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[RIP Anne L. Armstrong And Clay T. Whitehead](#)

July 31, 2008 by [Robert Nedelkoff](#) | Filed Under [American Politics](#), [Entertainment](#), [In Memoriam](#), [Internet](#), [News media](#), [Nixon Administration figures](#), [Republican Party](#), [Richard Nixon](#), [Technology](#), [U.S. History](#)

The last week saw the passing of a man and a woman who were both not only important figures at the Nixon White House, but by any measure significant in twentieth-century American history. On July 23, Clay T. Whitehead, director of the White House Office of Telecommunications Policy between 1970 and 1974, [died](#) in Washington at age 69. During his time in that office, he gained fame among journalists for his vigorous defenses of Nixon Administration policy in his press briefings. But it was what he did (with the help of his assistant Brian Lamb, later to found C-SPAN) to create and further the Open Skies policy that made history. This policy permitted telecommunications companies to send up their own satellites and establish the networks that made both nationwide cable TV and competing, low-price long-distance phone services possible. This in turn opened the way for the Internet and cellular technology as we know it. (Indeed, had President Nixon been able to serve out his second term, Whitehead's vision of a wired America could have brought [something akin](#) to the World Wide Web into being a decade before it happened.) In the 1980s, Whitehead played a central role in bringing cable TV and cellular communications to Europe. Ironically, he does not have his own Wikipedia entry and is barely mentioned elsewhere at the site.

And yesterday Anne Legendre Armstrong [died](#) in Houston at age 80. She was raised in an old Creole family in New Orleans and, after graduating from Vassar and briefly working in the New York magazine world, married a rancher and moved to Texas, where she switched from the Democratic to the Republican party and became active in GOP politics. From 1970 until 1973, she was co-chair of the Republican National Committee and played an important role in generating support for Nixon's re-election among women and Democrats. In 1973 she became the first woman to serve as counselor to the President, and was one of the White House's strongest defenders during the Watergate era. During the Ford Administration she became the first female Ambassador to Great Britain, and in the Reagan era she headed the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1987. Both of these far-sighted Americans of high achievement will be much missed.

Comments

2 Responses to "RIP Anne L. Armstrong And Clay T. Whitehead"

1. Maarja Krusten on July 31st, 2008 4:40 pm

Many thanks for posting this. Of course, I had seen the news obituaries for Clay Whitehead and Anne Armstrong in the Washington Post. I thought, "surely, someone at the New Nixon site will post a thoughtful entry about both of them."

You did a nice job with your write-up!

1. [Not Forgotten : The New Nixon: News and Commentary about the President, his Times, and his Legacy](#)

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