

Eminence Grisé

Every now and again there rises among us, without fanfare and flourish, an individual in whom there appears to be collected the wisdom of the ages and whose simple bearing and gravitas deepens our conviction that here is someone to whom we should pay mind and respect. This person will stand out, despite a complete disinterest in self-promotion or aggrandizement so prevalent among the blowhards in public life today, as a quiet bastion of truth, common sense, compassion and empathy.

The French have words to describe it, in an idiom that does not easily lend itself to translation --- *eminence grisé* --- a looming, all-pervasive influence that represents all that is known and understood from ages past with sure but prayerful hands reaching out to the future. This person tends to lead by example rather than dictum, like a shepherd his flock.

It has been my privilege to have shared my sojourn on this earth with several such individuals, and I count myself fortunate to have realized what a blessing it is to recognize them, but I am loath to identify them publicly as that would be, by definition, an anathema to them.

And so they remain anonymous holders of my utmost esteem and respect, and solemn, venerated guides in my steps towards my own eternity.