

## THEMES FOR DISCUSSION: THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD CHARACTER

### Questions to discuss

1. What are some traits that make up one's character?
2. Robert Byrd credits his adoptive parents with instilling within him good values that developed his character. Identify incidents in his early life that illustrate good character traits.
3. Throughout his personal and political life, Robert Byrd has stood up for what he believes. He has refused to allow politics to dictate how he votes on issues. What does this attitude tell about his character?
4. What does it mean to be a person of good character?

### In Their Own Words

1. One of Robert C. Byrd's favorite quotations comes from Horace Greeley:

*Fame is a vapor  
Popularity an accident;  
Riches take wing;  
Those who cheer today may curse tomorrow;  
Only one thing endures: character*

What do you think the quotation by Horace Greeley says about character?

2. Robert Byrd has said, *"In the real world, exemplary conduct can sometimes achieve much more than any political agenda. Comity, courtesy, charitable treatment of even our political opposites, combined with a concerted effort to not just occupy our offices, but to bring honor to them, will do more to improve people and restore their faith in us, their leaders, than millions of dollars of 30-second spots . . . ."*

What are character traits identified in this quotation?

What does the statement say about character and behavior vs. a media blitz?

1. Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, D-SD, has said, *"Robert C. Byrd is truly a legend in his own time, not only for his accomplishments, but also for his principles."*

What is a principle? What principles does Byrd possess?

### Individual and/or Group Activities

1. Research some of Byrd's decisions in Congress that show his character.
2. The Six Pillars of Character include trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. Give an example of something in the life of Robert Byrd that illustrates each of these six pillars.
3. Write an essay describing someone you think exhibits good character.
4. Citizenship is one of the six pillars of character. To become a better citizen, develop a project to make your school or community better.

5. Good citizens stay informed. Read the daily newspaper or watch the television news and record important issues in our state or community.
6. Go to <http://www.charactercounts.org./dosdnts.htm> and make a poster illustrating one of the character traits listed here. Display the posters in the classroom.
7. Examine the language of the United States Constitution and list references to character.
8. One character trait is respect. Develop a plan to address conflicts in a non-violent, respectful manner.
9. Research world or national conflicts and propose a way to have settled or settle the conflict peacefully.

#### WV STANDARDS and OBJECTIVES

- SS.9.1.2 explain the importance of the fundamental democratic values and principles of United States Constitutional democracy upon individuals, communities and nations
- SS.9.1.3 make informed decisions as to what government should and should not do
- SS.9.1.5 evaluate ways conflicts can be resolved in a cooperative, peaceful manner that respects individual rights and promotes the common good
- SS.10.1.3 analyze the nature of civic responsibility in various cultures
- SS.11.1.1 discuss ways citizens can work cooperatively to resolve personal, local, regional and world conflicts peacefully
- SS.11.1.4 develop positions and formulate actions on problems of today and predict challenges of the future (e.g., terrorism, religious conflict, weapons of mass destruction, population growth)