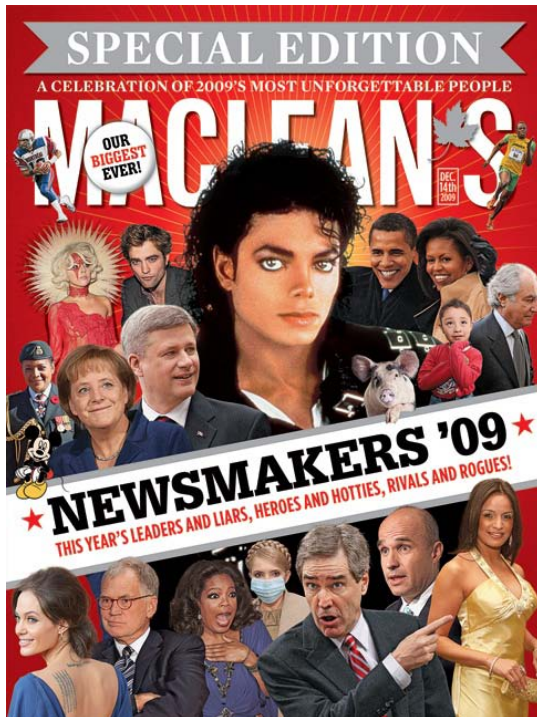


Influences that Endure



“Oh how quickly fame flees when we are out of the spotlight for even a few years.”

MacLean’s magazine labeled their Dec. 14 issue, “A Celebration of 2009’s Most Unforgettable People”. An intriguing assortment of “...leaders and liars, heroes and hotties, rivals and rogues” found themselves in the center of the media spotlight.

Political entities abound. The Obama family grins at us from the White House, a picture-perfect family aglow with optimism. Stephen Harper and Michaelle Jean appear quite satisfied in their photos after sampling seal meat while touring the North.

Jim Balsillie, Blackberry guru and wannabe NHL owner is described as “a business super-star championing the Canadian cause.” I bet he has a maple leaf tattooed somewhere on his body.

The “Winners” category was splattered with a startling array of characters ranging from Susan Boyle to Lady Gaga and Sidney Crosby to Moammar Gadhafi.

Yes, each page was laden with familiar faces and fascinating facts. But one thing was sorely misstated by the magazine – that these were unforgettable people.

The stark reality for most humans is that we are two or three generations from being forgotten. I know it sounds depressing, but bear with me.

This phenomena is proven each time I ramble nostalgically around my children or their friends. The mention of stars that grabbed headlines and influenced nations just a few decades ago is met with blank stares.

Burt Reynolds conjures up images in my mind of jet-black trans-ams and dare-devil stunts. I find myself humming, “We’ve got a long way to go and short time to get

there...” But a new generation is more apt to say, “Burt who” or “Is he related to Ernie from Sesame Street?”

Maureen McCormick, a.k.a. Marsha Brady was one hot gal in my youth, but she’s not exactly the topic of conversation in the hallways of local high schools today.

I asked a teen recently who Preston Manning is. His response was, “Isn’t he a football player?” Oh how quickly fame flees when we are out of the spotlight for even a few years.

For those who still doubt this truth, take a quick test: List the first and last names of your great-grandparents. Most cannot do so without consulting a family tree or visiting a cemetery to scan headstones.

No wonder King David penned the following words in the 103rd Psalm in the Bible: “Our days on earth are like grass; like wildflowers, we bloom and die. The wind blows, and we are gone – as though we had never been here. But the love of the LORD remains forever with those who fear him. His salvation extends to the children’s children of those who are faithful to his covenant, of those who obey his commandments!”

Yes, most of us won’t be remembered much beyond the potato salad served at our post-funeral luncheon. Our influence, however will linger long after our final breath, winding its way into the hearts of multiple generations to come; some presently unborn. Cancer claimed my biological mother before my children were born. But they are influenced greatly by her life via my life. Implanted values have been transplanted into their hearts and quite likely one day into the lives of my grand-children yet to be born. It’s a legacy of greatness and godliness that knows no boundaries and has no foreseeable end.

It challenges me to live carefully – for if greatness is transferable, so is smallness brought on by bad choices, immoral lifestyles and addictive behavior.

Makes one stop and think doesn’t it? I suspect that’s a good thing.