

WHAT ARE THE TOP TWO POLITICAL MOVEMENTS OF YOUR TIME?



ANNETTE ROLLYSON

1. "The women's liberation movement was getting under full steam around that time. Others pale in comparison because those two were so big at the time."
2. "When I was pretty small, it was coming up on the tail end of the Vietnam War, so that was probably the largest political movement."



ALICE GUZMAN

1. "I definitely think climate change is one of them just because it's a big thing, but everyone else seems to [agree]."
2. "I think Trump's impeachment is also one because he's the president. The whole DACA situation and immigration because that hits home for me."

In the total of forty-five presidents that the United States have had, **Larry Steinmetz's**, 42, earliest recollection of the presidency is President Ronald Reagan. Growing up with Reagan as the president, he doesn't remember much except for the legacy of which he left.

"I was a little young to remember a lot of [Reagan's presidency, but] I knew that he was a larger than life political figure in the United States and it's held up over the course of time since [his term ended]," Steinmetz said.

Despite his early memories of Reagan, he didn't become politically involved until President Bill Clinton; he never related to the other presidents as well as he did Clinton.

"He just brought an energy to things that he started to politically," Steinmetz said. "He was different than just another guy in a suit which, in my lifetime, that's what presidents have been up to at that point."

Steinmetz has observed the changes in politics over the past thirty years and noticed how politics have changed over time. Something he's noticed is the differentiation between both parties is substantial, which hasn't always been the case.

"The gap is so much wider now that it's just created a lot of people who aren't even interested in trying to find common ground," Steinmetz said.

Steinmetz also recalls his generation. Although the media now is important to forming political opinions, there was a time when those who researched politics to form it all on their own.

"I think that we were a little bit more harsh on our politics twenty years ago because you had to do your own research," Steinmetz said. "People feel that they know everything and they really don't."

The first time his age group could vote, Steinmetz recalls that when they voted opinions and differences were respected and understood to a much broader extent.

"I felt that when I was younger, no matter who you voted for, you were always respected," Steinmetz said. "You got to have your own voice and opinions."

Previously, many were concentrated on what benefited them, especially within the world of politics. Steinmetz now also sees the world of the media becoming more prominent with politics, whether helping or hindering others opinions.

"People were more concerned about their own personal situations [back] then," Steinmetz said. "I think that social media has hurt that because so many people post and jump on the bandwagons instead of being worried about what impacts them and their life."

Through the changes of politics and the perception of opinions, Steinmetz still finds a positive direction in the shifts between past and present.

"Even though we haven't gotten over the ultimate barrier, the introduction of serious female candidates over the course of the past few years [is the biggest change] and it's only a matter of time before we have a female president," Steinmetz said. "Because that's what it's all about. If they're going to be representatives of us, then they should look like us."

Story by Millie Rice

WE THE PEOPLE

Different generations share the way politics have shaped their identity, society, and upbringing, while expressing the changes that have occurred over time.

As a kid, **Lucas Donnelly**, 14, was able to wrap his head around politics from a young age. By age ten, he could understand what our world was offering in terms of government.

"I feel like most kids my age would lean more to the democratic side, just because its kind of become a trend, almost," Donnelly said.

Donnelly considers himself to be more liberal, but a lot of his views come from the environment that he grew up in. Many of those around him are liberal as well, which helps him feel more comfortable with his opinions as opposed to those with opposing viewpoints.

"Although I myself am very liberal, there might be some kids who are republican, they might be scared to say, you know, that they are republican because everyone is so liberal," Donnelly said.

Sources such as social media have affected the way politics are viewed publicly and Donnelly has recognized that. News sources have also found their own way of influencing people through different methods, but more of them are becoming very polarized with what they share.

"I think that the influence of social media and the news have really just made it where things can get around a lot quicker [and] that it's become a lot more toxic because there's a lot of opportunities to form their own opinion," Donnelly said. "It's really influenced a lot of people. So it's really hard to find a middle ground because there's so much pressure to lean one way or another."

Although this is how the media is seen now, it wasn't always that way. Donnelly recognizes the many leaps of change that the environment that brings us news has changed drastically over the previous years.

"If we were back in the 1950's you would just now be hearing about [the coronavirus] because there are not people who [could have] broadcast[ed] the disease, so they'd have to go through the mail and the New York Times would have to be writing about it before it got around. They would just now be hearing about it. The news just didn't get around as quickly," Donnelly said.

With the pressure to form an opinion based on what you hear, many stereotypes have been formed within society surrounding the opposing political parties.

"I think that although republican and conservative are different, I feel like it's almost one or the other. I think that a republican is more likely to be conservative and a democrat is more likely to be liberal," Donnelly said. "There's the dashing issue of stereotypes, but I would consider a republican to be in favor of Donald Trump because he is the Republican candidate or more conservative of immigration laws compared to Democrats."

Although the stereotypes and media have played a heavy part in political opinions formed now in a more negative light, Donnelly tries to find the upside in that the media has also helped encourage others to be involved with what's happening in the world.

"I think that [media] helps people get information faster and easier and encourage a large number of people to vote," Donnelly said. "When I hear politicians talk about [various topics through fast-traveling media], it makes me want to research that topic and form an opinion on it. So, yeah, I feel like even though they're biased, it kind of gives me an opportunity to go on my own and create my own bias."

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