

A Letter from Anne Roosevelt to Mike Deland

Anne Roosevelt

April 29, 1996

Dear Messrs. Deland and Reich,

Franklin Delano Roosevelt looms large in the hearts and minds of many, including his grandchildren who now survive. Some of us knew him personally, but most of us did not. We hold him in memory, as families will, as a whole person whose life touched a nation and whose affection still reaches us. We want him to be remembered as he was, in all his strength, courage and humanity.

It is quite clear that FDR developed his strength of character, determination and discipline most distinctly as a result of his having polio. He also became a more sympathetic and modest person. He made a political decision to downplay his disability because of his understanding of the role of public perception and the norms of the day. At times he did not.

But when it came to inspiring and encouraging others who were disabled - such as at his beloved Warm Springs, Georgia, or with amputees and wounded soldiers in wartime hospital - he freely showed himself in wheelchairs or on crutches, with braces. He was in no way embarrassed by his disability. Life was bigger than that.

Were he alive today we are convinced that he would wish to have the people of this country and the world understand his disability. He would be comfortable, possibly eager, in light of current increased understanding of disability issues, to share awareness of his and other types of disabilities with others. We firmly believe that more factual knowledge, particularly about and from public leaders, encourages and inspires those without disability to accept and support all people, including people with disabilities to live full, productive and joyful lives.

FDR's commitment to leadership, to excellence and to life, with a disability not well understood by many, nor accepted by some, sustained him and the Nation through one of the most challenging periods in American history. There is no better memorial than a complete picture of who he was.

While we wish no delay in the construction of the proposed memorial, we urge an adequate inclusion of all facets of the man as he was, not as some think he ought to have been.

Sincerely

St Core

Anne Roosevelt, on behalf of

Anne Roosevelt, Chandler Roosevelt Lindsley, Christopher D. Roosevelt, Eleanor Roosevelt Seagraves, Franklin Roosevelt II, Kate Roosevelt Whitney, Nina Roosevelt Gibson, James Roosevelt, Esquire