

There Is Less Laughter In the World Today

Less fun. Fewer smiles. The glass in the barometer of cheer is low. A beloved voice is stilled. A great soul has gone on the long journey. Millions mourn for a friend they never met. Will Rogers now becomes a legend for future generations.

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To few men is it given to win the place in human hearts that was the happy and enviable lot of the philosopher from Oklahoma. Will Rogers was more than a humorist apart, a jester whose penetrating arrows, shafted with twinkling understanding of men and motives, sped unerringly to the mark.

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A giant in three fields of endeavor. Comedian of the stage and screen; wise commentator in the daily press on the foibles of a silly old world, hesitant, abashed star of the radio, Will Rogers made cleanness of action and speech a religion. He knew neither the high nor the low as such. To him all persons were people; human beings plagued with ego and ambition. To his mill everything was grist. He unfailingly detected the false from the real. The peccadilloes of the politician who draped himself in the vesture of the statesman; the small vanities of society; the posturing of the dictator; the pomp and circumstance of a strutting world; these were his prey. Whether he was laughing, with a twinkle in his eye, at the august Senate of the United States, or jibing the occupant of the presidential chair; whether he was inviting an English King to come and live among us, or discussing the news of the day in a manner that outraged while it delighted, there was never wound or scar left to hurt.

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Will Rogers played as he worked. He liked the hearty and impact sports that delight men of virility and action. Cowboy by training, he rode the polo pony as he did the lithe western horse of the ranch; with the abandon of the trained horseman. He was an outdoor man.

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Will Rogers was a charitable man and merciful. His time and talents were at the command of any worthy cause. The Red Cross, flood relief, drought, countries demoralized by revolution and disaster, all engaged his whole-souled interest and help. To the individual he was the same generous benefactor, with hand ever ready to dig deep for tangible aid to tide old friends and those in travail across rough spots in the road.

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Will Rogers was all things to all men; a universal genius who occupied our stage for all too few years. And when a shocked world heard the word that the greatest air passenger since flying began had crashed to earth with the indomitable Wiley Post, peerless pilot and pioneer of the air, in far-away Alaska, it mourned with the sincerity that goes out only to those who by their lives and deeds have earned the affection, and, yes, the love, of their fellows.

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To Will Rogers, beloved citizen of the world, and Wiley Post, dauntless captain of the skies, a Salute. Your last flight has been made. And may you rest in eternal peace in the quiet Valhalla reserved for the warriors whose course is run.

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