frontier wildness and old West grit.

At their new home, there are no city services to hook into, no quick trips to the grocery store, no next-door neighbor popping in when they’re short a cup of sugar. The long, harsh winters can be an endurance test. Even producing a reliable hay crop requires persistence and hard work.

What the Cundys found here, in exchange for the modern amenities they left behind, is the feeling of being “totally autonomous,” Chuck says. They have breathing space, wide horizons, solitude, self-reliance, connectedness to the earth, and “freedom”—a word that often comes up during conversations with the couple.

Freedom is not just a political cliché or catchphrase for them; it’s a way of thinking and living.

It’s why they are avid travelers and outdoors people. It’s what drew Chuck (who made his career in aviation management) to flying, including a dangerous and exhilarating stint as a bush pilot in Alaska. It’s what made them choose Wyoming over Colorado when the latter became “too crowded” and “too politically crazy.” Freedom is what Betty sought when she ditched a daily commute and office job to launch her own media-buying company, working from home long before it was fashionable. Instead of a parking lot, she now looks out on 140 acres of her own land.
A passion for freedom also explains the couple’s stalwart support for Mountain States Legal Foundation (MSLF). They first heard about MSLF from the contractor who built their Wyoming home. They dug deeper into what the organization stood for, finding that our mission closely tracks with their own belief in property rights, constitutionalism, individualism (versus collectivism), and free enterprise.

Immersion in the local ranching culture fully opened their eyes to the dangers that radical, urban-based environmental groups pose to multiple-use management — threatening to close off public access and destroy ranching and other traditional Western occupations and industries. Betty and Chuck count themselves as avid conservationists, but they’re dismayed at the radical turn the environmental movement has taken.

Many Westerners wouldn't stand a chance against the two Big Gs — Big Government and Big Green — were it not for legal help from Mountain States Legal Foundation. Chuck and Betty recognize that these are David v. Goliath battles, and that's one big reason why they began supporting the Goliath-slayers at Mountain States Legal Foundation.

The bond between the Cundys and MSLF became much more personal in the spring of 2020, when a group of our staff visited the nearby town of Pinedale, population 2,000, for a first-hand look at the historic Green River Drift Cattle Drive.

The Drive, which has been going on annually, come hell or high water since the 1880s, today finds itself under threat. Big Green advocates, who also happen to hate ranchers and ranching, want to prevent responsible local management of grizzlies in the area. But MSLF is representing “Drift” families in their fight to safeguard their grazing rights, which is what brought us to the Cundys' backyard for the “field trip.” Chuck and Betty, and the MSLF staff, gamely tagged along with the Drift's riders and wranglers as they gradually moved thousands of animals from winter pasture in the valley to summer pasture high in the Wind Rivers.

"Becoming legacy givers is a great way to keep fighting for our values."

That weekend made us more than just allies in a common cause; it made us friends. And the Cundys were there for MSLF again, as local hosts and guides, when we brought another group of supporters to Wyoming this spring, so they, too, could experience this living link to the West’s past. It was a touching moment when the couple shared with everyone in the room their intent to continue the fight for freedom after their passing by writing MSLF into their wills, thereby joining the MSLF Legacy Society.

Chuck and Betty take the long view. They know that the fight to preserve freedom, like the fight to maintain public access to public lands, will need long-term support if long-term success is to be achieved. Legacy giving is their way of ensuring that they'll help keep the flames of liberty burning.

Freedom isn't just a way of life for Chuck and Betty in the here and now – it's a legacy they want to hand down to future generations. “We just updated our wills and trusts and really had to pause and ask, where do we want it to go?” Betty recently told us. “We always hear about liberal organizations getting massive grants, but you never hear about conservative organizations getting millions or billions, so this is our way of evening the odds a bit and helping to keep organizations like MSLF going, hopefully long into the future.”

“We think becoming legacy givers is a great way to keep fighting for our values even after we’re gone,” says Chuck. “It’s more important than ever given the way the country is going.”
Remember MSLF in Your Estate Plan
Let Us Honor You as a Member of Our Legacy Society

Hundreds of people have included Mountain States Legal Foundation in their will. If you’re one of them, but haven’t yet alerted us, please let us know! Unless you wish to remain anonymous, we would be honored to recognize you as a member of MSLF’s Legacy Society.

If you’re just now considering making freedom a part of your legacy by leaving a gift to MSLF, thank you. You realize that the job of protecting our constitutional rights will remain beyond our lifetimes. MSLF recognizes that your estate planning decisions are very personal, and that life circumstances change. We will always respect your wishes regarding privacy and any changes you make to your plans.

If you have questions, please call us to discuss the many options available to make a Legacy Gift to MSLF:

Common Questions:

Why Do I Need an Estate Plan?
So your hard work will benefit the people you love AND the causes you believe in.

Do I need to be wealthy to make a meaningful gift?
No! MSLF receives bequests of all sizes. There is no minimum requirement. Every gift makes an impact.

What types of assets can be included in my estate plan?
Stocks, Trusts, IRAs, Life Insurance Policies, and more. We’ll send you free information via the form below.

How do I write MSLF into my will?
Here is simple language you can copy into your will:

_I [name], of [city, state, ZIP] give, devise and bequeath to Mountain States Legal Foundation (tax identification number 84-0736725) of 2596 South Lewis Way, Lakewood, CO 80227, [written dollar amount, or percentage of the estate, or description of the property] to continue its mission to protect individual liberty, the right to own and use property, limited and ethical government, and the free enterprise system._

Tawna Robertson
Director of Development
(303) 292-2021
trobertson@mslegal.org

_85% of Americans Give to Charity But Only 6% Name One in Their Will_

Name ____________________________________________
Address __________________________________________
Phone __________________ E-mail____________________

___ I’d like to receive FREE information about estate planning options, such as:

• Will/Living Trust
• Life Insurance
• Charitable Gift Annuity
• Charitable Remainder Trust
• Retained Life Estate
• IRA or retirement plan

Please return this form in the enclosed pre-addressed envelope. Thank you!

Visit www.plannedgiving.mslegal.org for more information.
Imagine you are a country music star with a 30-year career and more than 40 number one hits to your name. Imagine you're the voice behind such classic country songs as “Hello, Darlin’” and the unforgettable duet, “Louisiana Woman, Mississippi Man” with Loretta Lynn. After so much success, you might think that you'd leave behind a secure future for your wife and children.

But for country music hall of famer Conway Twitty, that wasn't the case.

Ten years after his death, his estate was still at the center of multiple lawsuits. His property had been auctioned off, his children kicked out of their homes. Worst of all, the content of these lawsuits was public information, thereby airing his family’s private finances and embarrassing personal turmoil for all the world to see.

In Twitty's case, the problem wasn't a lack of money—his estate was estimated to be worth at least $15 million at the time of his death. The problem was a lack of proper estate planning.

To be sure, Twitty had a will. He had designated his four children as his sole beneficiaries. But he had not taken the time to update the will after marrying his third wife. Under Tennessee law, this had enormous ramifications. After his untimely death at age 59, years of lawsuits between his wife and children ensued.

Perhaps Twitty assumed his existing will was sufficient. Perhaps, being only in his fifties, he believed he had plenty of time to update it. Or, perhaps, like many of us, he simply felt too busy to stop and attend to such matters.

Whatever the reason, one thing is sure — Twitty never intended for his estate to be tied up in lawsuits for more than a decade after his death. He didn't think his lack of planning would add to the pain of his surviving family members. And he didn't intend to leave it to an army of judges and lawyers to carve up, auction off, and divvy out all he had worked for.

How long has it been since you updated your estate plan? You deserve to have your values and wishes protected. Regularly reviewing your estate plan is the best way to ensure that happens. Make an appointment with your attorney today. And if protecting our nation's constitutional liberty is something you want to support, consider making Mountain States Legal Foundation a part of your legacy by including this language in your will:

I [name], of [city, state, ZIP] give, devise and bequeath to Mountain States Legal Foundation (tax identification number 84-0736725) of 2596 South Lewis Way, Lakewood, CO 80227, [written dollar amount, or percentage of the estate, or description of the property] to continue its mission to protect individual liberty, the right to own and use property, limited and ethical government, and the free enterprise system.

MSLF offers free, simple tools online to educate you about how you can best support what matters most to you. To get started, visit MSLF’s Planned Giving page at www.plannedgiving.mslegal.org