

AMERICAN ATHEISTS, INC.

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STATEMENT FROM AMERICAN ATHEISTS CONCERNING THE DEATH OF REV. JERRY FALLWELL

ELLEN JOHNSON, President of American Atheists issued the following statement this afternoon regarding the death of televangelist Jerry Falwell.

"While we recognize and respect the grief of friends and relatives, it must be acknowledged in the wake of Rev. Falwell's death that he and the organizations he founded, especially the so-called Moral Majority, were serious threats to our Constitution and, specifically, the separation of church and state."

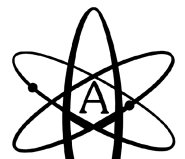
"Jerry Falwell was instrumental in galvanizing millions of American evangelicals into an intolerant, sectarian and authoritarian political movement. Gays, women, secularists, civil-libertarians and other groups who did not fit in to his plan to construct 'One Nation Under God' were stigmatized and attacked. Civil liberties were in jeopardy. Falwell and other religious right leaders advanced their political agenda in the name of Christianity, while demonizing their opponents."

"Perhaps the most ignominious moment in Falwell's career was his appearance with Rev. Pat Robertson on a television program which blamed the terrorist attacks of September 11 not on Islamic fundamentalist fanatics, but on a wide swath of the American people -- women (because of their support for abortion), gay and lesbian Americans, and individuals and organizations like American Atheists which labor for the separation of church and state."

"We cannot and must not lionize Rev. Jerry Falwell because he is now dead. We expect that some politicians beholden to the religious right, who perhaps owe their political careers in part to Falwell, will praise him for his religiosity or avuncular style. The truth is, however, that the Rev. Jerry Falwell was a dangerous man who opposed and worked against many of the key values underpinning our secular American democracy.:

-- Ellen Johnson, President
AMERICAN ATHEISTS

AMERICAN ATHEISTS is a nationwide movement that defends civil rights for Atheists; works for the total separation of church and state; and addresses issues of First Amendment public policy.



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