



Oklahoma City University School of Law

From the Selected Works of Lawrence K. Hellman

Summer 2010

Have Intellect, Charm, Curiosity, and Courage-- Will Travel: A Tribute to Norwood Beveridge

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Available at: https://works.bepress.com/lawrence_hellman/44/

OKLAHOMA CITY UNIVERSITY LAW REVIEW

VOLUME 35

SUMMER 2010

NUMBER 2

TRIBUTES

HAVE INTELLECT, CHARM, CURIOSITY, AND COURAGE—WILL TRAVEL: A TRIBUTE TO NORWOOD BEVERIDGE

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I have never asked Norwood Beveridge why he chose “Paladin” as the moniker for his e-mail address. I have just always assumed that he fantasized about taking the identity and persona of the central character in a popular TV show that was among the most popular on the air between 1957 and 1963: “Have Gun—Will Travel.” The leading character’s name was, simply, “Paladin.” Paladin was a handsome, adventuring gunfighter who resided in an upscale San Francisco hotel in the 1870s. He ran ads in newspapers offering his services to do what today we might describe as private detective/mercenary work. The ads’ simple message, which also appeared on Paladin’s calling card, employed an image of a knight from a chess set with the suggestive slogan:

HAVE GUN—WILL TRAVEL
WIRE PALADIN
SAN FRANCISCO

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The ads succeeded in attracting a stream of needy clients who engaged Paladin to right a wrong through the use of his gun-slinging prowess, if necessary. But Paladin was a debonair gunslinger who abjured the use of violence to solve his clients' problems, if possible. His "work" attire was all black, but when in residence at the San Francisco hotel between assignments, Paladin (as described by the sometimes-accurate Wikipedia encyclopedia) "dressed in formal white attire . . . , ate gourmet food, and attended the opera. In fact, many who met him initially mistook him for a dandy from the East."¹ Although the show's scripts allowed the Paladin character to display his skills as a fighter, the Wikipedia entry observes that the show also portrayed "his epicurean tastes and . . . refinement."²

Paladin's great advantage over adversaries was not his impressive equipment, or his ability as a marksman (superior as this was). Paladin's edge was his rich education; he had an infallible ability to relate ancient antecedents to his current situations. When the enemy was surrounding him, Paladin could usually make some insightful quip about General Marcellus and the siege of Syracuse or something similar, and then use this insight to his advantage. . . . Like a chess master, he sought control of the board through superior position³

I really don't know how carefully Norwood studied the Paladin character before choosing that name for his e-mail address. But this I do know: in many ways, Norwood Beveridge has exemplified the fictional Paladin's virtues.

Like the fictional Paladin, Norwood is handsome and has had a "rich" education that includes bachelor's and law degrees from Harvard and an LL.M. from New York University.

Like the fictional Paladin, Norwood is a man of culture. He has sung and played musical instruments professionally and for the entertainment of many—from folk gigs in a Cambridge, Massachusetts club simultaneously featuring the as-yet undiscovered Joan Baez to performing high classics with Oklahoma City's acclaimed Canterbury

1. Wikipedia, Have Gun—Will Travel, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Have_Gun_-_Will_Travel (last visited Aug. 4, 2010).

2. *Id.*

3. *Id.*

Choral Society to singing with OCU's highly talented Chapel Choir. Not only is he a talented musical performer; he is also a discriminating connoisseur of the performing and visual arts. He comes by his cultural knowledge and talents as a matter of upbringing and education. His family's roots in America trace back for centuries, and his family saw to it that he would become a "Harvard man," in the most favorable sense of the term: well-read, well-informed, culturally aware, charming, polite, refined, and possessing a sense of noblesse oblige.

Like the fictional Paladin, Norwood is an adventurer, ever ready for new challenges. This explains a career path that repeatedly saw him forsake a comfortable place to try something new—moving from his partnership in a white-shoe Wall Street law firm to a stint as general counsel of a NYSE-listed company to a law-teaching career that ultimately brought him to Oklahoma City University School of Law. (Yes, Oklahoma City! Who would have thought that this sophisticate from Down East in Maine would find such a comfortable fit in this still-developing town?) He launched his academic career sufficiently late in life that one of his LL.M. professors at NYU doubted his ability to gain a faculty position. But Norwood proved that professor wrong, earning a respected place in the academy as a distinguished teacher and a scholar.

Like the fictional Paladin, Norwood has an ability "to relate the experience of history" (his own and the world's) to current situations. This ability sometimes allowed him to reduce stress and rancor that might arise during a faculty meeting or difficult encounter by almost whimsically uttering an aside that would put things into a calmer perspective.

Like the fictional Paladin, Norwood prefers to resolve problems through the use of his intellect, drawing strength from his knowledge of literature and the arts. Norwood avoids confrontation except when necessary; but when it is necessary, he has the courage to challenge wrongdoers—albeit, not with a gun but with the power of argument. This trait served him well during his service as associate dean at OCU LAW when he would sometime have to "lay down the law."

Norwood's willingness to accept the responsibility of serving as associate dean deserves special mention. This was an assignment that he didn't have to take and which many on law school faculties would hasten to avoid. But he welcomed the challenge. He was energized by the opportunity to contribute to our law school's institutional growth. In the role of associate dean, he helped us recruit talented faculty and

administrators, set a high tone for academic rigor and integrity, and advanced the image of our law school with external constituents. For this service, I am personally grateful and so are all of those who take pride in the continuing growth and maturation of our school. Indeed, it was during Norwood's tenure as associate dean that OCU LAW gained membership in the Association of American Law Schools, a momentous accomplishment in the history of our institution. Helping our law school reach this milestone was justifiably a source of great professional pride for Norwood.

Norwood entered the academic world to become a scholar of securities law, and this he did. His numerous published law review articles proved to be influential and continue to be cited often. His knowledge and understanding of the law regarding the duties of corporate officers and directors was well displayed in his writings, which led to frequent engagements as an expert witness in significant litigation.

In sum, like the fictional Paladin, Norwood Beveridge is a man of intellect, charm, curiosity, and courage. All of these traits were reflected in his acceptance of a new professional challenge near the end of his teaching career: seeking to understand the regulation of the securities markets in the People's Republic of China. He did this because he was an early and eager supporter of our school's effort to develop a summer study-abroad program in China. By volunteering to teach in the program, he took on the burden of once again retooling to learn a new field. It was not in his nature to do this halfway. As a result, he became recognized as an American authority on this increasingly important subject, earning for himself speaking and publishing invitations that brought credit to him and our law school. His personal diplomacy while teaching at our partner law school at Nankai University in Tianjin, China, was an important factor in the development of the relationship between the two schools.

With Norwood's retirement, we will miss his willingness to embrace the future, to welcome innovation, and to try new things. But we will long remember the lessons that he left with us, and we will try to apply them with the optimistic spirit he so well exemplified for over twenty years. This is his enduring legacy at Oklahoma City University School of Law.