

Abigail Adams

A Mother Patriot

by Kimberly Fletcher



In 1775 as war raged around her Boston home, Abigail bravely cared for her young family alone while her husband was away, serving his country.

Her son, John Quincy, later spoke of this time as “the space of twelve months (in which) my mother, with her infant children, dwelt, liable every hour of the day and the night, to be butchered in cold blood.”¹

Many of the women of the Revolutionary era were Quakers and Christians who were adamantly opposed to war. And yet, they supported the battle because they deeply believed in the dream of America. John Quincy spoke of his mother’s influence. “My mother was the daughter of a Christian clergyman, and therefore bred in the faith of deliberate detestation of War...Yet, in that same spring and summer of 1775, she taught me to repeat daily, after the Lord’s Prayer, and before rising from bed, the Ode of Collins on the patriot warriors...”²

Abigail instilled a love of God and Country in her children. She stood courageously against the evils of her day and supported her husband all throughout his long life of public service. Abigail was a strong supporter of the battle for independence. She frequently opened her home as a headquarters for

the minutemen. Her son, John Quincy, later spoke of this. There were “some dozen or two of pewter spoons,” he said, “and I well recollect going into the kitchen and seeing some of the men engaged in running those spoons into bullets for the use of the troops! Do you wonder that a boy of seven years of age, who witnessed this scene, should be a patriot?”³

This is where patriotism comes from. It comes from a young child seeing their mother put her hand over her heart, from seeing their father carefully fold the flag, from witnessing their grandfather remove his hat when the flag goes by. They feel it, they see it. And when we share with them why we do it, why we feel America is so great—what the dream is all about, then we will be able to secure liberty because our children will know what it means to be American, and they will love her too.

The greatest act of patriotism a mother can perform will be within the walls of her own home!

¹ Memoirs of John Quincy Adams 1795 to 1848, page 5

² Life of John Quincy Adams: the complete biography written in his lifetime, 1856, page 323

³ Life of John Quincy Adams: the complete biography written in his lifetime, 1856, page 323

One Mom on A Mission

by Vivian D. Brown



As a mom, it has always been my belief, the most important job we have is to raise good citizens. So, when it came time to find a new school for my fourth-grade daughter, I chose a school where their mission is to prepare scholars "for success in college and citizenship."

When I received the call that my daughter was accepted, my husband and I were very excited.

A week or so later I had dropped off school supplies for teachers, and in the front office something caught my eye that I just could not believe. It just was not possible... how could this happen?

In plain sight, sitting on top of a bookcase were the United States and Texas flags haphazardly thrown on the top shelf. How could anyone do this to our flags? Patriots like our Founding Fathers sacrificed everything for our United States Flag. I was so shocked and upset that I could not even bring myself to say anything. I hoped this was a one-time thing... Sadly, it was not. I wondered how you can teach citizenship if you don't respect the flag?

Not only was this upsetting to me but also to my daughter. She would come home every day and say "mom, we didn't pledge to the flag."

They did not even have a flag in the classroom. I have always taught my daughter to respect our heritage, be a proud American and stand for the flag.

What kind of mother would I be if I did not act?

So, about the fourth time I went to the school and saw the bundle on the bookcase I finally spoke up. I asked the receptionist "who is in charge of the proper care and display of flags?" She told me the janitor was. Fortunately, (or not so fortunate for him) I was able to ask him directly about it.

"Sir, do you realize that men and women gave their blood and paid the ultimate sacrifice for our flag? Those flags are to be revered, respected. They are not pieces of cloth you just throw around. What kind of message are you sending students and families, when one of the first things they see is blatant disrespect for who we are as a nation?"

He told me, "Ma'am I've served my country." I replied, "Then shame on you sir, shame on you! You must understand first-hand the sacrifices and what it means. You should know better."

I knew my daughter and the other students

needed to learn the values, meaning and heroism it represents but my message seemed to go on deaf ears. The flags continued to lay there, and no flag was even flown at the school. What was I going to do? I could not drop it. How could I?

One day I was having lunch with Congressman Lamar Smith (TX21). I explained my story to him, and he was dismayed. He told me, "Vivian, call my office and I will send the school a U.S. Flag flown over our Nation's Capital." I was a bit hesitant and told him, I do not know if that is a good idea, I do not want them to disrespect it. He said, well maybe it will make an impression that they need to do something. So, I called his office and they immediately dispatched a U.S. Flag to the school. Weeks went by and still no flag.

I was not to be deterred. I thought, there must be something I could do. I needed to look for help. I heard my friend State Senator Donna Campbell had put forth a bill in the education committee that would give charter schools \$1000 per student. I immediately thought that this is what I am looking for.

I went to the Capitol in Austin and met with her. I explained the situation and asked her if there was a way to tie funding to them respecting the flag." She told me that she likes to keep her bills clean and would not want to do that. Still wanting to help, she told me she would also send a Texas Flag to the school.

Time went by and still no flag. I was just so disappointed, so was my daughter. She too, decided to act. The students practicing for the mandatory state testing were given a writing prompt "A day at the circus." When I picked her up from school that day, she told

me, "Mom, who cares about the circus?" I wanted to write about something important, like how they were disrespecting Our Flag."

As a mother who prides herself on what it means to be an American Patriot and to respect our nation's heritage, I was beaming with pride. The school was not impressed. She did not receive a passing grade, but it did not matter to her or to me. She saw injustice and chose to respond to it - no matter the consequences. Isn't that what we want for our children; to raise them so they have the confidence to use their voice, be a good citizen, to be a positive influence on their peers and in the community?

Once again, I had to go to the school, which was something I began to dread. I was greeted by the janitor. He said, "Mrs. Brown, I have something to show you." The school purchased two display boxes to hold each flag along with the certificates from the Capitol Architects that the flags were indeed flown over the United States and Texas Capitals. He then said, the school decided to buy a brand new 6' x 8' U.S. Flag to fly over the school. And that's just what they did. In fact, the school went on to install lights on the flag poles so both flags would be illuminated at night. I was later told; they adopted this policy across all their schools. I had done it!

Fast forward to the end of the Texas legislative session. I came across S.B. No.1200, it was introduced by Senator Donna Campbell. The bill title was "Relating to guidelines for the proper care and display of the United States and Texas Flags by public schools" Was I reading that right? Was I responsible for getting a bill written?

I contacted her office to thank them, the Sen-

ator had written and filed the bill the week following our conversation; and although it did not make it out of committee (bills rarely do the first time). I learned it was one of her biggest disappointments when that bill was stalled. I, however, was not disappointed. On the contrary. I wanted the school to respect our flag, I wanted my daughter to see her mom make a stand. I wanted her to see what it meant to do everything within the realm of possibility to make a difference to right a wrong. I had succeeded!

As I pass by the school every day; it warms my heart to see our glorious "banner wave" symbolizing the land of the free. The home of the brave.

As I said at the beginning, the most important job I have as a mother is to raise a good citizen. It was my obligation to demonstrate what that means. Even when something is challenging, it is worth the fight. Never give up! Stand up for what you believe! Even if you are the only one. One person, one mom...can make a difference.

Red Skeleton's Pledge of Allegiance



Video Exercise

Watch the following video, and discuss the questions below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pGcwRnQUmUw>



Discussion Questions

- ★ *What about Abigail Adams would you most like to emulate?*
- ★ *How has your mother, or mother figures in your life, been an example of patriotism? What are your thoughts on the constant role of mothers to nurture a love of country in their children in every era of earth's history?*
- ★ *How does it shape society, in your opinion? Does strengthening your own love of America and its history make it easier to share that love with your kids?*
- ★ *What stood out to you about Vivian's story of standing up for the flag? What impact was she able to have through her commitment to ensure the flag was respected at her daughter's school?*