

The Sacrifice of Artful Eddie

The word *hero* is bandied about loosely in today's world – sometimes appropriately and, oftentimes, not so much.

Max Lucado, author and minister, describes a true hero in his book *You Changed My Life: Stories of Real People with Remarkable Hearts*. And the story has a strange beginning. Here it is:

Artful Eddie lacked nothing.

He was the slickest of the slick lawyers. He was one of the roars of the Roaring Twenties. A crony of Al Capone, he ran the gangster's dog tracks. He mastered the simple technique of fixing the race by overfeeding seven dogs and betting on the eighth.

Wealth. Status. Style. Artful Eddie lacked nothing.

Then why did he turn himself in? Why did he offer to squeal on Capone? What was his motive? Didn't Eddie know the sure-fire consequences of ratting on the mob?

He knew, but he'd made up his mind.

What did he have to gain? What could society give him that he didn't have? He had money, power, prestige. What was the hitch?

Eddie revealed the hitch. His son. Eddie had spent his life with the despicable. He had smelled the stench of the underground long enough. For his son, he wanted more. He wanted to give his son a name. And to give his son a name, he would have to clear his own. Eddie was willing to take a risk so that his son could have a clean slate.

Artful Eddie never saw his dream come true. After Eddie squealed, the mob remembered. Two shotgun blasts silenced him forever.

Was it worth it?

For the son, it was. Artful Eddie's boy lived up to the sacrifice. His is one of the best-known names in the world.

Had Eddie lived to see his son, Butch, grow up, he would have been proud. He would have been proud of Butch's appointment to Annapolis. He would have been proud of the commissioning as a World War II Navy pilot. He would have been proud as he read of his son downing five bombers in the Pacific night and saving the lives of hundreds of crewmen on the carrier Lexington.

The name was cleared. The Congressional Medal of Honor that Butch received was proof.

(more)

When people say the name of O'Hare in Chicago, they don't think gangsters – they think aviation heroism.

In 1949, Orchard Field Airport was renamed O'Hare International Airport to honor Edward (Butch) O'Hare, the U.S. Navy's first flying ace and Medal of Honor winner.

Merriam-Webster dictionary defines a hero as “a person who is admired for great or brave acts or fine qualities.” *Wikipedia*, the free encyclopedia, puts it another way: a person who is often “sacrificing his or her own personal concerns for some greater good.”



Artful Eddie's son certainly qualified.

And so do the associates of Life Care and Century Park who give so sacrificially of their time, energies and, in many cases, of their financial means to serve others.

The Bible has something to say about it:

We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up (Romans 15:1-2 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter