

Trudeau: A Canadian I Admired.

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I was seven years old when Pierre Trudeau resigned as Canada's Prime Minister, obviously too young to care, let alone know who was the guy with the rose in his lapel. It wasn't until 1992 when a bunch of politicians came to my high school to talk about the Charlottetown Accord that I began to realize how influential Pierre Trudeau was in the development of our country.

What I learned was that Pierre Trudeau had given Canada its own constitution and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Reading about Pierre Trudeau, I learned that he made Canada officially bilingual, and played a part in making Canada a multicultural country. As strange as it sounds, starting from that day, I began to appreciate the value of being a Canadian, and felt proud that Pierre Trudeau had given us these important, core laws that give us our rights and freedoms. On the same day we had a video about Trudeau and the FLQ Crisis, when Quebec radicals kidnap two politicians and kills one. It's then I see a strong-willed Trudeau, saying to a reporter after being asked how far he will go to catch the kidnappers, "Just watch me." My high-school intellect said nothing else but, "Cool!"

Fast forward nine years, minus a couple months, and I hear the news that Pierre Trudeau is having health problems. Having learned more about Pierre Trudeau in the past couple years in university, I've come to think of Trudeau as a personal hero. By analyzing the context of the Official Languages Act, and multiculturalism, I came to see Trudeau as a person with keen intellect, a passion for Canada, and an all-round sharp politician. By making Canada bilingual, he took away the Quebec Separatist's excuse that Canada was a country uninviting to French speaking Quebecers. By emphasizing Canada's cultural diversity, he tried to prove that Canada wasn't a nation founded only by English and French, but by a diversity of immigrants.

Fast forward to September 28, 2000, I hear that Pierre Elliot Trudeau has died. Interestingly enough, I hear the news right after my Political Science course on Quebec Politics. As odd as it sounds, I tried very hard to hold back tears. Why? It's because, after I learned what he did for Canada, it made me proud to be Canadian, for having a man having the conviction to give Canadians their rights to forge their own identity, and live in a truly free country. Knowing Pierre Trudeau was dead made me feel as if I had lost a part of my Canadian identity.

The colours of the Canadian maple are a bit dimmer with the passing of a great Canadian I have no qualms calling a national icon, my Canadian hero.