

## A TIME OF REFLECTION

BY JOHN D. COWMAN

I find myself constantly reminded of how blessed, honored, and privileged I am to have been elected to the position of Mayor of the City of Leander. I could not imagine living elsewhere. The opportunities this city has to offer for all of us are innumerable, and I cannot thank the citizens of Leander and the City of Leander herself enough for allowing me these wonderful opportunities.

Leander citizens, like all Americans come from all different ethnic, religious, political, and social backgrounds, and while the expectations of our citizens may have been divided from time to time, we have, in spite of our differences, been, and still are, united as one, big family. We as a city are doing very well.

As we reflect over life, we find many people who have affected us and who have helped to shape whom we will be. Each and every one of these people who has affected us has done so for good or bad, and each and every one of these people has changed the way we look at the world. Some of these people are our heroes. Some of these heroes may be average people who have done amazing things, selfless things that made an impression on the world around them. Most of us never personally know our heroes. Our heroes might be movie stars, politicians, great men or women, living or not, who have done mighty things. They are the ones who seem to always stand in the spotlight of life. Yet all heroes do not receive accolades and notoriety. Some heroes go unnoticed.

The heroes in my life, men and women of honor and courage whom I will always look up to and respect are the men and women in uniform. Most of these men and women will never have fanfare or banquets in their honor, yet they are all heroes just the same. Filled with courage in the face of fear they chose to stand their ground for all that they believed in. Many obstacles have stood in their way, yet they press on to protect the very freedoms you and I sometimes take for granted. My heroes have never regretted serving our country during times of struggle. No amount of name calling, put downs, spitting or anger ever directed at them would change how they felt about wearing their uniform and serving our country. My heroes feel it is and was their duty to serve and they served with great pride despite the conjecture over the validity of the military operation, my heroes chose to take a stand and press on.

What these heroes of mine, average men and women, have taught me was to believe in this country and be proud of it. To always have the courage to take a stand, to never take our freedoms for granted, and to be a part of the process that shapes our country and in my case, our city. I have learned from my heroes that it is better to hold true to beliefs and act upon them than to sit back and grumble at the way things are. My hero's have taught me what it is to be a citizen of this city and not just an idol occupant.

I will always be grateful to my heroes whom I do not know for teaching me these values. I also know that it is my responsibility to pass this respect and fervent love for our city and our country on to the next generation. May we never forget from where we came and those who fought to forge it!

Let us all be proud of our today's and may we look forward with hope for the future of this wonderful city known as Leander and this wonderful nation known as the United States of America.