

Oklahoma City University School of Law

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Daniel J. Morgan, *Oklahoma City University School of Law*



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NORWOOD BEVERIDGE, A PROFESSOR FOR ALL SEASONS

Daniel J. Morgan*

It is an April evening in Piedmont, Oklahoma. Andrea Morgan's small middle school library is outfitted with a stage backdrop of low paper mâché ceilings (appropriately black), low lighting highlighted by candles at each table surrounding a small stage, and the odor of freshly brewed cappuccino suffusing the air. Mrs. Morgan's library club is having its first Beat Generation Coffeehouse program at which budding writers are invited to demonstrate that they are the next Allen Ginsberg or Jack Kerouac. All that is needed to complete the atmosphere is a '50s-style folk singer. Voila! Enter Norwood Beveridge, striding on stage, guitar in hand. For the next forty minutes, the young poets' society and their parents are treated to a bravado performance featuring pieces from the Weavers, Woody Guthrie, and folks like Joan Baez (to whom Norwood affectionately refers to as "Joanie" (maybe a little more going on there than Norwood, always the true gentleman, will admit to)). Norwood sets the perfect stage for the young poets to take their first brave steps into the world of art, literature, and performance. What a memorable evening!

Not a heck of a lot of law professors and/or corporate Wall Street specialists could pull off such a performance—Norwood can. His sense of whimsy and the twinkle in his eyes were on display that night in Piedmont, and I have been privileged to observe it for years during my friendship with Norwood through thick and thin at OCU.

Norwood has always broken down traditional ways of doing things, perhaps because of his youthful experience of playing in the real coffeehouses of New York, living hand to mouth, and depending on his quick wit and his ability to play and sing for his supper in smoky bars. All of these skills have served him well in academia. *Maybe* when he

* Professor of Law, Oklahoma City University. B.A., J.D., University of Wyoming.

makes his final remarks at his retirement dinner, we will learn the real nitty-gritty about Norwood and “Joanie,” but I expect only some general comments and that twinkle in the eyes. The rest will be left to imagination.

Norwood parlayed his musical background (ranging from classical training on the piano to folk) to close relationships with many on the OCU musical arts performance faculty, which has been a *great* bridge between the faculties of Arts & Sciences and the Law School. This connection served in many ways to enrich the professional experiences of both groups.

Active in both the arts and the community, Norwood sang for many years with the renowned Oklahoma City Canterbury Choral Society. I remember watching Norwood on TV performing with Canterbury during the very moving and emotional memorial service with President Clinton after the Murrah Bombing. What a special gift Norwood offered through his music that day to a grieving community and nation!

In latter years, when some of us are slowing down, Norwood has turned into OCU’s Marco Polo professor, traveling several times to China to teach various comparative courses in securities and corporations law at Nankai University and establishing recognized expertise in the emerging Chinese stock market as a part of his educational mission at Nankai University. Dean Hellman is already twisting Norwood’s arm to continue to teach in China after retirement. I’m betting on a year off before Norwood once again returns to the Orient for us.

And, of course, Norwood has performed his “traditional” duties in an exceptional manner. A great professor, author, and administrator, Norwood has always exemplified the highest academic and professional standards. He cheerfully served in what may be the least attractive but critically important post in legal education, associate dean. As former associate deans, Norwood and I share an additional bond. We know that the associate dean gets most of the intractable problems, the blame when things go wrong, and little credit for the occasional success. Other than that, we agree it’s a heck of a job!

Norwood has truly been a professor for all seasons at OCU. He is a fascinating person who continues to take on new challenges and adventures. Norwood is the guy the host wants to show up first at the party and be the last to leave.

Norwood, the party is not over. We will give you some time off. Then, return to us, go to China, and come back to a good glass of wine in exchange for some new stories about your most recent adventures!

