

Mon., 2/6/23 [302 words follow, including the 2 more allowed by L-T]

Words matter.

Various sources have co-opted a variety of words and phrases to serve varied purposes. Consider "liberal" and "conservative" as these words are used especially to delineate candidates for public office.

The word "liberal" derives from the Latin root "liber," meaning "free." This should be important to people who subscribe to principles such as "free market," "free speech," and basic "freedom," for example, such that "liberal" should be a word that unites us rather than divides us.

Similarly, "conservative" derives from another Latin root based on "conservare," which denotes an intention to preserve, protect, or keep safe. These meanings, too, should unite rather than divide us. Personally, I am in favor of both liberalism and conservatism in the context of their origins and meanings.

Sadly, though, Wisconsinites are informed in such ways that we now must separate candidates for the state supreme court based on whether they are "liberal" or "conservative" rather than on their preparation, qualification, and experience as criteria for someone to serve in such an important office. These criteria are far more important than the simplified labels of "liberal" or "conservative."

Personally, I am more concerned that both Dan Kelly and Jennifer Dorow are graduates of Regent Law School at Regent University which was founded in 1977 as Christian Broadcasting Network University by current chancellor Pat Robertson (who failed the New York bar exam). Both this evangelical school and Robertson's 1988 candidacy for the GOP presidential nomination suggest that Kelly and Dorow attended a law school which can hardly be described as non-partisan.

Fortunately, there are other, better choices as Wisconsin Supreme Court candidates, Janet Protasiewicz (who I think best meets these criteria) and Everett Mitchell. Vote for one of them on February 21st and again on April 4th.

Words matter but so do other criteria.