

## Political Integrity: Chuck Cadman Style

by Stephen Elliott-Buckley - Sunday, July 17, 2005

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While Chuck Cadman's long time in federal politics ended with him saving the country from an impending perhaps-too-early election, the most important part of his legacy to the country is not that. Nor is it his entry into politics after the inane murder of his son.

While [Sandra Martin says](#) he'll always be known for saving the Liberals, his most important legacy is his recent re-election in his riding after the federal Conservative Party turfed him as their candidate, winning with 44% of the vote while the Conservative candidate was fourth with 12% of the vote.

Intelligence, vision, personal will, willingness to not bow down to the rule of party whips and sheep, a sense of the meaning of days that underlines the importance of doing, really doing, what is worth doing: these are the qualities that Chuck Cadman demonstrated. Regardless of whether we agree with any or all of his beliefs, it is hard to not respect the integrity with which he pursued them.

What is stunning is the number of the rest of Canada's 307 MPs that we can count on one hand who stand out as people with similar integrity and respectability. As the party system squelches independent thought in public for the sake of party line, independent MPs are a breath of clean, unpolluted air that hints at the potential of what politics can be in Canada, not only federally, but provincially and municipally.

While MPs can promote their independent thinking merely in caucuses' secret halls, they do little to uphold the potential they hold and can demonstrate to those who elected them.

And while we could choose to see the Liberals celebrating his life because of how he saved their slim mandate, my MP [sets the bar high](#) for the remaining 309 MPs:

*Mr. Cadman came to Ottawa "not as a power broker, but a missionary," said Industry Minister David Emerson, MP for Vancouver South [sic: Vancouver Kingsway]. "He put it all on the line for what he believed in. I like to say he had grit, which is the ultimate compliment I can pay somebody because that's what Canada was built by -- people with grit."*

While I won't even begin to comment on his self-serving use of the word "grit", I will say that I await Emerson's assertion of all he believes in and his demonstration that he's putting it all on the line for that. I fear that Emerson already is, leaving him as a pale shadow of Cadman's authentic grit. His constituency newsletter this month contains a Happy Canada Day message, the lyrics to O Canada, a survey for us to tell him what issues are important to us, and a short piece on Bill C-53, the Proceeds from Crime Bill, that representatives from local businesses--who he met with--welcomed.

I'm waiting to see in Emerson the kind of Chuck Cadman-like qualities that would get him re-elected as an independent if in the next election PM PM undermines democracy again by parachuting a star candidate into this riding. I know Ian Waddell has it, and he very nearly beat Emerson last year.