

"THE WAY WE WERE"

When Florida Attorney Norm Kent received a form letter from Sen. Norm Coleman condemning marijuana, Kent fired off this note to his former Hofstra University smoking buddy.

My friend Norman,

Years ago, in a lifetime far away, you did not oppose the legalization of marijuana... Sure, we had to tape the doors shut, burn incense and open the windows...yet we grew up okay, without the help of the Office of National Drug Control Policy's advice.

We grew up to become lawyers. Our other friends, as you go down the list, are doctors, professors, parents, political consultants and professionals. No one ever got cancer from smoking pot or diabetes from using a joint.

You never said then that pot was dangerous. What was scary then, and is as frightening now, is when national leaders become voices of hypocrisy, harbingers of the status quo, and protect their own position instead of the public good.

In your public life, as an attorney general, mayor and United States senator, you have been in the forefront of speaking out against abuses which are harmful. You have been a noble and honorable public servant... How about admitting that if the Rockefeller drug laws were applied to Norman Bruce Coleman on Long Island in 1968, or to me, or to our friends, and fellow students, you, I and others we knew and loved might just be getting out of jail now?

How about standing up and saying: "I, Norm Coleman, smoked pot in 1969." That "I am not a gang member, a drug addict or a criminal." How about saying: "I was able to responsibly integrate my prior pot use into my life, and still succeed on my own merits."

How about standing up not only for who you are, but who you were?

Norm Kent

Common Sense for Drug Policy
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