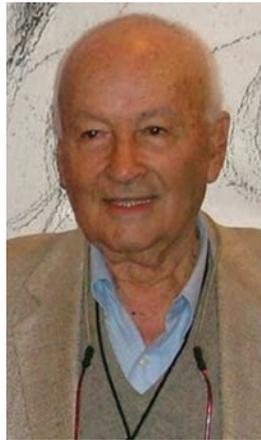


shoveling the pork into Alaska (decades from now, the Bridge to Nowhere will be a political trivia question, like vicuña coats). His last election, though, was a disgrace. In October 2008 Stevens was convicted on seven counts of not reporting gifts from Bill Allen, a businessman crony. Eight days later he lost narrowly to Democrat Mark Begich. In April 2009, however, Attorney General Eric Holder asked that the conviction be thrown out: Prosecutors had withheld from the defense interview notes in which Allen contradicted his testimony. Maybe Stevens deserved a voter rebuke, but not on a falsified charge. R.I.P.

■ As a boy, Manuel Ayau earned the nickname “Muso”—short for Mussolini—on account of his abundant confidence. It was ironic because no man was more important to the spread of classical liberalism in his native Guatemala. In 1971, he founded the Universidad Francisco Marroquín, which today hosts 2,700 students, who are required to study classical liberals like Friedrich A. Hayek. When the university started, Marxist assassins targeted Ayau because of his beliefs. But the confident “Muso” braved the risks; he equipped his car with a remote-control starter to check for bombs. A friend of Milton Friedman, he popularized the economist’s ideas in Spanish-language books and in contributions to the *Wall Street Journal* and other publications. He once explained his reasoning: “I learned that freedom must triumph in people’s minds and hearts before it can make any headway in politics.” Well said. Dead at 84. R.I.P.



■ The 1st Special Service Brigade of the British Army landed under enemy fire at Sword Beach, Normandy, on June 6, 1944. Their commander, Lord Lovat, was not only a distinguished soldier, but also a Scottish clan chief. Naturally he had a piper with him: 21-year-old Bill Millin, son of a Glasgow policeman. “Give us a tune, piper,” ordered the commander as they waded up the beach. Millin pointed out that it would be against army regulations. His Lordship replied that those were English regulations, and so did not apply to Scotsmen. Millin wound up his pipes and played, walking up and down the beach as corpses rolled against his legs in the surf and enemy mortar fire thumped around him. He continued to play, advancing inland with his brigade, until four days later when the pipes, which he had momentarily laid down in the grass, took a direct hit from shrapnel. German snipers had held their fire from him in sympathy, assuming the poor fellow had gone crazy from battle fatigue. Bill Millin died August 17 in Devon, England, aged 88. R.I.P.

■ EDITOR’S NOTE: Some of John O’Sullivan’s reporting in “The Wrong Alternative,” on page 30, was overtaken by events after we had sent the article to the printer. An updated version will be available in NR Digital.

## The Case for Marriage

IF it is true, as we are constantly told, that American law will soon redefine marriage to accommodate same-sex partnerships, the proximate cause for this development will not be that public opinion favors it, although it appears to be moving in that direction. It will be that the most influential Americans, particularly those in law and the media, have been coming increasingly to regard opposition to same-sex marriage as irrational at best and bigoted at worst. They therefore dismiss expressions of that opposition, even when voiced by a majority in a progressive state, as illegitimate. Judges who believe that same-sex marriage is obviously just and right can easily find ways to read their views into constitutions, to the applause of the like-minded.

The emerging elite consensus in favor of same-sex marriage has an element of self-delusion about it. It denies that same-sex marriage would work a radical change in American law or society, insisting to the contrary that within a few years of its triumph everyone will wonder what all the fuss was about. But its simultaneous insistence that opponents are the moral equivalent of the white supremacists of yesteryear belies these bland assurances. Our tolerance for racism is quite limited: The government, while it generally respects the relevant constitutional limits, is active in the cause of marginalizing racists and eradicating racist beliefs and behaviors. Moreover, social sanctions against racism, both overt and implied, are robust. If our society is truly to regard opposition to same-sex marriage as equivalent to racism, it will have to undergo change both dramatic and extensive. Churches that object, for example, will have to be put in the same cultural position as Bob Jones University was in the days when it banned interracial dating, until they too join the consensus.

If proponents of same-sex marriage thought through these implications, their confidence might evaporate, for it seems highly unlikely that this project will succeed at all, and impossible that it will do so without decades of arduous and divisive social “reform.” That is no reason to shrink from the task, if it is truly a just one. But we should first consider whether the historic and cross-cultural understanding of marriage as the union of a man and a woman really has so little to be said for it.

We think that there is quite a bit to be said for it: that it is true, vitally true. But it is a truth so long accepted that it is no longer well understood. Both the fact that we are debating same-sex marriage and the way that debate has progressed suggest that many of us have lost sight of why marriage exists in the first place as a social institution and a matter of public policy. One prominent supporter of same-sex marriage says that the purpose of marriage is to express and safeguard an emotional union of adults; another says that its purpose is to make it more likely that people will have others to give them care in sickness and old age.

So at the risk of awkwardness, we must talk about the facts of life. It is true that marriage is, in part, an emotional union, and it is also true that spouses often take care of each other