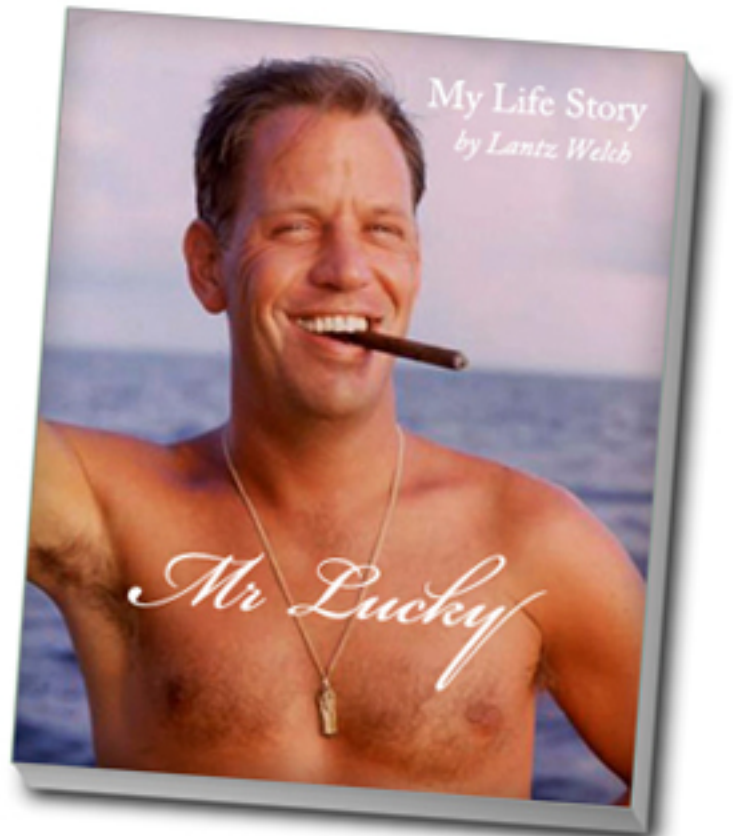


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Mr. Lucky

INTRODUCTION

N.B. nota bene is a Latin phrase meaning "note well". In present-day English it is used to draw the attention of the reader to a certain detail of the subject at hand.

N.B. Some words are blue & underlined. If you click on them you will be taken to the appropriate web page.

N.B. I sometimes curse too much, but you should note that we are all products of our experiences in life. Many of my developmental years were spent around loading docks, meatpacking houses, construction jobs, truck driving and boxing halls. I have tried to clean up my language, but it does not always work.

You will note that these pages are filled with I, I, and I, along with Me, Me, and more Me's. There will be no apology. What is it that you do not understand about the term "Autobiography", "*A history of a person's life written or told by that person?*"

In case you are wondering how I can be so precise in my memories of trial and other events you should know that people maintained scrapbooks about my activities. Also, we had the Smith Jury Verdict Reports that detailed all cases tried in a six county area.

N.B. In the 60's, 70's, 80's and early 90's the weekly sheet was 10 to 15 pages covering 30 to 40 cases in a six county area. After "[Tort Reform](#)" was orchestrated by the Casualty Insurance Industry in the late 90's into the 2000's. Those numbers shrunk to 1 or 2 pages and 2 to 5 good cases tried by good lawyers resulting in bad results.

The Bad Guys [and the Republicans] successfully destroyed the jury system: "*For the last 15 years, insurance companies, manufacturers of dangerous products and chemicals, the tobacco industry and other major industries have been engaged in a nationwide assault on the civil justice system. In nearly every state and in Congress, corporations and their insurers have waged a relentless campaign to change the laws that give*

sick and injured consumers the ability to hold their offenders responsible for the injuries they cause."

This has given the insurance companies [record breaking profits](#).

Of course the plight of the seriously injured has been ignored.

TURNING TO THE QUESTION MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED
OF ME, WHAT WAS YOUR SECRET??????????

ONWARD & UPWARD TO MY MISSION IN LIFE. Somewhere along the line I determined that I was Sir Lantzlott reincarnated. That I was put here to look after the "Widows & Orphans"; that is, the weaker people who needed my help. Mr. Lucky was indeed fortunate to have chosen a path that suited his idealistic nature, for I would have surely been a failure in the bleak Corporate World.

Another anomaly in my life was the fact that money was never a motivational factor for me. My best theory is that when you go to work at an early age and realize you can always figure out a way to make money when you need it, money becomes unimportant. In my legal career I was motivated by helping, winning and later on, setting records. The good news is that much to my amazement an inordinate amount of money came my way.

I ran my law firm on the principle that I would always treat my clients the way I would like to be treated.

I also concluded that I was Jonathan Livingston Seagull: *"People who make their own rules when they know they're right ... people who get a special pleasure out of doing something well [even if only for themselves]... people who know there's more to this whole living thing than meets the eye: they'll be with Jonathan Seagull all the way."*

I DID NOT WANT TO BE PART OF THE FLOCK FIGHTING OVER
SCRAPS!!

I was so taken by the lessons of this book that Laura had a special solid gold necklace made for me that I wore under my shirt when I went to trial:



Later on I acquired another Good Luck Piece that I wore during trial. The Bolin twins were members of a good Catholic family that lived a few doors away in the old neighborhood.

One of the twins became the Claims Manager for Hartford A & I so naturally he kept up with my career as a trial lawyer.

He took me to lunch one day and after being extremely complimentary about my successes in helping people he gifted me an 18K St. Jude medal that had been blessed by his priest. [St. Jude](#) was the patron saint of hopeless and desperate cases.



Later on I started awarding this medal at the Annual Bench & Bar Conference to the Young Lawyer who had done the most for helpless and desperate people. It would pass from year to year to the next deserving recipient.

I kept various plaques in my office, e.g. *"EXCELLENCE: The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor."* Vincent Lombardi

And on the wall behind my desk:



I have been told many times that I exuded an intensity and almost mystical power in the courtroom that commanded confidence and absolute belief in what I had to say. It was no doubt due to the fact that I felt that I was on the side of the angels.

I am proud to be a trial lawyer. It is the trial bar that makes up the vanguard of social change. It is the trial bar that nurtures and protects the freedoms that this great nation was founded upon: freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom to our own beliefs; and the right of trial by jury.

We are the guardians of the poor, the unfortunate and oppressed. It is our lot to stand at the bar of justice. Whether it is for a large corporation or the poorest individual on earth, our charge is the same; to seek truth and justice with honor.

May I go forward and perform my obligations with courtesy, dignity and due respect to my fellow man to the end that justice shall prevail.



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BEGINNINGS & GRADE SCHOOL

MR. LUCKY or THE LUCKY LAWYER

{Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity.}

September 25th: Many exciting events occurred on this date, e.g.: Columbus sails with 17 ships on 2nd voyage to America; Chubby Checker's "Twist," hits #1; Sandra Day O'Connor sworn in as 1st female supreme court justice; Michael Douglas & Catherine Zeta-Jones birthdates; BUT, perhaps the most propitious event of all will be the birth of Lantz Welch in 1932.

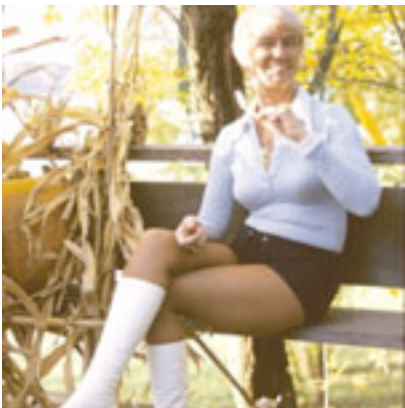
My father, Philip, born in 1900, had a 7th grade education, having to forgo school to quit in order to help support his family. My mother, Evelyn, born in 1904, a member of a Swedish immigrant farm family, grew up in S. Dakota, 1 of 8 siblings. She completed high school.

My sister Jody attended college.

Women never worked outside the home, but during WW II war years, my mother obtained a job at a war plant and once getting a taste of freedom, worked the rest of her adult life. She operated an employment agency aptly named, Welch & Associates. She always expected the best of everybody and usually got it.

My father was a frustrated and underpaid white collar worker all his life who worked for Sinclair Oil Corp.

I have been told by many that I have inherited my optimistic enthusiasm from my mother:



(Evelyn in her 70's)

and my intellect from my father:



I could not have asked for better more loving parents. When I became a trial lawyer they attended all my closing arguments and gave my back a pat when I took a frequent whipping.

FIRST N.D.E.



I came across this pic of me fishing at age 8 that reminded me of my first N.D.E. [Near Death Experience] of 7 that occurred at age 4. The story was told to me of an incident that happened when my dad & I were fishing in Gull Lake, Minn.

I was using a miniature rod & reel I hooked a huge Northern Pike that turned out to be larger than I. My thumb got caught in the reel spool and as I was being pulled into the lake, my dad had the quickness to grab one of my ankles

or I would not be writing of this experience. I can't find the picture that shows me standing on a dock next to the fish that was taller than Little Lantz.

I also discovered my lucky #, 4, at that time. I put a nickel into a horse racing machine on #4 & kept betting it until I had a sack full of nickels. I then went down to the lake & started skipping them across the water until my mom stopped me. Those nickels were worth about \$1.00 each and these were post depression years.

GRADE SCHOOL

My aggressive nature peeked out at an early age when I tried to kiss the little girl on the next mat at naptime in kindergarten. My parents were called. I had the same proclivities in the 2nd grade when I tried the same activities with the prettiest girl in our class at a birthday outing at the Oak Park Theater at 40th & Prospect. She ran home crying. I took a whipping.

I demonstrated the business side of my life at age 9 when I became a pin boy at the Oak Park bowling alley at 39th & Prospect. I was the youngest & smallest ever employed. Most were teenagers who could pick up 3 pins at a time, while I could only manage two. This was a disadvantage since the locals usually tried to roll the second ball in order to hit the boys in the pit for a good laugh. Amazingly, I figured out a way to rarely get hit. Tips were rolled down the gutter & I always garnered the biggest take.

In the adjoining pool hall I learned the game of pool at age 9 by standing on a Coca-Cola case.

My work ethic persisted, and while in grade school I worked at: Smith Drugs as a bicycle delivery boy/Abe's Super Market delivering groceries/snow shoveling/yard care etc. I never needed an allowance.

S. B. Ladd Grade School was uneventful aside from the fact that I had to repeat the fifth grade because of disciplinary problems. This created an additional problem, because I was now thrown into the new school system requiring the eighth grade.

Several events stand out during my grade school years:

THEIVING: I stole an item from Kresge's Dime Store. My parents discovered it & knew I lacked the money to buy it. I confessed. My father made me don my

Cub Scout uniform & took me to face the manager to return the item and apologize for the theft. I never stole anything again in my life.

BOY SCOUTS: I got past Tender Foot on three occasions, but was busted back for various reasons, so I quit the program.



CHURCH CHOIR: I was a boy soprano and told that I had a beautiful voice, so I hung in there and even received a cross for not missing a Sunday for over a year. My voice changed, so I then dropped out of the choir.



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HIGH SCHOOL

I worked my way through high school [Central & Southwest] at many interesting jobs: Hallmark Cards order filler/Rodeo Meatpacking house loading docks/Construction laborer/Tree removal/Septic cleaner/Window washer etc.

I was accepted into an underprivileged Rotary Club boys camp one summer and talked them into keeping me the entire summer as a dishwasher. That is when I took up boxing.

One summer Mr. Lucky was working scaffolding on the 10 story water tower at 75th & Homes when I had one of my many near death experiences. Straight scaffolding was suspended against a circular water tower. The black coworker & I used 40 lb. jackhammers horizontally against the wall removing bad concrete to be replaced with Gunitite. About every hour we would complete a “drop” & lower the scaffold about 4 feet. We tied off each end by drilling into the concrete, driving a spike & tying off to each end of the scaffold. I would then take a smoke by sitting on the rail closest to the tower, leaning against the tower with my feet on the opposite rail. My pal would warn me that this was very dangerous to which I replied, *“When Welch makes a tie in, it never fails.”*

One morning, when we were very close to the top it did. The scaffold swung out, I pitched over backwards & as luck would have it, a foot tangled in a rope & I fell only a dozen feet or so. He lowered us to the ground & after I puked my guts out we took a break until lunchtime. He talked me into going back up, by saying that I would always be afraid of heights if I did not. I finished out the summer on that job, but needless to say, I never again sat on the railing.

Central High School: One of the problems with taking IQ tests, and learning that you are a genius, is that it encourages you to choose not to study. When that is coupled with disciplinary problems, a four-year high school program can easily turn into a five-year program.

Don Owens and I became skillful pool players and used to hustle bets at [Kling & Allen's](#) at 12th & Main. This was a hangout of “Fast Eddie”, Willie Mosconi and other great players who came through Kansas City. We did pretty well for a while because of our obvious youth, but the streak ran out as we became known.

My goal in life, while attending Central high school, was to simply graduate, get a job at the Leeds Chevrolet plant and buy a car. I had no thoughts of going to college.

K.C. Star/Times Mailroom: One of my more interesting jobs in high school was working Friday & Saturday nights at the [mailroom](#) as have other famous luminaries, e.g., Woodrow Wilson & Harry S. Truman.

Youngsters from the toughest high schools in the area worked this job, e.g., Central, Manual, & Ward on the Kansas side. Hiring was straight out of “On the Waterfront” with Marlon Brando. Late Friday night a gang of 20/30 would circle around a short tough ex-boxer named Major Fox. His baldhead, face covered with a green eyeshade would stare out as he pointed to those who would get to work until early the following morning. We would then show up Saturday night for more of the same. That is how the multi-sectioned Sunday paper was assembled.

Southwest High School: In 1951, as Luck would have it, my parents moved to 63rd Terr. and Holmes which put me in the Southwest high school district. I had no desire to attend this “Rich Kids” high school and so I attempted to get permission to transfer back to Central high school.

Some of my early behavior came back to haunt me. The rule at Central was that one person was assigned per locker, but several of us jocks did not want to pay for separate locks and thus, three of us shared one locker. We were apprehended by the Vice Principal, Mr. Marshall, and while he was reprimanding us, I told him to “Stuff it” and started to walk away. He made the mistake of grabbing my arm, and in a reflex reaction, I started to punch him out. He fell back against a row of lockers, which tumbled over.

Guess who I had to see about getting permission to transfer back to Central high school. Mr. Marshall just grinned at me and said, “*We're rid of you Welch, and you're not coming back.*” (There will be more about Mr. Marshall later in the story).



A short story will clearly demonstrate the differences in students at the two high schools: While walking down the second-floor hallway at Southwest High in front of "Study Hall" I picked up one of those large metal waste cans and drop kicked it through an open doorway clear to the back of the room. I was apprehended by the Vice Principal within about 15 minutes and when I asked him who ratted me out. He said, *"This isn't Central high school Welch. Over a dozen students gave me your name."* This was the beginning of my new attitude.

SOCIAL LIFE: Southwest H.S. had fraternities & sororities. The best fraternity was the "Delts". Since I could never make my grades they made me an Honorary Member. This worked out well since the Christmas Dances were the highlight of the year. Each frat. gave out one Guest Invite & I got them all. Also, I was always invited by a desirable sorority girl of each sorority, so I attended ALL the dances.

Under the rules, I was not eligible to play football my first year at Southwest high school. The football coach, Louis House, was known as the Vince Lombardi of the Interscholastic High School football league. His football practices were tougher than the league games. My first year at Southwest, 1951, should have been my senior year. However, it took me five years to complete the four-year program, and I graduated in 1952 at age 20.

Back to football in 1952: Coach House was giving out equipment and studiously ignoring me. When that process was completed, I approached Coach House, jabbed him in the gut with my thumb and said, *"How about some equipment for me?"* To which he replied, *"You're that tough kid from Central aren't you?"* To which I readily responded, *"That's me coach."* He then said, *"Well tough kid, we'll see how tough you really are."* He then had me issued cleats, pants and jersey, but no protective padding.

It should be noted at this point, that Coach House is the only coach in the history of high school football in Kansas City to have fielded three teams in a row that won the city championship: 1950, 1951 & 1952.

Many would say that enviable record was a direct result of the leadership of Coach House. I happen to believe that it was because he had the good fortune of coaching a quarterback named Carl "Cool" Ade, who was one of the greatest natural athletes I have ever met. Carl was an All City: football player; basketball player; baseball player and a scratch golfer. In fact, when Tom Watson played in his last amateur tournament, Carl had him down by one stroke until the end of the match. Years later, when I was one of the better racquetball players in the state, Carl beat me 20-2 and 20-1. It took me almost one year of weekly play against him before I could play him even.



THE CHAMP! "Cool" Ade

Our teams' best running back was John Handley, winner of the Nigro Football Trophy as the best football player in Kansas City. John was an absolute mass of muscle and ran over opposing lineman the way that Eddie Podolak did for the Kansas City Chiefs.

We scrimmaged and I was playing defensive left guard. The opposing lineman pulled and Handley ran over me on three consecutive plays. The fourth time I was able to get under him and he tumbled through the air a few times and landed on his back. Coach House no doubt realized that he was gambling with his star player simply to take care of a smart mouth. I was issued protective pads and played out the championship season.



Carl Ade back row left. LW front row, 3rd from left.



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COLLEGE & LAW

Attending Southwest high school put me on a life-altering course. I discovered that most of my pals were talking about going to college. So, I enrolled in Kansas City Metropolitan Junior College across the street from Westport High School. At that time I had a job at the Bell telephone company at 11th and Oak Street. I worked in archives on the top floor and there was little or nothing to do, so, for the first time in my life I studied. I received very superior grades.

The fraternities at the University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri, began rushing me, because it seems that I was popular at Southwest high school. On the Senior Ballot I was voted: Most Humorous, Biggest Flirt, and Best Personality.

I was anxious to go to college in order to pursue girls and party, but I could not afford the cost. The three fraternities that I was interested in were: Kappa Sigma; Sigma Alpha Epsilon and Sigma Chi. I needed to figure out a way to serve meals to defray my room and board. Unfortunately, those positions always went to upperclassman and not pledges.

I started with the fraternity I was least interested in, Sigma Chi, and they held a special chapter meeting and agreed that I could serve one meal a day. I then shared this information with Sigma Alpha Epsilon, and they made special arrangements for me to serve two meals a day. I then told Kappa Sigma [the house I really wanted] I could join their fraternity if I could serve three meals a day and not have to pay a House Bill. They held a special chapter meeting and the deal was done.

For additional funds I worked at the Italian Village across from Jesse Hall as a waiter, bartender and pizza maker. I also opened the Trolley Car next door at 6 AM and cooked, ran the counter and did the dishes.



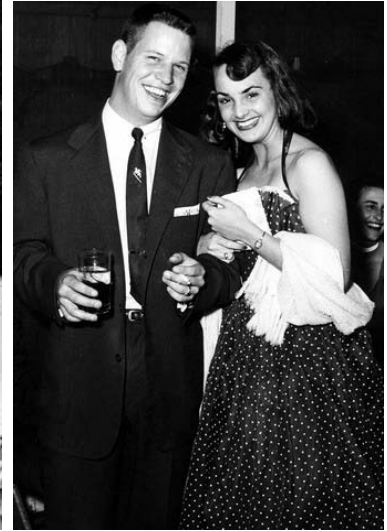
While attending M.U. I owned a 1941 Chevrolet equipped with a roof rack that carried my ladders used in my business of washing windows and taking down trees.



I hired several of my fraternity brothers to work for me.

All of these activities, coupled with pursuit of the opposite sex and partying left little energy for attending class or studying.





Therefore, I either crammed for tests or found some way of obtaining advance copies of tests and squeaked by.

In 1956 I met my true love, Diane, and I got pinned on Thanksgiving Day of that year.



In January 1956 I started Law School at the University of Missouri, Columbia Missouri. As part of the 1st year class orientation meeting we were told by the Dean to look at the man on your left and the man on your right because they will not be there to graduate. Only 1 of 3 graduated. We were told that 1st year law was a full time endeavor and anyone was found with outside employment would be expelled. Of course I could not attend without my occupations so I continued working.

About ½ way through that first year I was called into the Deans' office and he told me that it had come to his attention that I was working. I replied, *"Who would have told you a thing like that?"* To which he responded that certain rumors had come to his attention. I said, *"That's the problem with hearsay, you just can't believe it."* We sparred back & forth a few more times and he then started laughing and said, *"You are going to be some kind of good trial lawyer someday."* *"I don't want to hear any more about your working outside of your law studies."* To which I responded, *"I will try to see that you don't."* And I fled his office and of course continued working.

I was enrolled in Air Force ROTC and was anxious to go to Korea and fly jets. However, I knew that if I did not finish law school. I would probably never come back to it. Therefore, I applied to the Air Force for an extension of time so that I might obtain my law degree.

As fate would have it, Diane became pregnant, and we were married in 1956.



It was one thing to work my way through law school and support myself, but quite another to support a wife and child in addition. So, I went to the Air Force ROTC Colonel and told him that I no longer desired the extension and wished to move forward into active duty immediately. He was not pleased and told me how difficult it had been for them to obtain the extension I had requested and that it could not be undone. I was not anxious to twiddle my thumbs for a couple of years so I explored the possibility of not accepting my commission.

I sought the advice of my Contracts professor, Mr. Pittman (The Fox), and he advised me that until I took the oath and was sworn in, the United States Air Force did not own me.

I then advised the Col., that I would not be present for the swearing-in ceremony, and he was furious. He told me that never in the history of the Cadet Corps had anything like this occurred and he told me how much money they had spent on me. I told him that I was sorry.

N.B. This might be a good point to share one of the many sayings my grandmother, Laura Welch, shared with me:

“O wad some power the giftie gie us to see oursells as ithers see us.”

(O would some power the gift to give us to see ourselves as others see us.) Robert Burns (1759 - 1796)

There seems to be a universal inability for successful self-appraisal. I did not fully appreciate this until after I had spent one month at Lackland Air Force Base courtesy of Air Force R.O.T.C. Shortly after arriving I met the base commanders' daughter, who was a very attractive hottie, so I started seeing her most every night. I was even invited to the Col.'s house for dinner on a few occasions. After returning to Columbia, Missouri I somehow came across my fitness report that had been authored by said Col. His concluding line was, *“Cadet Welch is one of the most unusual young men I've ever met. It seems that you either love him or hate his guts.”*

P.S. I can remember in the 1980s having my usual end of the day cocktail with my two best pals, Max Foust and Judge Horn when they jumped on my case and educated me to the fact that not everyone liked me. In fact, they assured me that most lawyers and judges resented my successes and were in fact jealous of me. That most thought that they were much smarter than Lantz Welch and had demonstrated this with better grades in law school. In fact, I was not the darling of the legal profession that I thought I was. My response was then and always: *“As my hero, Popeye The Sailor man, always says, ‘I yam what I yam.’”*

N.B. Another cocktail conversation that I remember with Horn and Foust took place on the subject of the two political parties. As usual I was pontificating about something or other Judge Horn stopped me and said, *“Lantzer, I will tell you all you will ever need to know about the Democrats and the Republicans. They both steal. However, there are more Democrats that steal than Republicans. But, even though there are fewer of them, they are smarter than the Democrats and always manage to steal a whole lot more.”*

Anticipating that the next move of the U.S. Air Force would be to get me drafted to serve in the Army in Korea I obtained an affidavit from a doctor that

Diane was pregnant and I presented this information to my draft board in Kansas City. I later learned that they did in fact try to have me drafted.

I then decided that I would have to finish law school at Kansas City University at their night school. This was a great disappointment, since it was a well known fact that very few of the night school graduates were able to pass the Bar Examinations.

I obtained a full-time job as a claims adjuster for State Farm Mutual, obtained a company car and rented a two-car garage made into a house in the Waldo area of Kansas City.

I finally graduated from night law school in 1959.



To my utter amazement, I did pass the Bar Examinations in 1960 and became a lawyer.



60's

In the late 1960s. I was chosen as one of Kansas City's most eligible bachelors.



Other big changes in my life occurred in the late 60s when Diane was institutionalized and I acquired the legal custody of my three children.

I had been living in a great bachelor pad at Heritage Hills in Johnson County Kansas. This new state of affairs forced me to buy my first home at Weatherby

Lake, Missouri in 1970. I bought the house for \$40,000 with a \$10,000 down payment. The mortgage was the first and last debt I ever had in my life.

These events brought another big change in my life, the deepened relationship with Gwen and her marvelous son Rick.



ALL WERE HAPPY ON THE HOME FRONT:









Ski trips





Trips down the Grand Canyon





Sailboat races



Ice Boating



Ice Hockey



And my two heroic sons who were champs at whatever they attempted.

Fortunately, they had Lady Gwen to guide them:



NOW YOU MAY ASK: WHO OR WHAT SUPPORTED ALL THESE WONDERFUL ACTIVITIES?? WHO WAS WORKING THOSE 80-100 HOUR WEEKS??????????

It must be time to turn to Mr. Lucky's Professional Life.

As a background you should know about my time as a State Farm Mutual Claims Adjuster. I was trained for a month in Bloomington, Indiana & when I hit the bricks I had been taught that we were the Good Guys & that lawyers who represented injured people were simply interfering with our mission.

It took me almost a full year before I learned that the truth was exactly the opposite. That "Claimants" had no earthly idea what dollar sign to place on their health & well-being. We continually took advantage of this ignorance. It was our job was to keep them out of the hands of lawyers.

My first 3 civil trials on behalf of injured persons resulted in 2 wins & 1 loss. The first 2 were 400% more than the offers & the 3rd was my first screwing by a small town [Liberty] judge & a skillful defense lawyer.

My next legal adventure was to be my one & only Criminal Case. I will now explain to you why so many innocent people find themselves in prison. There was no Legal Aid or Public Defender in those days. Young lawyers fresh out of law school were appointed by the Court to defend cases. Virtually all these lawyers pleaded out their cases.

In the fall of 1962 I was living in the attic room of my parent's house at 63rd Terr. and Holmes. This was because I had lost my Prairie Village house to Diane and her new husband.

On July 1, 1962 Ramona Collins, age 22, received two visitors to her apartment. Her boyfriend, Nolan Ray, age 23, and his Hispanic pal, Contreras. The two men had been drinking and according to the newspaper accounts, Ms. Collins stabbed Nolan Ray with a butcher knife and she was thereafter

charged with first degree murder. Ms. Collins and Nolan Ray were both Caucasian. I was assigned this case, and it was no doubt expected that I would plead her guilty to a lesser offense than first-degree murder.

It should be noted that one of the skills I developed as a claims adjuster was that of becoming an excellent investigator. I found David Contreras, age 24, and obtained a court reporter statement. As the true facts developed, both men were drunk and the deceased was insisting that Ms. Collins have sex with Contreras. The deceased began to assault her and she stabbed him in self-defense. She was held without bond until her preliminary hearing when the charges were reduced to second degree murder.

We were ready for trial the morning of October 17, 1962, and the prosecutor was surprised to learn that I had no interest in pleading her guilty. He made an offer of manslaughter, and I told him that we wanted a jury trial. The prosecutor next offered "assault with a deadly weapon" and I told him that we wanted a jury trial. The trial judge berated me about my lack of concern for the best interests of my client, and I told him that I was the only person that seemed to be concerned about my client. The prosecutor then offered "common assault" and I told him we wanted a jury trial. By lunchtime the State dismissed all charges, and Ms. Collins was a free woman.

P.S. The bloody Cutco serrated knife, with evidence tag attached, still hangs in my office.

P.P.S. I was never again appointed to defend a criminal case. Most young lawyers received at least a dozen appointments.

Turning back to my Mission to represent the little people who'd suffered injuries, you might wonder how I would develop the skills to carry out this Mission.

In the early 60s we did not have a "Lantz Welch Educational Center" for the training of wannabe trial lawyers:



I gained my skills by going to watch my heroes try jury cases. It should be noted that this was “on my own dime” since all of my earnings were predicated on contingent fees. If I was not successful in the pursuit of the case, I did not get paid. Thus, it did not pay to take non-meritorious cases.

I found that all of these able lawyers were willing to share their knowledge by answering my questions. One of my particular heroes was Lyman “Red Dog” Fields. He was always willing to answer my questions. Even though there was no Plaintiffs Bar in this part of the country, Lyman was the best we had. I was particularly gratified that when the Kansas City Bar Association presented a musical comedy called “Big Boss” in April of 1963. I was chosen to play my hero, “Red Dog Pasture”.

CIVIL JURY TRIALS:

1964: There were many trials that year and I will mention just a few of them.

The year started off great in January with my first “big verdict”. Wilma Dalton suffered a herniated disc and we turned down a \$7500 offer in favor of a verdict of \$35,000.

March brought my first encounter with Bill Sanders, the best Defense Lawyer in K.C, and one of the best in the country. I was offered \$5500 for a totally winnable case, only to stare at a defense verdict.

My next heartbreaker was tried in June for a young man on a motorcycle traveling on the highway when the defendant pulled from a “Yield” sign in an automobile that virtually exploded his pelvis. We had been offered \$9000. After the defendant's verdict I was visiting with the jury on the Oak Street side of the courthouse when a motorcycle roared off from the light and one of the jurors exclaimed, “*There goes one of those sons of bitches!!*”, and then immediately slapped his hand over his mouth and assured me that nothing like that had been said in the jury room.

A VALUABLE LESSON LEARNED BY LANTZ: Do not accept cases wherein a juror could never see themselves in the shoes of the plaintiff. After this experience I never took a motorcycle case, skier, cigarette smoker, etc.

1965: Of the many cases successfully tried that year, one really stands out in my mind. A lawyer referred the dog bite of an 11-year-old girl who had suffered a tear through her lower lip. I had photos taken shortly after the incident that I introduced into evidence. The trial took place over two years following the incident and as is true with young children, the scar was barely visible at time of trial. What to do? I told the child that the strangers in the courtroom did not really need to see her scar. And if she wished, she could keep her hand over her mouth during the entire proceedings. I was gambling that the defense lawyer would not have the balls to ask her to remove her hand. I was right and we received an \$18,000 verdict and lawyers started referring all their dog bite cases to me.

1966-1969: These years brought a lot of wins, but the one standout verdict came in May of 1967. Plaintiff was a 55-year-old woman with a herniated disc. Dr. Lichtor, the defense Dr., testified that she had excellent results from her surgery and was simply trying to fool the jury. We turned down a \$7500 offer and obtained a \$37,000 judgment.

The 60s brought some other interesting events in addition to my civil trial work. An article from the Saturday Evening Post, dated September 25, 1965 is

about [Sharon Kinne](#) who faced three different murder charges. Her cases make the O.J. Simpson matter look like a walk in the park.

She was defended by Mr. Quinn, the senior partner of the law firm that first employed me. Because of my abilities as an investigator I was asked to handle all of the investigations and statement taking preceding trial.

Earlier in March of 1960 Sharon Kinne's husband, James, was shot in the back of his head by a 22 caliber pistol. The Jackson County Sheriff's office closed the case as an accidental shooting by his 2 1/2 year old daughter, Dana.

Sharon took the insurance money and bought a new Thunderbird and began an affair with her car salesman, Walter Jones. Walter being a good family man did not want to give up his wife Patricia Jones for Sharon. Sharon told Walter she was pregnant and he still refused to divorce his wife. On May 26, Sharon called Patricia Jones at work and asked to meet with her. She got into the car with Sharon and she was never seen alive again.

The next day, after his wife had not come home, Walter called Sharon and pressed her for information about his wife Patricia. Sharon agreed to help look for her. She called an old boyfriend, John, and later that night they went to a Lover's Lane that Sharon was very familiar with and discovered the body of Patricia Jones.

My best pal, Larry Gepford, was the prosecutor and my boss, Mr. Quinn, was the defense lawyer. Before trial in the Jones murder case, the State reopened the husband's death and filed a second murder charge in an effort to add fuel to the fire.

I sat at counsel table and assisted in the trial. It was front page news morning and night until the jury brought in a verdict of not guilty.

Later the second case came on the docket and since it was an absolute loser Larry tried to dismiss it. The chief criminal judge was Judge Tom Stubbs, who pointed out to Larry that even though the prosecutor had complete control over the dismissal process, Judge Stubbs would have complete control over the criminal docket for the balance of Larry's term in office. The case started trial in January 1962 and much to everyone's amazement she was convicted.

I was not amazed, because I understood the power of the press. In the first trial, the Kansas City Star/Times reported all of the State's direct and almost

none of our cross examination. When we got into our evidence the exact opposite occurred. Predictably, the citizens of Kansas City felt that the “guilty bitch” had cheated the system. Therefore, in the second trial, they were ready to nail her to the cross and they did. Unfortunately for the State, because of some things that happened in pretrial proceedings, Mr. Quinn had a new trial, locked up in his briefcase before the trial actually began. The verdict was reversed by the Supreme Court of Missouri.

However some interesting things occurred while Sharon was in the slammer pending the appeal. She took on a lover, broke up with her, and the lover said that Sharon had confessed to the Jones murder and told her she had hidden the missing pistol in the wall of her parents home. The State virtually destroyed the house and of course there was no pistol found.

After the reversal Sharon was out on bond and ran off to Mexico with a hairdresser named Frank Puglise. Sharon got into a dispute with a John and managed to shoot him twice in the heart. The large black headlines in the Mexican paper dubbed her “La Pistolera”.

N.B. Larry and I had always argued about her guilt or innocence. At 3 AM in the morning in September of 1964 Larry woke me up to tell me about the events in Mexico, thus proving him right all along.

Another good friend of mine was Joe Teasdale who managed to beat my pal Larry Gepford in the Democratic primary for Prosecuting Attorney. Joe and I were handball adversaries, skiing pals and chased some of the same women. I came across this note from Joe in that time frame: *“Good luck to you in your new endeavors in the field of virtually every athletic and adventurous, thrill-seeking event known to modern man. You are a true Herculean figure of this era.”* This was Joe's attempt at humor, and he went on to become Gov. of the State of Missouri which was also very humorous.

MORE CIVIL JURY TRIALS:

There were quite a few cases I tried in the balance of the 60s and I was lucky to win them all and two are worth mentioning since they were “slip and fall” cases that are very difficult cases. I obtained two nice verdicts, and this was pretty big news in the legal community.

In February of 1969 a woman slipped on a piece of lettuce in a restaurant and I obtained a verdict of \$30,000, five times the settlement offer.

In September of that year, the plaintiff claimed that the escalator at the Sears and Roebuck store jerked causing her to fall. We went to trial on a zero offer. The verdict was \$8750.

May of 1969 brought one of the few cases that I was forced to try in Federal Court, where plaintiff's personal injury verdicts are few and far between and not very substantial. I went to trial against the Watson, Ess, etc. law firm against a \$10,000 offer and obtained a verdict of a little under \$30,000.

I finished the year in December with a satisfying verdict for a 16-year-old boy with facial scars and obtained a verdict for three times the amount of the offer.



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70's

TRIAL JUDGES: Are primarily motivated by two things: 1. Inadequate salaries, and 2. Being right (not being reversed on appeal).

In the heat of the trial it is not always easy for a judge to make the right call. Many decisions are close and confusing. It is always safer to rule in favor of the insurance company defense lawyer rather than the young unseasoned plaintiff's lawyer. Early in my career I was plagued by this and took many appeals in order to reverse the trial judge when it was not profitable to do so.

In two cases in 1970, *Waters & Redman*, I took Judges Smith & Bondurant, respectively to the Mo. Sup. Ct. in order to reverse their decisions. I did the same thing number of times in the 1960s.

I maintained a TRIAL BOOK that contained all of the latest case law in an alphabetized format so that if an issue came up on "Cross Examination" for example in the heat of trial I could turn to "C" and find 8 to 10 cases on the subject and recite the controlling law into the record. I began to command respect and obtain more favorable rulings from the trial judges.

In the front of my Trial Book I placed a large decal displaying the universal sign of a red circle with a red slash through it & a bull taking a dump. It stood for "No Bullshit" which was my trademark. Once during a heated exchange at the Bench a trial judge said to me, "*Mr. Welch, are telling me I don't know the law?*" I walked to Counsel Table, retrieved my Trial Book & displayed the front page and said on the record, "*Judge, do you really want me to answer that?*" He responded with a chuckle, "*I withdraw the question, now let's proceed.*"

N.B. The office created a file called "Lantz's Appellate Record". It should have been called his "Trail of Tears". You have heard the saying, "*You must go along to get along*". Appellate judges don't care for young lawyers who rock the boat and aren't very submissive.

All verdicts over \$15,000 went to the Mo. Sup. Ct. when I started practicing law. Later raised to \$25,000. I used to keep a drawer full of their "Opinions" and totaled the amount of money they screwed my clients and I out of.

These judges came from the Conservative Defense side of the bar. I got my evens when I enlisted and helped organize St. Louis, Springfield and K. C. in controlling the Appellate Judicial Commission and we changed the balance of power.

The 1970s brought some very satisfying jury verdicts, but equally important. I began my activities on behalf of the Kansas City Bar Association, as well as lecturing in an attempt to upgrade the quality of my profession.

There were a number of good verdicts in 1970, but the one that stands out in my memory was Miller Vs. Kansas City, Missouri. Plaintiff slipped and fell on a cracked sidewalk. The verdict was the largest personal injury verdict ever rendered against the city, \$50,000.

Of all the plaintiffs verdicts obtained in 1971, the best was Dodson Vs. M.F.A. Plaintiff's truck burned and rather than pay the loss, M.F.A. had him prosecuted for arson. He was acquitted, and we took the insurance company to trial in a malicious prosecution suit. Verdict was \$15,000 actual and \$200,000 punitive damages. These were the kind of cases I loved where a large unscrupulous casualty carrier tried to bully some poor farm boy into submission.

Of the cases won in 1972, one that stands out was for police officer Howard Hager. What made this case unusual was that Officer Hager had been injured in January of 1969 and he was injured again in May 1969 in a second accident. The law at that time required that each case be tried separately in front of two different juries. The defense in case number one blames all of the injuries on the second accident and there is usually a very inadequate verdict. When case number two is tried that defense lawyer argues that the victim has already been adequately compensated and there's usually another inadequate verdict rendered.

I came up with a novel, but sensible, solution. I proved that Officer Hager suffered aggravation of the injuries received in the first accident, and therefore the cases could not be factually separated and should be tried together. Judge Paul Vardeman correctly ruled that was a reasonable

position and the cases were in fact tried as one. The combined verdicts were 600% over what we had been offered.

N.B. An interesting spin-off from this occurred. I would drive home on I-29 in my Mercedes convertible and I was once pulled over for speeding. The officer said, *"Do you know how fast you were going sir?"* To which I responded, *"I know precisely how fast I was going."* He said, *"I clocked you at 75 mph in a 45 mph speed zone."* To which I responded, *"Your equipment is obviously defective."* He drew a big breath and before he could speak I said, *"Because I was going closer to 100."* He said, *"Who are you?"* To which I replied, *"Lantz Welch."* *"Aren't you the lawyer who represented Officer Hager?"* I told him that I was & I invited him to lean in & look at my speedometer and pointed out the number 160 and asked him why in the world I would want to travel 45 on the inter-state. He laughed and said that he would be at this location for the rest of the week and would appreciate it if I would back off to 50 when I passed by and I said that I would.

On the other side of my life I was busy racing for the Kansas City Ski Club.

I was also busy racing my Lightning Sailboat in regattas across the country.



A model of "Footloose" made for me by my father.

In spite of all those activities, I still had time for my first love, the courtroom. I started the year in January with what I still consider to be one of my greatest victories. Victories are not always measured by the size of the win, but rather the size of the Advocate against you. In my

opinion, the two premier defense counsels were Reed Gentry and Bill Sanders.

I tried an automobile sprained neck case (our bread & butter case) against Reed Gentry. He went to trial on a \$5,000 offer. I went to trial with two D.O.s against the best Orthopedic Surgeon in town, Howard Ellfeldt. I could hardly believe it when the jury returned a verdict of 500% more than I had been offered. I knew that I had finally arrived.

The case that caused a bigger stir in the legal community was the first case in Missouri, and one of the few in the United States, that resulted in punitive damages against a healthcare provider.

Our leading Ford automobile dealer in the Kansas City area was Ray Smith Ford. An x-ray showed that Mr. Smith had a lesion on the distal end of his 11th rib requiring surgical removal. It was later learned that they had operated the wrong rib and in fact, the lesion was on the distal end of his 10th rib. When the correct portion was removed it was determined to be a benign enchondroma and not cancerous.

Contrary to the B.S. promulgated by Corporate America and the casualty insurance industry, people are not willing to sue at the drop of a hat and this is not a litigious society. In fact, in the thousands of cases I handled over 50 years I grew tired of hearing potential clients tell me that, *"We are not the kind of people who sue someone, etc."*. I would usually spend the first 15 minutes or so in an interview educating them that they did not have to apologize to anyone for standing up for their rights if they had been negligently injured.

The Ray Smith case would never have occurred but for the fact that St. Luke's Hospital sent him a bill for **both** surgeries. He went to a very fine lawyer, Tom Sweeney, who advised him that the radiologist and the thoracic surgeon had fallen below the acceptable medical standard of care, and he indeed had a good case. However, it had a probable value of about \$5000. Mr. Smith declined to pursue it and decided to go on with his life.

While golfing with Mr. Quinn one day Mr. Smith discussed his problems. Mr. Smith had been forced to wear a surgical belt and ultimately give up golfing and bowling.

Mr. Quinn said that he had a Cracker Jack young lawyer working for him named Lantz Welch who should take a look at the case. At the first interview I told Mr. Smith that Tom Sweeney was an excellent trial attorney, but that trial attorneys often had differences of opinion and that I thought his case had a much greater value than \$5000.

During the trial of the Smith case I was in the court reporter's office over the lunch hour examining all of the x-rays that had been admitted into evidence.

N.B. I was a very energetic and dedicated lawyer. I never went out for lunch during a trial, but rather, brown bagged my lunch and used that extra time to work. I discovered an x-ray of the same area in question that had been taken a year earlier. It displayed the same lesion of the exact same size and location.

When trial resumed I was cross examining the Thoracic Surgeon and I replaced the x-ray from the view box with another that I had just had marked as an exhibit. I held my thumb over the date and asked the surgeon if this appeared to be the exact same lesion. Had it grown or changed in appearance? He said, "*Of course not.*" I removed my thumb and asked him to read the date into the record. His jaw dropped and he almost fainted. I got him to agree that if anyone had taken a few seconds to examine the earlier x-rays that not one single surgery would have been necessary, let alone two.

N.B. I tried this case without a single medical witness on behalf of the plaintiff since no one from our medical community was willing to go to bat against these prominent defendants.

In the face of the \$7,000 offer we received a verdict of \$105,000. On the Motion for New Trial I received my customary screwing by a conservative Trial Judge, the Hon. Larry Smith, who ruled that if defense counsel had thought to object that I was making a "punitive damage argument", the court probably would have ruled in his favor and thus he entered judgment for a New Trial for the defendants.

N.B. "ERROR" in a trial is always predicated on complaining counsel making a **timely** and correct legal objection. In this case there was neither.

The case went through the Kansas City Court of Appeals and ended up in the Missouri Supreme Court. It was ordered that the case go back for trial on the issue of damages only and amazingly there was a concurring opinion by a judge who had been a prominent defense lawyer before going on the bench, who opined that this probably should have been a punitive damage case since the failure of the medical personnel to take a few seconds to examine the other x-rays was no different than the motorist who failed to take a few seconds to look at the stop sign.

Before the second trial I thought, if Judge Seiler thinks I have a punitive case, who am I to disagree. This time the offer was \$25,000 and we received a verdict of \$50,000 in actual damages and \$150,000 in punitive damages.

Again the case went through the Kansas City Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court of Missouri. We collected the full verdict with interest.

When I dispensed the proceeds to Mr. Smith in my little 15' X 12' office with its little steel desk and single steel chair he examined the settlement sheet and sagely asked me how much I had earned for taking his case through two full jury trials and four times through the appellate courts. I pointed out that the attorney's fee clearly showed on the Settlement Sheet, but he persisted in wanting to know how much I had personally earned. I told him that this was between the firm and me and I was perfectly happy with the outcome. He said, *"I'll bet that you did not even earn \$5.00 per hour"* to which I replied, *"I'll bet you're right."*

He then said many complementary things to me and said that I had renewed his faith in the legal system. He then told me that he wanted to gift me a new car [probably a Lincoln]. I told him that this was not permissible and that I would probably do better on the next case. He made repeated phone calls on the same subject over the next few months and one day Mr. Quinn called me to his office and asked, *"What's this I hear about you refusing to accept a gift from Mr. Smith."* I replied that under our fee arrangement I did not see how I could possibly drive such a car 25% of the time. He laughed and said the firm had no interest in any such gift and that I should go ahead and accept it. The next time Mr. Smith called about this I told him that I would gratefully receive his gift and he told me to pick out any car and send him the bill.

As fate would have it I saw a billboard describing the marvels of the Mercedes automobile and its safety record. I stopped by the Aristocrat

Motor dealership and viewed their safety video and was hooked. I picked out a brand-new Mercedes convertible, had the invoice sent to Ray Smith which he promptly paid. Thus began my love affair with Mercedes-Benz. I presently drive a CL500. It was also the beginning of my 40+ year friendship with Horst Schwab and Manfred Hetzel of Aristocrat Motors.

Following my first Ray Smith trial I fine tuned my education on why it does not pay to play with the Big Boys. I was against the best medical malpractice defense lawyer around, Larry McMullen. The defendant obstetrician had used forceps to deliver a baby and caused a depressed skull fracture with consequential brain damage. The odds against me increased as it was tried in Kansas City, Kansas.

Have you seen the movie, “The Verdict”, with Paul Newman? This was a reprise. The defendant practiced at KU Medical Center and most of the medical texts in the library there condemned these forceps deliveries. I finally found a doctor from out of town that was willing to testify against this renowned defendant. He called me at home on the Friday night before trial to tell me that his son was trying to enter medical school and would be denied entrance if he testified in the case.

I went to trial with no medical witness planning on cross examining the defendant with medical test texts from his own teaching hospital and was chagrined to find that all of these medical texts favoring my position in the case had mysteriously disappeared from the library.

The defendant presented nine [9] medical doctors in his defense and predictably the verdict was for the defendant. I wept, dried my eyes and took an appeal to the Kansas Supreme Court. I argued to the court En Banc after they had eaten lunch and most of the justices snoozed. I was unsuccessful.

This was not my first misadventure involving the tilting at windmills and Mr. Quinn was not happy about this and subsequently forced me out of his firm. Many years later his son, John Michael Quinn, a very fine criminal defense lawyer in Kansas City told me that his father had said on many occasions, *“The only serious mistake I made in my professional career was letting go of Lantz Welch.”*

1973 was the beginning of Welch & Austin. Bill Austin was a Kappa Sigma fraternity brother at M.U. and a business lawyer. We remained together for almost 10 years until Bill opened his own offices.

The balance of 1973 brought a number of wins and one rather unusual case. You must remember that I imagined my mission in life to be that of helping weak and defenseless people, a reincarnation of Sir Lantzlot. I often told people that I was in the “Do Right” business. I had zero interest in defending lawsuits. So, when an old pal from Central high school brought me his client who was a defendant in a paternity case I was not interested. However, the defendant turned out to be an athlete I admired, [Curtis McClinton](#), an All American football player from KU and leading running back for the Kansas City Chiefs.

I decided to try to help him. The case was tried before one of our finest trial judges, Hon. Paul Vardeman, and it brings up an interesting memory. Most of the leading trial lawyers looked on Voir Dire [jury selection] and Opening Statement as a bothersome part of the trial and something to get through as quickly as possible in order to move into the evidence. I was pretty much alone in my belief that this time should be treasured by the Advocate, since it was the only time, aside from Closing Argument, that I was given the opportunity to speak directly to the members of the jury. I made the most of it and took almost a full day to select a jury and almost half the day to make my Opening Statement.

N.B. Left Handed Compliment: Judge Vardeman saw me in the back hall following my Opening Statement and asked if there would be any necessity for the jury to hear any actual evidence in the case, then chuckled. I felt very pleased. The jury was out a little over two hours before we won the case.

1974 Of all the wins in 1974 the only interesting one was an automobile rear-ender neck sprain case against [Bruce Watkins](#), Jackson County Circuit Court Clerk and a great leader of the black community in Kansas City.

My client was a drop-dead gorgeous black woman named Ms. Brown. We only had \$800 in medical bills, an offer of \$2,000 and obtained a verdict of \$8,000. What made it memorable was the fact that after the verdict was read Bruce leaned over the counsel table, took my client's hand and said, “Nice going baby!”

What made it sweet was the fact that the defense lawyer, Paul Niewald, was a great intramural athlete at M.U. and partner in a large defense

firm. I am sure that he looked down his nose at a scuffler like Lantz Welch.

1975 Among the many wins 1975, one was particularly gratifying since it was against Reed Gentry. It was a peculiar case. Inter-State Securities obtained a \$310 judgment against plaintiff. They had sued the wrong party and we went to trial against a zero offer and I obtained \$30,000 in actual damages and \$30,000 in punitive damages.

In another interesting jury trial that year I defended my mother. She started her own employment agency under the name of Welch & Associates. She had a problem with an employee she had discharged who stole an oil painting from the business premises. The employee was charged with the theft. The employee sued my mother for malicious prosecution and demanded \$200,000 to settle her case. I defended my mother and the jury awarded the employee \$1.00.

1976 This was the year of the second round of the Ray Smith trials that resulted in the large punitive damage verdicts against his health care providers.

It was also the year that I tried my first case against Joe Sherman, my next door neighbor at City Center Square as well as at Weatherby Lake. Joe was one of our leading Defense Lawyers and Past President of [D.R.I.](#) I received a verdict of \$25,000 against an offer of \$15,000 and was quite happy considering the quality of my opponent.

In late 1976 I started a trial in Lexington [Lafayette County] Mo. My local counsel was [Ike Skelton](#). When Ike was later asked why he gave up his career as a trial lawyer in Lexington, MO. to run for Congress he relates the story of how he sat 2nd chair to a K.C. lawyer who actually made a hard headed German Country jury cry in Opening Statement & decided he was in the wrong business.

1977 This year brought me three jury trials against the best defense lawyer in our area and probably one of the best in the United States, Bill Sanders. To beat Bill Sanders meant you had truly arrived at the top.

The first was a medical negligence case where I represented the husband of a disturbed young woman who strangled herself to death with a

pillowcase while a patient at the defendant hospital. I found one doctor in Kansas City who was willing to testify for us and the defendant and called six of the leading medical experts in the United States in its defense. We went to trial against a zero offer and obtained a verdict in the amount of \$200,000.

My next outing with Bill was in October when I went to trial in a legal malpractice case against a Kansas City attorney. We were offered \$100,000 for trial and obtained a verdict of \$120,000.

And to round out my year against Bill Sanders, he was on the losing end of the first million-dollar verdict in Missouri. In fact, it was this verdict that allowed me to become a member of the [Inner Circle of Advocates](#).

There were three defendants in the case so I faced not only Bill Sanders but two of the other great defense advocates, Roy Larson and Jack Kilroy. The plaintiff was an 8 year old boy injured at Worlds of Fun, an enterprise owned by Lamar Hunt who also owned the Kansas City Chiefs, our local heroes.

Robbie had entered a restricted area beyond the cue line and found himself under the descending Screamroller [a roller coaster ride]. He was struck in the head and brain damaged.

The case was tried in Liberty, Clay County, MO [the home base of Jesse James].

N.B. At this time the Kansas City Chiefs had been at the [top of their game](#) and their owner, [Lamar Hunt](#) had invested his considerable successes in [Worlds of Fun](#).

The defendants counsel in Robbie's case followed their usual game plan with this country jury, Baffle Them With Bullshit.

Because of the defendants' local popularity they called Lamar Hunt to the witness stand. Of course he knew nothing about the facts of the case and was used as Window Dressing as he testified about the financial benefits Worlds of Fun had brought to Clay County.

As he perched with perfect posture in his navy blazer, gray slacks, blue oxford shirt, rep tie & horn rimmed glasses in the witness chair he looked just like Mr. Peepers. Simply loveable!

Judge McFarland asked if I had any cross & I simply sat at the counsel table glaring at the witness. After an uncomfortable silence the judge asked me again.

I unwound & slowly approached the witness with my finger cocked like a gun. As I did so the witness visibly shrunk & slid down in the witness chair. *“Mr. Hunt, turning to the financial benefits that you have brought to this local community: When can the members of this jury go to their local RFD mailboxes and expect to receive a check from you?”*

The jurors laughed so hard that the judge had to gavel them back to order. BTW, the judge was also laughing.

We were offered \$450,000 before trial and obtained a verdict in the amount of \$1,394,000. The fact that this verdict was rendered in the small town of Liberty, Mo. made it all the more unique.

Bill Sanders, the defense lawyer, likes to tell the story of how he found me sitting outside on the courthouse steps moaning about the fact that I had gotten such a small verdict and he sat down and put his arm around me and consoled me with the fact that he had just been hit with the largest verdict ever rendered in our state.

N.B. Perhaps this is a good point to tell you about one of the many reasons I loved being a Trial Warrior. Those of us who are lucky to handle the litigation in our small community were a privileged group. In England, they would call us Barristers. We probably comprised less than 1% of the total membership of the bar of more than 6,000 lawyers. During the 30+ years that I tried approximately 230 jury cases to verdict I pretty much dealt with the same opponents. I developed a deep respect and trust for virtually all of these men. We did millions of dollars of legal business on a handshake. Your word was your bond. When I hired a young lawyer at my firm I advised them that if it ever came to my attention that they had lied to or misled a judge or a fellow lawyer, they were fired.

Bill Sanders was of course at the top of the list and I even named him as Executor of my will.

On the night the death of my first born son Scott was reported in the K.C. Star April 18, 1975, Bill penned this note to me:

“Dear Lantz:

I am sorry, sorry, sorry! But everyone has to die sometime, and you showed your son how to make the most of his years on this earth. It was obvious how proud he was of you. He would not want you to mourn him, but instead he would point you to remember the pleasant times you had together.

Keep your chin up.

Bill”

I was retained as counsel in the [Jerry Litton plane crash](#).

LUNCHEON EXPERIENCE: I attended the University of Missouri Law School in Columbia Missouri with one Charles P. Dribben. C.P. was a most unusual man. He reputedly graduated number one in his class at Harvard and most certainly scored the highest grades in the history of our law school at M.U. BTW, C.P. had little or nothing to do with me while in law school since I was obviously beneath his station. This is not to say that he was rude, but simply distant.

Late in the 1970s C.P. called and invited me to lunch at the Cock & Bull. I eagerly accepted hoping that he was intending to refer legal business. At that time C.P. was employed by one of the most prestigious firms in town that probably would not have even taken a case representing an injured person.

As the lunch grew to a close I said, “So C.P., *what brings us together here?*” I swear on my mother's grave that he said something to this effect: “*Lantz, in law school you were certainly not at the top of your class in grades [understatement of the year], but yet you are the most successful trial lawyer for your age this city has ever seen. I'm hoping you can share with me how this has come about.*”

I also swear to you that this is the only time in my life I can ever remember being speechless. I have no recollection of what bullshit I spread on him. I later learned that C.P. reenlisted in the U.S. Army as a Col. in the JAG Corps.

1978 I was president of the Kansas City Bar Association in 1978 and I won a few cases that year, but nothing of any consequence.

I was retained in the [Coates House Fire](#) Cases & settled them.

1979 Of all the wins in 1979, only two were interesting. One of the cheaper casualty insurance companies, Allstate, insisted on going to trial with house counsel. I tried an auto case involving broken ribs and a torn rotator cuff, turned down a \$5,000 offer for a verdict of \$70,000. Bill Sanders would've held me down to less than half that much.

Another big medical negligence win in June of 1979 was for an All American K.C. Chiefs player, Bruce Polen, who suffered an injury in practice and was operated upon by Howard Ellfeldt, Orthopedic Surgeon who was also Chief of Staff of the defendant Research Medical Center. *"Gentle manipulative physical therapy"* was prescribed by Dr. Ellfeldt and the therapist negligently applied too much pressure causing a tear at the surgical site. Thus ended the playing career for the plaintiff. It should be noted that Dr. Ellfeldt had the courage and honesty to appear as a medical witness for the plaintiff. The defense used Dr. Joseph Lichtor.

We went to trial with a zero offer and obtained a verdict of \$555,000. Following this I received a letter from the National Football League Players Association asking me if I would be willing to be their legal counsel. I politely declined explaining that I was just a simple neck and back sprain lawyer and knew nothing of commercial law or group representation and negotiations.

N.B. The insurance industry had a stable of medical defense whores that they regularly used in defending personal injury cases. Their chief star was Dr. Joseph Lichtor, orthopedic surgeon and the team Orthopedic Surgeon for the Kansas City Chiefs. He was a most effective witness. I obtained a transcript of my cross examination of Dr. Lichtor in the Polen case and provided it to the good lawyers that I knew to be representing injured people so they could use it against him in their cases. This was the beginning of the end for the good doctor's extracurricular activities.

Here are some responses I received:

"Thank you for the partial transcripts of the masterful cross examination of Dr. Lichtor. You did a superb job and are to be commended."

"Thank you very much for the Polen transcript. Although trying to get a straight answer out of Dr. Lichtor is like trying to nail Jell-O to the wall you allowed me to have moderate success."

I just finished reading the 'Death of an Orthopedist'. Your surgery, it was exquisite. I shall keep the material and if the appropriate time occurs, will regale Dr. Lichtor with it."

Needless to say, the good doctor was finished in a confrontation with a competent trial attorney.

The icing on the cake in 1979 was being selected as a member of [The Inner Circle of Advocates](#). This group is comprised of the 100 best plaintiff trial lawyers in America.

Of course this was printed in many publications and some of the many letters I received said:

From a lawyer in Liberty, Missouri: "I noted in this morning's Times your honor as you were inducted into the Inner Circle of Advocates. I would like to add my sincere congratulations to the many I am sure you have already received, and will continue to receive. I have always been greatly impressed by your ability and effectiveness, and the high quality, excellence and integrity evidenced in your practice of law. Trial advocacy is equal parts art and science, and you combine the two with a most impressive style which is earning you the respect and admiration of those who understand the exemplary quality of your advocacy."

From a Kansas City lawyer: "And to think I knew you when. Lantz, I want to sincerely congratulate you upon your acceptance into the exclusive trial group. It is an honor well deserved, because you have started from the basics and worked your way tenaciously to the top. It is a tremendous success story."

I am most proud to say that is a well-deserved honor and now, nothing would please me more than to 'whip your ass' in some racquetball. And if I do, I wanted you to know that I will let everyone know."

From another Kansas City lawyer: "Kindly add my sincere congratulations to the many others you have received following the announcement of your selection to membership in the Inner Circle of Advocates. To me personally, perhaps your genuine expression of friendship to this humble person during the many years I've known you is to me an even greater asset than the above honor."

And from the National Law Journal: "It's an exclusive club whose meetings and membership are among the best kept secrets in the legal

profession. It's a collection of the greatest trial lawyers in America today, without a doubt. The groups' practical function is to share confidential intelligence on new trial techniques, expert witnesses and other litigation strategies. The information is shared in secret at their closed annual meeting and through jealously guarded internal correspondence, including occasional newsletters. One member spoke of a 'gentlemanliness, a camaraderie' in the group. Internal correspondence sometimes there is the heading, 'Dear Brothers'. Admission is by invitation only. We check with our members and judges in the area who know the candidate because we want to find out the lawyer has a good reputation."

August of 1979 brought more terse letters from Sen. Tom Eagleton telling me he was not interested in "Merit Selection for Federal Judges".

The 1970s brought me speaking engagements both in-state and out-of-state as well as participation in seminars, usually on the subject of Closing Argument.

The governor of Oklahoma made me an honorary Okie in 1970.

I did a TV show, "Malpractice Insurance: Kansas City Viewpoint" featuring me Vs. the general mgr. of St. Paul Insur. & Dr. Benoit [the thoracic surgeon I sued in the Ray Smith case].

Another on TV 5, "The Medical Legal Dilemma".
LW Vs. the Pres. Of the Jackson Co. Medical Soc., Pres. Of R.B. Jones Insur. & Pres. Pro Tem of MO. Senate.

Taught the MO. Bar Practical Skills Course.

Taught "Investigative Techniques" at UMKC School of Law.

Assisted the MO. Supreme Ct. on "Appellate Settlement Conferences".

Lectured at Annual Mtg. of MO. Bar, St. Louis on "Efficient & Profitable Personal Injury Practice."

Spoke at the annual mtg. of the ABA in Chicago.

Univ. of Mo-Columbia Law School on Trial Practice.

I even spoke to The Lawyers Assoc. on the subject of Lawyer Advertising.

The Univ. of Mo. School of Law on the “Medical Malpractice in Missouri”



In March of 1979 I addressed the Clay County Bar Association on “*WHAT’S IT WORTH?-The Valuation of a Civil Lawsuit.*”

In April of 1979 I addressed the Risk and Insurance Management Society on “*Products Liability from the Plaintiff’s Viewpoint.*”

In April of 1979 I did a Mock Malpractice Trial for the National Osteopathic Health Conference.

In May of 1979 I gave a talk on Voir Dire at the UMKC Law School.

In June of 1979 the Mayors Council retained me to interrogate the city aviation officials who were planning an expansion of runways at KCI.

In September of 1979 I participated in a Medical Malpractice program for UMKC on the subject of "Practicalities of Settlement".

By this time my law firm of "Law Offices Lantz Welch, P.C." was being contacted in over 300 potential medical negligence cases per year. We accepted about 10% of them. The local doctors who started out fearing and hating me soon began loving and admiring me. They realized that I was only taking meritorious cases against bad doctors.

Laura and I attended our first meeting of The Inner Circle of Advocates at the Broadmoor in Colorado Springs, Colorado:



September of 1979 brought the 100th anniversary of the Missouri bar where I lectured on "Direct and Cross of the Medical Expert" which brought the following letters:

"This year's annual meeting program had the finest professional programs we have had in many years. Your part as a speaker of course made this possible."

“I would like to express my thanks to you for making the 100th annual meeting of the Missouri Bar Association one of the best ever. The presentation which you made was, I'm sure you're well aware, very well received. It is only because people such as yourself who have been very successful and the practice of law are willing to give their time to the bar as a whole that we can continue to progress.”

“Just a short note to thank you again for your outstanding contribution to the success of our Annual Meeting. Your presentation was extremely well-received, and as usual you did an outstanding job.”



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80's

The 1980's were my years for hitting Home Runs. I brought in four [4] World Record Verdicts and finally convinced the Black Hats to *"Not f*** with Hoppy."*

But first, some other matters that occurred in this time period:

In May 1980 I spoke to the National Association of Accountants on *"With Your Profession Comes Legal Responsibility"*.

That same month I presented a slide show at the Second Presbyterian church on "SCUBA diving in the Red Sea"

On May 25 it was reported in the Kansas City Star: "Joint Panel to Review Malpractice Claims" *"Lantz Welch, a prominent malpractice attorney, was chairman of an ad hoc committee which has been developing the new Impartial Medical-Legal Review Plan over the past year. Welch said the panel will serve as the equivalent of a small claims court, allowing cases in which physical damage is not severe and the claim against the doctor is small to be settled out of court."*

May brought the Seventh Annual Bench-Bar Conference at the Lake of the Ozarks. I had helped design this program to bring the judges and lawyers together in an informal setting to create camaraderie and resolve disputes. It was hugely successful. I don't remember if I spoke that year but I did play in the racquetball tournament and managed to teach the young Turks a little about the game. No one came within 10 points of me in 21 point matches.

I was most honored to be invited by the Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis to join Justice Bardgett of the Supreme Court as the kickoff speaker for their 1st Annual Bench and Bar Conference which was held at the Lake of the Ozarks in late May/June.

The Missouri Association of Trial Attorneys held its 22nd annual meeting at the Lake of the Ozarks and I spoke on "Comparative Closing Arguments".

In July of 1980 I received a letter from a future Inner Circle Brother, Tom Strong: *"Just a note to thank you for the Voir Dire and Closing Argument ideas which you sent me. I stole all of your ideas I could then after a three-week trial ended up with a \$925,000 verdict in my malpractice case. They had offered zero dollars."*

August 4/8 Dick Heilbron and I taught the MoBar Practical Skills Course and the Young Lawyers evaluation was: *"Lantz was great -- very helpful. One of the best presentations of the course. Presentation was not only informative but also entertaining."*

In September of 1980 I presented a Medical Malpractice program featuring Lawrence Charfoos, an Inner Circle Brother of Detroit, Michigan. As was said by the Director of the Law Center, UMKC: *"What can I say? You did it again!"*

October of 1980 I put on a ball buster program starring 2 Inner Circle Brothers from Texas: Pat Maloney and Scott Baldwin [Scott was in trial and I had to take his place in the program]. For the defense appeared Bill Sanders and Joe Sherman. The subjects were: Traumatic Anatomy and Effective Summation. It was a resounding success.

In November of 80 the Kansas City Magazine published THE BEST LAWYERS IN KANSAS CITY The piece started with my photograph at my desk and the following copy: *"He handles the large claims and the small ones. He is so well wired into hospital emergency rooms around town that, if you went enter with an injury worth suing over, you are likely to come out with one of his business cards."*

Since I did not consider this language to be complementary I wrote to the editor/owner the following: *"I enclose a copy of a page from an article that you apparently authored. I have highlighted the particular sentence that is of concern to me. Please furnish the source of this information immediately."*

Two days later I heard from the magazines' lawyers and in the December issue the following appeared: *"CLARIFICATION Lantz Welch was named the best personal injury by a panel of judges and lawyers in last month's article, 'The Best Lawyers in Kansas City'. In attempting to describe the extent of his considerable reputation in his field, the article may have implied to some readers that hospital personnel solicit business for Welch. That is not the case. The article meant to say Welch's reputation in legal and medical circles is so strong his name is most likely the first one an*

injured party will hear when he or she investigates the possibility of filing a lawsuit. Welch's widespread reputation is the result of sizable judgments and settlements he has consistently won for his clients. Any other inference regarding his professional ethics was inaccurate and unintended."

I received the following letter from Inner Circle Brother Pat Maloney: *"The recantation and retraction contained in your instance is most remarkable. I have been involved professionally and otherwise in a number of libel suits. They have always come out bad. Your results made the initial story indeed worthwhile."*

From UMKC School of Law February 1981:

"On behalf on the law school and myself I would like to thank you for judging the regional round of the National Trial Competition. Certainly a competition, now consisting of over 100 ABA accredited law schools throughout the country, could not be possible without the support of persons such as you who are genuinely interested in the complete education of today's law student. We appreciate that support. Thank you again for your assistance and for giving so generously of your time."

In May 1981 I was challenged by the Young Lawyers Section of the Bar to racquetball and this appeared in their Headnotes: *Bob Fischgrund faced Lantz Welch, who was a young lawyer in the last century, in a battle of the age brackets. Lantz managed to squeak out a victory, but the tournament chairman was heard to mutter, 'Wait till next year'."*

In June of 1981 Joe Sherman invited me to speak to his staff of defense attorneys: *"Lantz Welch, prominent plaintiff's attorney, will be our guest. It is anticipated Lantz will discuss with us his philosophy and motivation in his capacity as a plaintiff' litigator, and his views of the expectations of plaintiff's counsel in dealing with defense firms and defense litigators."*

The Kansas City Star August 1981: ATTORNEYS SAY LARGE FEES MOST OFFSET LOSSES *"There are two sides to this issue of large fees, said Lantz Welch, a Kansas City attorney who has helped his clients get some of the largest verdicts in the state. When you get a substantial verdict and fee, that makes up for other cases where lawyers take a real beating. Some lawyers try many cases, never win, and take an economic bath because their fee was contingent on winning the case. Remember, the occasional substantial fee must support other litigation that is done on a charitable or unintentionally done on a non-productive basis Welch said."*

My counterpart in Chicago is [Phil Corboy](#) and after my first Inner Circle meeting he sent me the following note: *"I thoroughly enjoyed being with you in Sun Valley. You are a great lawyer, but what is more important, a great guy with a great sense of humor. Good luck in all your endeavors. Let's keep in touch."*

The Kansas City Star October 1981: HUGE VERDICTS DON'T MEND HURT LIVES *"On a summer day in 1976 an excited 8 year-old boy from Pleasanton, Kansas asked his grandmother if he could go with friends to Worlds of Fun and she agreed. The last ride that Robbie. Myers took was in an ambulance to the hospital. Somehow the inquisitive youngster sneaked behind a fence and stood too close to the Screamroller. The speeding roller coaster hit his head.*

Now Robbie wears a helmet to protect a deep gash in his head. He folds his arms when he meets strangers to hide his paralyzed right arm. He is trying hard to learn simple lessons in a special education classroom. Robbie's mother sued several parties after the accident. Ultimately a jury ordered the defendants to put \$1,394,000 into a trust account for the boy and the mother received an additional \$75,000.

People who receive larger awards and their attorneys resent the belief held by some that they have found their pots of gold in courtrooms. These people do not 'win' something. It is very misleading said Lantz Welch, a Kansas City attorney who has represented many injured people in court, including Robbie Myers. 'It's a bad bargain, but it's one they get forced into.

Bruce Polen, a defensive coordinator for the Pittsburg State University football team, said his bad bargain started on a therapy table at Research Medical Center in 1974. The All American was trying out for the Kansas City Chiefs at spring camp and had a good chance to make the team, a coach testified later. But Mr. Polen twisted his knee when he jumped for a ball and injured it again when he leaped for an interception. He underwent surgery at the medical center. While he was recuperating, a physical therapist damaged his knee and ruined any chances he had of a professional football career. A Jackson County Circuit Court jury awarded Mr. Polen \$500,000 in damages, later reduced to \$400,000 by the judge. Mr. Polen said he is happy working as a college coach, but he would rather have his healthy knee back.

Lantz Welch says the biggest complaint against the insurance companies is that they try to convince the public by any means possible that high money

awards will hurt policyholders through higher premiums. Of course, this is nonsense."

The Kansas City Times June 1982: CASHING IN ON THE BIG ONE

"Attorneys can spend years becoming 'overnight successes'. The piece starts with a large photo captioned: "Lantz Welch, a Kansas City attorney who specializes in personal injury cases, relaxes in his City Center Square offices. He holds a replica of the bones in the human hand and arm, which he uses as a visual aid during trials."

"Lantz Welch who specializes in personal injury cases said lawyers attract the big case 'by paying their dues'. If a lawyer gets a good recovery in one case, other lawyers will want him to use his talents on similar cases and refer them to him.

The first big verdict that I obtained was \$18,000 on a dog bite case about 20 years ago Mr. Welch said. It was substantial for that kind of case. Soon I had several dog bite cases referred to me and I was able to settle some of them.

Mr. Welch's biggest case concluded in December 1977, when he got a verdict of \$1,394,000 for a child who suffered brain damage after an injury at Worlds of Fun. Mr. Welch said he and the lawyers working for him spent about 4,500 hours on the case. Mr. Welch's fee: \$464,666.66.

June of 1982 I was elected as president of the Law Foundation of the School of Law, University of Missouri-Kansas City.

Some years later I was flattered to receive one of the few Lifetime Memberships of the Law Foundation of the School of Law, University of Missouri-Kansas City. This is essentially the Board of Trustees that governs the law school

September of 1982 I invited Inner Circle Brother J. B. Spence to head up our medical malpractice seminar. I spoke on the subject of "Plaintiff's Losses/Loss of Consortium.

I received a nice letter from a young lawyer:

"I can't really express in a letter how grateful we are to you for sharing your time and thoughts with us last Wednesday. I am sure that the crowd you addressed came for more than a lecture. They came to see the 'magic powers' a trial lawyer of your caliber has that sets him apart from the rest. That special magic was easy to see as you are a man who truly cares

about people and the preservation of their unique rights as individuals. We are extremely proud that you talked to us. Thank you very much."

In November of 1982 I taught the 2nd Annual Civil Litigation Course and received this nice letter from a young lawyer:

"I learned a great deal from your seminar on trial techniques and thank you for sharing your wisdom and time so generously. As you mentioned, these seminars are the least painful way for a young lawyer to achieve success (as opposed to a kicking by the likes of Joe Sherman, Reed Gentry, et al). You also mentioned that you once allowed a young lawyer to shadow you through a jury trial. If you feel like doing that again, I would like to volunteer to 2nd Chair you. Please let me know what you think."

I was listed in a book titled "The Best Lawyers in America" in 1983 and continue to the present. I sent some copies to some of my Inner Circle Brothers and received the following responses:

From Tom Strong: *"Thanks for the Best Lawyers. I am soaring with the Eagles when I listed in the same book as the Red Baron."*

Jim Hullverson: *"Thank you so much for forwarding 'The Best Lawyers In America'. I am not at all surprised to see you in there, but was surprised to see Tom and myself."*

Phil Corboy: *"I have received 'The Best Lawyers in America' and your kind inscription in it. To have a lawyer like you tell me I am the greatest has made my day."*

Larry McMullen: *"Thanks for sending over the book. Bill Sanders and I have ordered 50 copies for relatives, friends, potential clients, etc. Your autographed book now spends 50% of his time on Bill's desk and 50% on mine. We constantly swipe it back and forth."*

P.S. I am sure glad they got it published before we have to try Mincey Vs Blando again!!

In the MATA News Letter in April I authored a Trial Tip:

"The issue in trying a six-figure case is whether you try to educate the jury from the beginning of the trial that you are dealing with a substantial case, or wait until Closing Argument to discuss money. Some years ago I was the moderator for a Trial Practice Seminar sponsored by the KCBA. While having dinner in my home at Weatherby Lake this subject matter arose with my dinner guest, Jack Fuchsberg, a most renowned trial attorney from New York City who said:

'Lantz, if you had told me upon greeting me at the front door of your lake home, before having had a chance to view the interior or the outside surroundings, that the price tag you were asking was

in six figures, I believe you would have established a barrier before you made the sale. However, if you showed me your entire home, its relationship to the lake and the many improvements that you have put into the house and grounds and then given me your price tag, I would probably be much more receptive.'

This analogy seems all too simple. But if one reflects back on their past experiences in purchasing certain items, I am sure they will recall the salesperson making an effort to 'sell the product' before stating the price tag.

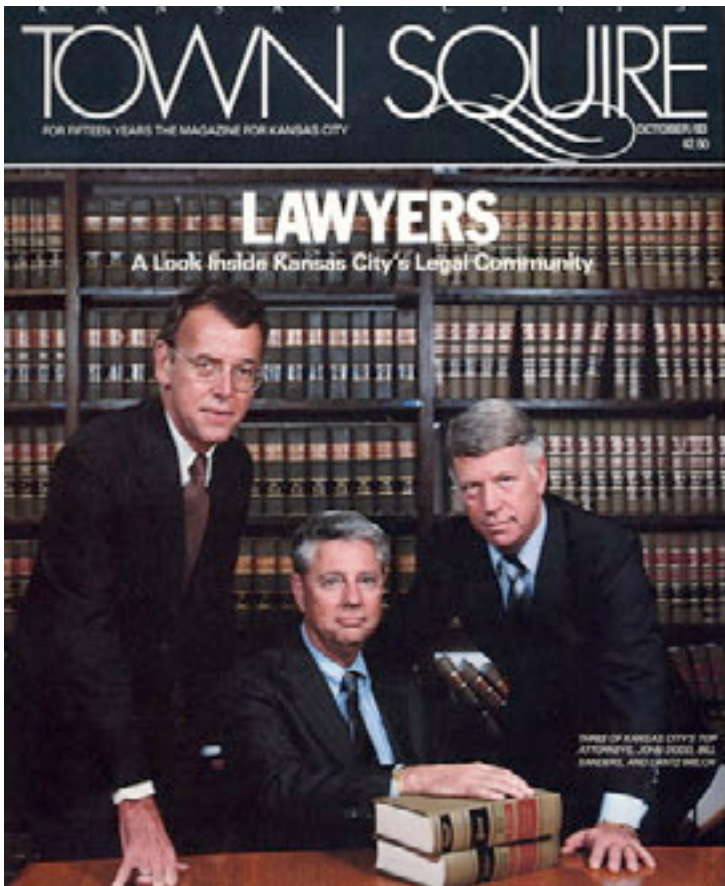
From the time of Jack's conversation I have concluded that I am going to sell the facts to the jury and wait until I am certain the sale has been made before advising the jury of the price tag."

As President of the Law Foundation of the School of Law, as well as President of the Class of 1959 I had the privilege of addressing the 1983 Law Graduates.

The Kansas City Star, July 1983: GOSSIP WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE LUXURY ITEM?

"Lantz Welch, lawyer: my favorite luxury item is an aerobatic biplane. Two wings and an open cockpit-named the Red Baron. It's jet black with red trim. I acquired it from a radiologist who is a friend of mine. He took me for a ride one day and I told him, 'I'm going to own your airplane'. And he said, 'No way.' Later, I ended up representing him in a case and the airplane became mine. There is a certain visceral thrill in aerobatics. It's more than Worlds of Fun can ever offer you."

The Town Squire Magazine in October 1983: INSIDE KANSAS CITY'S LEGAL COMMUNITY Three of Kansas City's top attorneys were featured on the cover:



A corporate lawyer/ Bill Sanders/ Lantz Welch

JERRY LITTON PLANE CRASH:

Jerry, his wife and two children were flying from Chillicothe to Kansas City to celebrate his triumph in the Democratic primary for the U.S. Senate. He would have won the general in a landslide. The left engine failed on takeoff and all were killed. I was retained by the family and referred the case to the leading aviation lawyers in the country, Inner Circle Brothers from Los Angeles.

The case was tried in federal court in Kansas City before Judge Howard Sachs and ably defended by Reed Gentry. There had been a pretrial settlement against the makers of the defective crankshaft for \$585,000. The jurors were not advised of this.

YOU WILL NOW LEARN WHY I ESCHEW FEDERAL COURTS AND FEDERAL JUDGES:

The defense lawyer, **over timely objection**, was allowed to cross-examine Mildred Litton, Jerry's mother, about the income she received on an annual basis of over \$100,000 per year.

Even a high school graduate would realize that this had no relevance to the defendant's negligence and the value of Jerry's life and was highly prejudicial.

One of the jurors explaining why they brought in a defendant's verdict stated in the Kansas City Star: *"We thought she was independent and didn't need the money"*.

I told Litton family that I would be very happy to appeal this case at my own expense and get the judge reversed so they might get a fair trial. The family was heartsick and worn out and refused my offer.

N. B. This should give you some insight into why the plaintiff's lawyer must be a perfectionist, try a perfect lawsuit free of error, and still face an appeal before collecting the money. The insurance industry is making interest-free money on the debt they owe to the injured party.

On the other hand, the defense lawyer uses every dirty rotten trick in the book to create as much prejudice as possible in order to win the case. They are not concerned about error since few plaintiffs' lawyers will appeal a defense verdict. I was an exception to the rule.

Scott Welch Memorial Fund: After my son's death I established a fund at the Law School in his memory and as I go through my scrapbooks there are a great number of letters thanking me for the contributions. The Dean writes in January of 1984: *"The Scott Welch Memorial Fund has produced concrete, important results by making an important contribution to the significant successes achieved by our moot court program. These successes have helped us to attract superior students and have enhanced the School's reputation in many ways. While I have the opportunity, I want to thank you also for the time and effort you have given to the Law Foundation. This kind of generosity impacts directly on the school, helping us to achieve our goals."*

9/11 WORLD TRADE CENTER:

Did I ever tell you that we could have avoided the 9/11 tragedy if Big Business had simply listened to me?? In the 1980s when airline hijackings were done for \$, I wrote to the FAA suggesting they simply require the airlines to put locks on the cockpit doors.

Later, I checked with a law school pal who was head of the FAA Legal Dept. in K.C. to learn what had been done about my suggestions. He told

me that the airlines refused, saying it was not cost effective. Cheaper to put the passengers at risk than eliminate the risk don't you know.

"The corporation is a true Frankenstein's monster, an artificial person run amok, responsible only to its own soulless self."

[William Dugger](#)

"It is a government of the people by the people for the people no longer; it is a government of corporations by corporations for corporations."

[Rutherford B. Hayes](#)

"So long as the media are in corporate hands, the task of social change will be vastly more difficult, if not impossible, across the board."

[Robert W. McChesney](#)

"Corporations cannot commit treason, nor be outlawed, nor excommunicated, for they have no souls."

[Edward Coke](#)

"I hope we shall crush in its birth the aristocracy of our monied corporations which dare already to challenge our government to a trial by strength, and bid defiance to the laws of our country."

[Thomas Jefferson](#)

"Behind the ostensible government sits enthroned an invisible government owing no allegiance and acknowledging no responsibility to the people. To destroy this invisible government, to befoul this unholy alliance between corrupt business and corrupt politics is the first task of the statesmanship of today."

[President Theodore Roosevelt, 1906](#)

"The only difference between the Republican and Democratic parties is the velocities with which their knees hit the floor when

corporations knock on their door. That's the only difference."

[Ralph Nader](#)

"This (George W. Bush's) administration is not sympathetic to corporations, it is indentured to corporations."

[Ralph Nader](#)

TURNING NOW TO WHAT I LOVE MOST, COMBAT IN THE COURTROOM

My pal Gerry Spence captures my sentiments in his book "With Justice For None":

"A trial is a barbarous sport conducted in accordance with certain civilized rules. We no longer run our adversary through with the Pike or behead him with a Broadax. Yet the contest is as deadly as before, and often crueler. Rarely will the fight be fair. As in most sports, those who can afford the best players generally win. The modern trial is a contest in which Justice is easily defined and easily understood in monetary terms-dollars.

Lopsided duels are part of our heritage. In the 18th century, Oliver Goldsmith complained, 'Laws grind the poor, and rich men rule the law'. Today, even rich men do not rule the law, for that is the nearly exclusive domain of mega corporations that in comparison reduce our richest to paupers. The justice game was never designed to be played between human beings and these corporate leviathans."

April of 1981 brought my last loss of a jury trial and proof that you should always listen to your wife. A lawyer brought me a client who claimed an unnecessary hysterectomy. I did not particularly like her but the referring lawyer kept telling me how great I was and that plus my thinking that I was unbeatable caused me to take the case. The case was legally sound, but not very attractive.

So, I went to trial against my favorite nemesis, Larry McMullen. It was the usual lineup I had become accustomed to: Lantz and his lone medical witness against Larry and his eight medical witnesses. Incidentally, his lead medical witness was William J. Cameron, Chief of Obstetrics, KU Med. Center, the defendant in the brain damaged baby forceps delivery case. We had been offered \$65,000 before trial and the jury returned a verdict for the defendant's.

While I was moping around the house Laura reminded me that I did not like the client or the case when it came in the office and I let a loquacious referring lawyer blow smoke up my ass. A lesson learned.

N.B. WHY I LOVE BEING A TRIAL LAWYER: I penned a personal note to Larry McMullen as follows: *"Larry: you now owe me two. L---*"

To which he appended at the bottom: *"Dear Lantz: you tried an outstanding case and I realize it even though the jury did not reward you. I hate to think how you are going to make me pay for this some day. L.L. Mc"*

This was my last loss for the next 28 years which simply means that I am the champion that I claim to be or as a detractor said, *"He simply takes good cases."* It is probably a mixture of both. BTW, I do not count as a loss a total crapshoot I took in December of 1984 when I settled a fracture of the shoulder, thoracic vertebrae and paraplegia for \$2,500,000 from the 2 responsible defendants. I then took a 100 to 1 shot against a very collateral defendant for a defendant's verdict.

April of 1982 brought a meaningful result against a great advocate, Clyde Meise. When I was a claims adjuster working for U.S. F. & G. he was our defense counsel and never lost a case. Cooper Vs General Standard was an injury case where I had been offered \$165,000 before trial. The verdict for Cooper was \$300,000 but the remarkable verdict was for the wife on her loss of services derivative claim for \$100,000.

I sent a copy of the results with this note to all members of the Inner Circle: *"This is a most unusual loss of services verdict in this state for a wife of an injury victim. I am passing along some closing argument ideas given me by an Inner Circle Brother some years ago that were utilized in this trial.*

'What are Ruth Cooper's losses? When she became Bob's wife she took on certain obligations. In return for this she was entitled to his love, support and help throughout their married life. All you can give her through his verdict are the earnings they took from Bob Cooper. We all know that marriages are not all perfect. There are benefits and there are burdens. These wrongdoers took away the side of the scale with all of the benefits and they left Ruth Cooper with just the burdens. Does this seem fair and just to you? Is it fair that the benefits of 27 1/2 years have been stripped from Ruth Cooper by these people?'

HYATT SKYWALK DISASTER:

There were over 300 people killed and injured making this the largest construction disaster that has ever occurred in the United States. I have been told that thirty years later, the [Hyatt Skywalk Tragedy](#) remains the nation's worst structural failure disaster.

My first knowledge of the disaster came to me in Colorado on Saturday, July 18th, when I started receiving phone calls from families who wanted to retain me so I flew back to Kansas City on Sunday afternoon. My calendar shows that I met Max Foust on Monday and I assume we were making plans about how to go forward.

On Friday, July 10, 1981 Laura and I attended the Tea Dance at the Hyatt Hotel. There was a great orchestra and we had a terrific time. While there we walked across one of the skywalks and noticed how it moved under our footsteps. We discussed the safety factor but thought about the swinging bridge in Swope Park and dismissed the thought. We had such a good time we decided to come back the following Friday night.

The jury trial that I was scheduled to try on Monday settled, so on Wednesday we flew out to my condominium in Colorado. Had we stayed with our original plans Mr. Lucky would have probably been killed or severely injured at the Hyatt Tea Dance.

Along that same line, Max Foust had agreed to meet Sam Cottingham for a cocktail at the Hyatt. Instead, Max picked up his new Mercedes and avoided the tragedy. Sam was killed.

The icing on the cake involved Pat McClarney of the Shook firm. He and some friends had planned on attending the Tea Dance on July 17, 1981 but were delayed getting back from Colorado until Saturday. Pat and his firm were the laboring oar in most of the paperwork in the Hyatt litigation and gets credit for the brilliant settlement that was ultimately reached in the Hyatt litigation. So here is a situation where the three leaders of the Hyatt Skywalk litigation could easily have been killed in the disaster, but instead went on to bring the litigation to a successful conclusion.

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Monday, August 4, 1981 at 2:00 PM in Div.11, Judge Donald Mason scheduled a meeting for all lawyers having an interest in the Hyatt disaster to meet in the Jury Assembly Room at 4:30 PM. I believe this is the largest room in the Jackson County circuit Courthouse and it was totally packed with over 400 lawyers. Max Foust and I were seated together in the front of the room and in the back of the room were some out-of-town lawyers who came to sell the concept that they were Class Action experts and that they were prepared to handle all of the litigation for a referral fee of 10% from the lawyers. There was a group from Cleveland led by Stan Chesley and another from New Orleans led by Wendell Gauthier.

The group body language was fascinating because after each pitch was made the lawyers present turned to look to Max and me to see what we had to say. When the out-of-towners ran out of gas I turned to Max and said, *"Shall we run these bastards out-of-town?"* Max said, *"Let's do it."* And then I said, *"Will you do anything I say?"* To which he responded, *"You're my leader, go for it."*

When I stood to address the group there was utter silence and you could have heard a pin drop [I wish it had been on video]. I turned to the back of the room and said that Max and I had some bad news, some good news and some better news. *"The bad news for you carpet baggers is that we don't need you and the good news is that Max and I will handle the litigation. The best news of all is that Max and I will not charge you one thin dime for doing so."* Of course there was much cheering and resounding applause and it looked like we were off and running.

Max and I met the next day and decided to recruit Pat McClarney and his Shook/Hardy firm for the heavy lifting of the paperwork and Lynn Johnson to look after the people from the state of Kansas.

This major disaster brought massive news coverage both locally and nationally. Just three days after the collapse: Kansas City Times July 20, 1981: "LAWYERS EXPECTING A RUSH OF LAWSUITS OVER DISASTER"

“Lantz Welch, a Kansas City personal injury lawyer, predicted that individual insurance companies will try to determine the amount of liability exposure, and then tell victims families that the company will take care of all the damages. The argument that they present to the bereaved is, ‘Why should you give up one third of what you have coming to some lawyer?’ But the key is: ‘Who knows what a victim has coming?’ Welch asked. No one really knows.”

The Kansas City Star July 23, 1981: “Working overnight for the second consecutive night, Crown Center Redevelopment Corp. ordered the dismantling and removal of this sole remaining skywalk that spanned the lobby of the Hyatt Regency Hotel. The removal today was accomplished despite the pre-dawn efforts of Mayor Richard L. Berkley to halt it. Max Foust stated, I do feel it would have been more appropriate if they could have advised the parties involved before they moved it, so they could have reviewed it and inspected the walkway. Another plaintiff's attorney, Lantz Welch, said he would have gotten a temporary restraining order if he had known about the walkway removal during working hours. I think it's important to test it while it was up Welch said, adding that he was surprised and a little angry about the unannounced removal. Mayor Berkley who has made a formal request to the US Bureau of Standards to investigate the Hyatt tragedy, said today that Bureau officials told him there would be advantages to testing the third bridge in place.”

The National Law Journal August 3, 1981: “Mr. Maloney and local plaintiffs lawyers such as Lantz Welch and Max Foust indicated that construction of the walkways could be likened to the long span construction and that architects and builders therefore should have known when putting up the \$50 million dollar hotel a year ago that the safety of such walkways was suspect. Defense attorneys do admit that victims aren't to blame. An unbelieving Mr. Welch predicts that ‘somewhere down the line’ the defendants will find the victims responsible for something.”

Mr. Welch pointed to more detailed issues that may prove to be difficult to resolve. In this state, where you're a business invitee injured on the premises, you have to show more than the simple fact that you were in the place. You have to show negligence of some kind. So, is Crown Center negligent in relying on the expertise of architects and contractors? Hyatt manages the hotel: Does it have a right to rely on others concerning the safety of the walkways? Were there any warnings by developers or contractors to the owners? Was there any duty relating to crowd control by Hyatt? Also, I think it's unsettled whether insurance companies cover

punitive damages and Mr. Welch pointed out that punitive damages are not dischargeable in bankruptcy, they follow you around for your entire life.

The Kansas City Times August 5, 1981: ATTORNEYS SAY LARGE FEES MUST OFFSET LOSSES "There are two sides to this issue of large fees said Lantz Welch, a Kansas City attorney who has helped his clients get some of the largest verdicts in the state. When you get a substantial verdict and fee, that makes up for other cases where the lawyer takes a real beating. Some lawyers try many cases, never win, and take an economic bath because their fee was contingent on winning the case. Remember, the occasional substantial fee must support other litigation that is done on a charitable or unintentionally non-productive basis Welch said.

In 1976 an eight year old was hit in the head by the Screamroller roller coaster ride at Worlds of Fun and suffered brain damage. Welch, a partner in a small local firm, worked more than 4,500 hours and spent \$29,000 of his own money to prepare the case -- money he would never have recovered had he lost the case. When the jury awarded the child \$1,394,000 in December 1977 the judge recommended a 40% fee for Welch. Welch thought the fee was too high, and said a fee of one-third would be more appropriate. After expenses were deducted his fee came to \$464,660.66 or about \$100 an hour.

In 1968, Ray Smith came to Welch with a medical malpractice case. 11 years later, Smith was awarded \$150,000. Welch earned a fee of \$51,484.97. A jury awarded \$105,000 in February of 1973. The trial judge took away the award; the Missouri Court of Appeals gave the award back. The Missouri Supreme Court took it away again. In July 1976, Welch tried the case again, and the jury awarded Smith \$200,000, which was reduced by the judge to \$150,000. The Court of Appeals affirmed the verdict and the Supreme Court later affirmed the award. With all the time I put on that case in 11 years Welch said, I would be lucky if I averaged as much as five dollars an hour."

The National Law Journal September 21, 1981: "Lawyers for defendants and plaintiffs in the Hyatt cases have formed a committee to coordinate discovery and prevent problems between the local state and federal courts. Most of the approximately 100 lawsuits that have been brought in connection with that disaster were filed in state courts said Lantz Welch, a Kansas City lawyer who is on the coordinating committee. More than 400 persons arrived at the first state court hearing relating to the Hyatt cases, Mr. Welch said, including Mel Belli and all those kinds of people."

BACK TO THE ACTION: Sometime in the fall of 1981 I was contacted at my home on a Sunday night by a young lawyer who had referred past legal business to me. In addition, I sometimes rented his Piper Comanche airplane since I had lost my Cessna 210 in the Bermuda triangle.

He told me that he was calling on behalf of two very famous lawyers, a Professor [Irving Younger](#) and a professor [Arthur Miller](#) of the Harvard Law School.

He told me that they represented a client named Molly Riley who had suffered a sprained neck in Hyatt disaster. He further told me that they intended to seek a Class Action lawsuit in her name and they had heard about me and wanted me to be the lead trial lawyer in their class-action lawsuit. I told him that I had never heard of the two gentlemen and if they really were famous trial lawyers they would be members of the Inner Circle of Advocates. I further told him that Class Action cases were devised to represent a large group of people with small claims that needed the power of binding together in a class to obtain justice. Mass disaster cases such as airline crashes and these Hyatt cases were not proper candidates for a Class Action. I told him that these lawyers were simply ambulance chasers. I told him that I realized that if I participated in such a scheme I could earn legal fees 10 to 20 times what I would earn in representing the people who sought my services. I advised him to not get involved in this misadventure because Judge Mason would throw the rascals out of the Missouri courts. He listened to me.

The rascals first filed their class-action sprained neck case in the state court and when their efforts appeared hopeless they dismissed and re-filed in Federal Court where the case was assigned to Judge Scott Wright.

In December 1981 Judge Scott Wright held a hearing to determine whether he would order a Class Action to be created for the handling of all of the Hyatt cases pending in both State and Federal Court. His federal courtroom was humongous in size, as they all are, and was filled to capacity with standing room only with representatives of the media from all over the United States. The Counsel Tables were also quite massive. Seated at the Plaintiffs' table was Prof. Younger, the young lady with the sprained neck and a few other rascals. Seated at our table were Max Foust, Pat McClarney & Lynn Johnson. The jury box was empty with the exception of one solitary figure, me. I was so pissed off I did not want to be seen as even participating in this farce.

At about 11 AM Judge Wright looked to me and said, "Mr. Welch, you seem to have been strangely silent all morning and that is not like you. The Court is interested in your viewpoint in this matter." I replied, "Judge Wright, this reminds me of the story about the three biggest lies in the world and I will skip over the first two and come to the third which is, "We are from the Federal Government and we are here to help you." And I shouted, WE DO NOT WANT YOUR HELP!!!!!!"

The audience went ballistic with laughter; Judge Wright was banging his gavel for all he was worth and this went on interminably. When order was finally restored Judge Wright said to me, "The court is sorry it asked." Provoking more laughter. Of course he had the last laugh by creating the Class Action which caused the real lawyers for the victims to waste their time and energy for about six months in getting this judge reversed.

The Kansas City Times January 5, 1982: "Lantz Welch of Kansas City, one of the sharpest critics of the class-action approach, wrote the judge that he will continue to fight a class-action. He said that in looking after the best interest of his clients he had chosen to file their cases in state rather than federal court. In state court, he said, the lawyers rather than the judge, would question prospective jurors and state judges could not comment on the evidence at the conclusion of the trial. The only persons who will benefit from the imposition of a class-action are those enterprising attorneys who represent a lady with a sprained neck, who will acquire additional clients through a class-action. If this trial is in the hands of unqualified lawyers it could result in a verdict wherein Crown Center, Hyatt and Hallmark cards may not be held liable, thus reducing the funds presently available to the victims."

Prof. Younger was not a trial lawyer and admitted he had not tried a case since 1965.

Against all common sense, the law and reasonable beliefs Judge Wright declared a class-action and entered orders stifling our progress for the 109 cases filed in state court.

On the date of federal certification I wrote the following letter to Prof. Younger:

"I have just finished reading Judge Wright's order of January 25, 1982. It seems apparent that in response to your urgings and assurances he has

indeed declared a Class Action wherein discovery is to be completed by July 1, 1982, and trial is to begin August 15, 1982.

I do not believe this litigation can be properly prepared in such a short a time and I consider your conduct in manufacturing and promoting this scheme to be legally dangerous to my client's interest.

In the event that you proceed and bring in the wrong verdicts against the wrong defendants and thus deplete the present funds that are available to my clients, you are hereby put on notice that they will sue you for legal malpractice as well as anyone else who aided you in this misadventure.”

The Kansas City Times January 26, 1982: “In an interview Judge Wright explained that the class includes all plaintiffs in state and federal court for the purposes of determining liability and punitive damages. Lantz Welch, attorney for at least 16 plaintiffs said he intends to go forward with these cases in state court, where they were filed. I seriously question Judge Wright's authority to interfere with my clients rights in the state court system. He said, my clients are dead set against being in this Class Action. Mr. Welch said that the lawyers designated to represent the class of plaintiffs in the case were inexperienced in personal injury cases. If you take an individual like Sally Firestone, who is a quadriplegic, and if you try the case before a jury, you can make them understand her suffering Mr. Welch said. But joining Ms. Firestone's case with those of hundreds of others would diminish her case. And by the same token, those cases with only miniscule injuries would be upgraded. It's kind of like communism in a way. You reduce everyone to the same level. He also criticized the July 1 deadline for completion of discovery, the pretrial exchange of documents and the setting of an August 15 trial date. He called the timetable one of the most ludicrous things I've seen in the judicial system.”

In the National Law Journal February 8, 1982 YOUNGER V. KANSAS CITY BAR: “What's happened here is that this Order has put my client's destiny in the hands of a nonresident Washington lawyer said attorney Lantz Welch one of the leaders of a group of plaintiffs attorneys who intervened before Judge Wright to oppose the Class Action petition. Mr. Welch and those who share his position deny that the existing system was incapable of handling the Hyatt cases. The collapse of the hotel walkways last July 17th killed 113 persons and injured 212.

We were making tremendous progress in discovery he noted, adding that settlement negotiations had been proceeding well for many plaintiffs. How many attorneys will follow Mr. Welch into an all-out battle against Judge Wright's decision remained unclear in the days after the ruling was announced."

The American Lawyer June 1982 THE IRVING YOUNGER VARIETY SHOW: After four pages describing Youngers' life as an articulate and entertaining law professor Lantz Welch observes: *"The professor depicts himself as an enterprising trial advocate, says committee member Lantz Welch, but if you look really hard, he's just a self-made expert. He's an untried question mark in the trial arena. As far as the Hyatt case goes, Welch -- who has threatened Younger with a malpractice suit if the class action results in the wrong verdict -- has a point. Younger has never worked on a class-action, he's never handled a mass tort, and he's never done any personal injury work."*

June 7, 1982 the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that Judge Wright's Class Action could not stand. It should be noted that the Federal Class Action and halted all meaningful work on behalf of the victims by the lawyers who had been chosen by the victims.

N.B. Fast-forward to the present time. There is a monthly luncheon group consisting of the six best trial lawyers to have practiced in our community. Three plaintiff and three defendant. Naturally Max Foust and I are included as well as Bill Sanders. There are six trial judges, three State and three Federal and of course this group includes Judge Scott Wright.



Judge Scott Wright appears 2nd from left.

Judge Wright and I have “buried the hatchet” in the intervening 30 years and he particularly enjoyed hearing the story of how I had named my first born son after him. In 1957, while attending the University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri I was involved in a situation that brought me to the attention of the authorities. While I was being taken through the courthouse I observed an office door with this sign, “Scott Wright – Prosecuting Attorney” and thought to myself, what a great name in case I have a son – Scott Welch. I did and I named him Scott Welch.



RICK & TINA WELCH/JUDGE SCOTT WRIGHT (my KCMBA Achievement Award Dinner)

Judge Timothy O'Leary approved our proposed settlement wherein the defendants agreed to not contest liability and a punitive damage fund of \$20 million would be established that would be reduced in proportion to the actual damages received by the victims who go to trial in state court. The Kansas City Times December 1982: *Lantz Welch observed, "Under the present arrangement almost all the cases will settle. And if there's an honest difference of opinion about the value of the case it will be tried to a jury where only 75% of the jurors have to be persuaded. That is why we don't want to be in Federal Court where you have to persuade 100% of all of the jurors to arrive at a verdict."*

AND NOW TO WHAT I DO BEST:

My first Hyatt jury trial was on behalf of a couple who were offered \$380,000 before trial. We received two verdicts totaling \$2,000,000. \$500,000 was for the 64 yr. old husband of the woman who suffered fractures of her arm, thigh & ankle.

From Inner Circle Brother, John Norman: *“Lantz- \$500,000 for a 64 y/o loss of consortium is heartening to us all –professionally and personally.”*

From Brother Bob Habush: *“Congratulations, Lantz, on our outstanding victory in the Hyatt case. You are the greatest!!”*

From Brother Ted Babbitt: *“You continue to be my hero. Not only because you are capable of getting such fantastic verdicts, but because you are able to be so uncharacteristically humble when being interviewed by a reporter. Congratulations!”*

From Brother Phil Corboy: *“Wow! Congratulations on you most recent victory! I look forward to seeing you in Oregon.”*

N.B. ARE YOU BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND WHY I LOVE MY INNER CIRCLE BROTHERS SO???

SALLY FIRESTONE: The most seriously injured victim in the collapse was a 34-year-old woman who was employed by IBM. Sally suffered a crushed cervical spine at the C-5 level with resultant paralysis from the neck down.

Before this trial the largest quad verdict in Missouri was \$5,000,000 rendered in St. Louis, Missouri and settled for \$3,500,000.

Defendants in Sallys’ case made a settlement offer before trial of \$5,000,000.

Before trial started I had Sally and her father, Rev. Firestone, in my office to discuss the defendant’s offer of settlement. I gave them the above stated facts and told them that my best legal advice was for them to reject the offer and go to trial. Rev. Firestone was predictably surprised because I had advised him that most actual damage verdicts were settled for lesser amounts. I told them that I would leave them alone in the office for five minutes while they decided what they wanted to do. When I returned I was pleasantly surprised when they said that they had confidence in me and would go forward with the trial as I had advised.

I may have mentioned earlier that one of the rules of my law office was that I always treated people the way I would like to be treated and I expected this of my young lawyers. I was flattered and almost embarrassed by their complete trust in my judgment and I asked my

secretary to bring in the originating file and I withdrew their Contract of Employment. I showed them the contract and then tore it in half and Rev. Firestone said in a frightened voice, "You're not firing us are you?" I laughed and told them that I was simply putting my money where my mouth was and that I was going waive my attorneys' fees on any amount of \$5,000,000 or less. Rev. Firestone immediately protested that this was not fair to me and they would not agree to it. I responded that I was a big boy and had complete confidence in myself and in their case and we were going to proceed on that basis. We entered into a new contract and then I began my final preparations for combat.

I have found that wrongdoers facing serious consequences in a jury trial will do almost anything to avoid paying the piper. In this case they filed a request on August 2, 1983 to move the trial to another county. September 7, 1983 the presiding Judge Jackson County Circuit Court refused the request. On September 10, 1983 the defendants took the request to the Kansas City Court of Appeals to no avail.

Jury selection began on September 12, 1983.

The jury rendered its verdict for \$15,000,000.

St. Louis Globe Democrat September 23, 1983: *"The award to Sally Firestone on Wednesday night was the largest ever rendered in Missouri, according to attorneys on both sides of the case. The award was three times the amount suggested by the defendants. Michael Waldeck, an attorney for the defendants, said they would appeal the award, which he called just another example that the community cannot set aside their prejudice against the defendants and not seek to punish them by each and every verdict they render."*

The Kansas City Times September 24, 1983 NEW DREAMS ARE START OF NEW LIFE FOR SALLY FIRESTONE: *"Before the collapse, I often wondered if I was a positive influence on anyone's life. The response afterward certainly told me that I was and made me want to continue to be. She said that purpose is to help other disabled people. Ms. Firestone added that the offer of her lead attorney, Mr. Welch, to take no fees from the first \$5,000,000 recovered -- even if that was all that was awarded -- will help."*

Some letters from lawyers:

"You continue to amaze me. You started with nothing, and then worked extremely hard to become the top of your field. I marvel at that. Congratulations on your verdict in the Firestone case. You deserve it all."

From the Shook firm: *"Because somebody had to stay in the office and work, I missed the opportunity to see you in action in the Sally Firestone litigation. However, from all reports you had them on the run from the moment Voir Dire began. My congratulations to you for a magnificent result. Your preeminence is again confirmed. I am tremendously proud of you, and for what you have done for Sally Firestone and for the entire Plaintiff's Bar by virtue of your magnificent \$15 million verdict."*

From an Inner Circle Brother Fred Dolt:
"Congratulations on your outstanding verdict! And to think only a few months ago your partner told me Kansas City was a 'low verdict area'. I would have been proud of you if you had gotten that verdict in a 'high verdict area'."

From an Inner Circle Brother Ted Babbitt:
"What a fantastic result, and what guts to turn down that kind of offer! Congratulations!!"

From Inner Circle Founder, Brother Richard Grand: *"I, for one, would very much like to see copies of your voir dire, opening and summation. I feel that your \$15 million verdict was probably one of the 10 most important verdicts in the history of this country. The information that you are spreading to the organization is extremely helpful and you do keep our standards high."*

Message from The Mayor's Wife: *"Sandra called to tell you that if she was anywhere near you right now she would give you a big hug and a kiss. Thank you for Sally. I visited her several times in the hospital and met her parents. Thanks again. Sandra Berkley."*

From an Inner Circle Brother Ned Good: *"I am tremendously proud of you, and for what you have done for Sally Firestone and for the entire Plaintiffs' Bar by virtue of your magnificent \$15 million verdict."*

From an Inner Circle Brother Paul Luvera: *"Just saw the results – WOW!! Congratulations on a wonderful result. Great Going! I have a quad case going out in three weeks – could you fly out & I'll watch you do it."*

From an Inner Circle Brother Bruce Walkup: *“Congratulations on your \$15,000,000 verdict. When your argument is transcribed, I would certainly appreciate obtaining a copy of it.”*

From an Inner Circle Brother Ted Warshafsky: *“What is chutzpah? It is appearing in Kansas City to lecture about how to try cases, and being introduced by Lantz Welch the day after he got his \$15 Million verdict.”*

From an Inner Circle Brother Norman Saucedo: *“First of all, I want to congratulate you on your spectacular \$15,000,000 verdict!! Secondly, I want to thank you for sending the photographs of me with the Godfather. If I come back, do you think you could get me a reservation at the Hyatt Hotel. Love and kisses, Norm.”*

N.B. Our speakers for the Inner Circle meetings come from within our organization. Who better to teach & share than the World's Best trial lawyers? Whenever a member achieved a world record verdict, made new law or invented new discovery techniques they were expected to share this with the membership. I shared Sally's case with them. They asked that I not publicize my unusual adjustment of the legal fees.

The trial judge ordered a remittitur in Sallys' case of 15% or \$2,250,000 or in the alternative a new trial for the defendants. A good discussion of this [antique and unfair doctrine](#).

The Kansas City Times December 28, 1983: *“Lantz Welch, Ms. Firestone's lawyer, estimated that an appeal can take 12 to 18 months. I advised her to turn down the reduction, try the case again and get a bigger verdict, but she does not want to go through that emotional wringer again. In papers filed Tuesday, Lantz Welch said the jury award was entirely consistent with all of the evidence before the jury. Making the verdict reduction conditional on payment would prevent defendants from having their cake and eating it too by allowing them to win a reduced verdict and then appeal the case.”*

Ms. Firestone said that I feel that I have no choice but to accept the reduction. My father is 73 years old. I do not want to put him through another trial nor do I want to undergo the strain, the publicity and the embarrassment of another public trial. She complained that it is ‘unfair’ that a trial judge can reduce a jury's verdict, but cannot add to it, and the defendants can appeal even though she agreed to the reduced verdict. She also complained that since the collapse, the defendants and insurers have

made \$4,500,000 in interest on the amount awarded her by the jury and would make more interest during an appeal.”

The Kansas City Star January 1, 1984 SETTLEMENT OF HYATT CASES
A TEST FOR THE LEGAL SYSTEM: *“In January 1982 Judge Wright established a Class Action lawsuit absorbing key aspects of all the suits in state and federal court. His actions appalled the victims’ and defendants’ attorneys in state court.*

Settlements ceased from the time it appeared Judge Wright would establish the class action until June 1982, when the 8th U.S.C. Circuit Court of Appeals dissolved it.

Is someone to be complemented for threatening to bring about a fiasco, which it would have been, and then take credit for what a bunch of sensible lawyers did on the State side?, asked Lantz Welch whose firm represented about 20 Hyatt victims. Mr. Welch calls Judge Wright an excellent, fair-minded, conscientious judge, but he says the judge's pride became a factor in the Hyatt litigation. He hitched his horse to the wrong wagon in this Class Action Mr. Welch said. And when all the lawyers in the city tried to tell him so, he bowed his neck and plunged forward. Hindsight suggests the state settlement encouraged by Judge Wright was unneeded, Mr. Welch added. State Court judges could've adjusted unfair punitive damage verdicts, Mr. Welch said.

The attorneys in Federal Court where the greedy ones, said Mr. Deacy, the Hyatt Corp. attorney.”

N.B. 18 cases were settled in Federal Court by Class Action lawyers [note, I did not say classy] for a little over \$900,000 and Judge Wright approved legal fees of \$1,770,000 for the federal class attorneys. Contingent fee lawyers would have charged between \$180,000 and \$225,000.

FIRESTONE v. CROWN CENTER REDEVELOPMENT CORP.,
693 S.W.2d 99 Supreme Court of Missouri, En Banc

Our highest court reinstated the amount remitted and with our share of the punitive fund, plus interest, the amount paid to Sally Firestone was \$22,390,061. THE LARGEST SINGLE SUM OF MONEY EVER PAID TO AN INJURED INDIVIDUAL IN THE WORLD.

Perhaps more importantly the Supreme Court held: “The doctrine of remittitur is abolished in Missouri.”

This of course made for national legal news and I received a deluge of telegrams from around the country asking for copies of the opinion.

HOWEVER, to show the power of Corporate America and the Insurance Industry Lobby, the Missouri state legislature put remittitur back into state law in short order by statute effective July 1, 1987. Mo.Rev.Stat. Sec. 537.068 (1987).



This is a picture of Sally taken at my 70th birthday party and her message in my birthday book was:

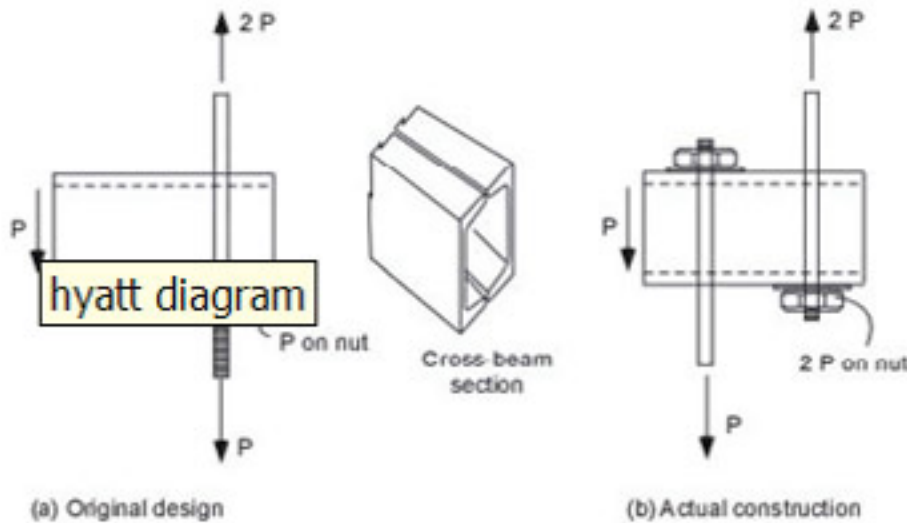
"What can I say? You were -- and are -- quite splendid! The process of preparation, trial, appeals and, finally, completion were amazing. I admire your thoroughness and persistence. Wishing you a marvelous 70th birthday and in the ensuing years. Appreciatively, Sally Firestone."

If Sally had accepted the \$5 million, rather than the \$22 million+ she could never have enjoyed the charitable foundation that I helped her

create. Through the years our two foundations have engaged in many joint projects and in spite of her infirmities she enjoys a useful and productive life.

N.B. KEY TO THE LITIGATION:

The general public always believed that the big issue was what had caused the Skywalks to fall:



THIS WAS THE PHYSICAL CAUSE OF THE COLLAPSE.

THE REAL ISSUE!! I was one of the first lawyers retained in the litigation and through my contacts in the Inner Circle I quickly brought in the best experts in the country and easily determined the physical cause of the collapse. However, the real problem lay in who was going to pay for this. Bear in mind that the corporate entity exists for only one purpose, how to increase the bottom line called profit.

The Hall family (Hallmark Cards, Inc) owned Crown Center Corp. which in turn contracted with Eldridge Construction Company. The Eldridge Corp. (an Empty Suit) contracted with the Havens Steel Corp. as the fabricator. Havens plaintiff relied upon G.C.E. International, Inc. as the professional engineering firm.

Ergo, 330 victims and their families might have to look to the shallow pockets of Havens or G.C.E. to be compensated for their losses. This means about five cents on the dollar.
Aye, there's the rub.

So, LW and his team quickly realized they had to swim up the corporate stream to where the money was to be found. The ill advised federal class-action slowed our efforts.

We finally caught a break in the deposition of Donald Hall, president of Hallmark cards. It seems that he had gone on record with the architects about the large ugly columns that were in the original design for the support of the skywalks. It seems that he wanted something light and airy with more of a greeting card look and thus the suspension rods were born.

N.B. Do any of you remember when Pres. (tricky) Dick Nixon ruminated in a meeting about what might be contained in the Watergate Building? It seems that the history of the musings of powerful men bring about predictable results.

This slender thread helped us to swim upstream to the money and led to the successful conclusion of this litigation. It developed that Hallmark cards had the power to enter into a retroactive insurance agreement with their liability carriers to retroactively increase the amount of their liability coverage's in exchange for promises of future premiums at an increased rate. This in turn allowed the establishment of the \$20 million punitive pot in return for our willingness to abandon our legal claims for punitive damages.

N.B. It should be noted that our timely disposition of all these cases set a record that has never been equaled. It would've been even shorter but for the interference of the Federal Court

Before turning to my next world record verdict I will share an interesting case I tried in Platte County Missouri in June 1985. Plaintiff was riding a motorcycle in Platte County when the defendant crossed the centerline and fractured plaintiffs nose, pelvis, wrist and ribs.

While waiting for the verdict Judge Yeaman and I were sharing a bottle of whiskey in his chambers when his bailiff rushed in very excited. It seems that there were a group of people outside the jury room singing hymns and chanting prayers for the defendant driver. It obviously did not have the desired effect since I obtained a \$200,000 verdict in the face of a \$55,000 offer before trial.

P.S. This remained a record verdict for this agrarian county for many years.

After the Firestone verdict I could not imagine my life as a litigator improving. However in April of 1984 I started a medical malpractice case against St. Mary's Hospital. Plaintiff was hospitalized following an automobile accident which required him to undergo a tracheotomy. Plaintiff also suffered internal bleeding after surgery. Three nurses at the hospital failed to record plaintiffs' substantial blood loss, failed to check plaintiffs' vital signs and failed to have blood available in the hospital blood bank to match plaintiffs' blood type. Plaintiff suffered severe brain damage.

I demanded \$5 million and the defendants offer before trial was \$100,000. The jury verdict was \$17,500,000, the single largest personal injury verdict at the time and certainly largest medical malpractice award in the world. I had made settlements before trial totaling \$950,000 against three defendant physicians before starting trial.

It looked like I was going to take over ownership of St. Mary's Hospital, but cooler heads prevailed in their behalf and I settled the case for \$8,502,948.

Letters from Inner Circle brothers:

"Just a note to congratulate you on your superb verdict that I read about. Medical negligence cases are always difficult and the result that you obtained in this trial certainly reinforces my opinion that you are and will remain one of the foremost trial lawyers in the United States. I certainly believe that the roads that you plow will make it easier for us in the future to obtain just compensation for our clients."

From Inner Circle Brother Phil Corboy in Chicago: *"You never cease to amaze me! I would like to spend some time with you at the Broadmoor this summer just hoping some of you rubs off on me."*

From an Inner Circle Brother Jim Boccardo: *"I can't believe my eyes! What a hell of a result in your Jackson case. At the next meeting of the Inner Circle we will see to it that you are awarded the hand-embroidered liquid walking stick. I do wish you would send me a copy of your entire jury argument, at my expense, as quickly as possible so that we peons out here in California can learn how to do it."*

The Kansas City Star Business Section April 18, 1984: by Jerry Heaster
JURIES OVERDO IT ON MALPRACTICE AWARDS

“Do jurors understand the consequences of what they do when they award inordinately high judgments to those seeking damages in wrongful injury suits? Consider for a moment the amount of the verdict: \$17,500,000. Can you comprehend how much money that represents and what can be done with it? Think of it this way: if \$17.5 million were invested today in 30 year treasury bonds the annual return from this would be well over 2 million a year. That's more than \$40,000 a week -- are close to \$6000 a day. That money to pay such judgments does not come out of the pockets of doctors or the bank accounts of hospitals. Rather, it ultimately is paid by consumers of healthcare.”

The Kansas City Star April 29, 1964: by Lantz Welch

WAS \$17.5 MILLION TOO GENEROUS? LOOK AGAIN, JERRY

“The thrust of Jerry Heaster's column was that a recent \$17.5 million verdict rendered in a malpractice case cannot be justified in either moral or economic terms. He suggests that such awards are driving up the cost of health care in this community.

Mr. Heaster does not understand the basic laws of cause and effect. It is obvious that he did not attend the trial and was venturing opinions without the benefit of the facts that the jury had. Most appalling is that he had not burdened himself with the facts before setting himself up as the judge of the jury.

Increased medical costs are not due to those occasional victims who are able to prove their cases (about 20% prevail in court). Instead, they are due to the fact that the cost of medical services has skyrocketed. One of the primary reasons for these skyrocketing costs is the ‘medical arms race’ between competing hospitals. The entire country of Sweden has fewer CAT scanners than Kansas City, where we have them in 22 out of 25 hospitals. The price of a new CAT scanner now starts at \$1 million, and its cost and maintenance is factored into every patient's hospital bill.

The cause of a substantial malpractice jury verdict is the astronomical sum required to just keep one of these tragically brain-damaged people alive.

Let's turn to the misleading information about what happens to the verdict. Mr. Heaster assumes that the victim will have \$17.5 million today to invest. He ignores the fact that insurance companies do not rush out to pay their debts as long as they can earn interest on the victim's money. He ignores the legal costs of waging a five-year court battle -- one that has not ended. Ignoring all these realities of life, he predicts that the victim will receive close to \$6000 a day. He has ignored the reality of legal fees and

expenses. Somehow, Mr. Heaster has conveniently ignored the IRS. After their bite, the victim is now below \$3,000 a day. Of course the realities are that figure will be closer to \$2,000 a day. What happens to these expenses? Using the same 30-year timeframe, and those projected costs discussed earlier, the victim needs \$6,392 per day. This means that the victim is receiving about one third of what it would take to survive in this 30 year period, assuming that economic history repeats itself. If inflation continues to worsen, the victims' plight worsens. To this point, we are talking hard economics, not one single penny so far for the terrible and irreversible nature of the tragedy to this victim, his wife and his 10 children. Not one word about compensation for mental anguish, pain and suffering and loss of enjoyment of life.

To the jurors who served in the case in question, I leave you with a quote from 'The Twelve Men' by G. K. Chesterton: 'Our civilization has decided, and very justly decided, that determining the guilt or innocence of men is a thing too important to be trusted to trained men. When it wants a library cataloged, or a solar system discovered, or any trifle of that kind, it uses up its specialists. But, when it wishes anything done which is really serious, it collects 12 of the ordinary men standing around. The same thing was done, if I remember right, by the Founder of Christianity.'

From an Inner Circle Brother Bruce Walkup: "Your reply to Jerry Heaster's article was beautiful. Certainly without your reply the effect would have been devastating. Congratulations."

From an Inner Circle Brother Browne Greene: "Congratulations again on your medical malpractice award and thanks also for sending me the excellent articles and especially your article dealing with the medical malpractice crisis bullshit that was written against you. You are certainly having a great year."

From an Inner Circle Brother Ted Babbitt: "You are my idol. You are not only great at being a lawyer, playing racquetball, diving, flying, and picking beautiful women, but you said in that article what I have been trying to say to the Florida Legislature for the past five years. If only you had hair you would be perfect."

My next adventure into the courtroom came in December of 1985. You are probably aware of the fact that [Big Tobacco](#) never lost a case for 30 years or so and most of this was due to the problem of "Medical Causation", meaning that the plaintiff had to rule out other causes of the

cancer, a virtual impossibility. For the same reason, the Chemical Industry had never been beaten in court, though they had done much harm throughout the country.

In the 1970s a young lawyer brought a lawsuit for five victims of the careless conduct of the Alcolac Chemical Company in Pettis County. The corporate defense legal team immediately beat up on the young lawyer by persuading the local circuit Judge to split the five cases into five separate venues throughout the state of Missouri.

He came to me with his problems and I advised him to sign up everyone who had been damaged and that I would take care of them. There were eventually 31 plaintiffs in this litigation. I joined the plant manager as a party defendant and thus achieved venue in Jackson County Missouri.

The plant was built just outside the city limits of Sedalia, Missouri and thus could not be monitored or controlled by that city. It did however fall under the control of the Department of Natural Resources of the State of Missouri, DNR. The plant produced chemicals used in paints and plastics and the byproducts were highly toxic. The plant would burn off and release these toxic chemicals at night. There were balls of chemical foam the size of pickup trucks that were blown across the countryside and orchards and poultry flocks were destroyed by these chemicals.

The nearby residents suffered damage to the central nervous system, reproductive system, immune dysfunction, cardiac neuropathy, cancer, musculoskeletal dysfunction and various other manifestations. In each victim's case the prognosis was very guarded to poor. It took over eight years to bring these defendants to trial. During that time two of the plaintiffs died and we expended \$1,200,000 in case expenses.

I tried these cases before a jury for 4 1/2 months [the longest civil case ever tried at that time]. There were 165 witnesses hundreds of exhibits and over 10,000 pages of transcripts. The case was defended by a very able and clever defense lawyer, Alvin Shapiro. Of course the primary defense was that something else must have been responsible for the plaintiffs' illnesses.

Our case rested on the presentation of the identical symptoms and test results of all 31 of the victims. We felt that this was more than mere coincidence and that we had met the huge burden of medical causation.

When the time came to submit the cases for verdict I suggested to the trial judge that Alvin should be allowed to pick any one of the cases and we would argue the liability and damages of that one case. If I lost that case I lost them all. On the other hand, if I prevailed on the liability issue we would submit and argue each additional plaintiff briefly and separately and acquire a verdict since there was such a variance in the nature and extent of their injuries and damages.

Alvin insisted that we should argue and submit all 31 cases at one time and ask the jury to bring in separate verdicts for each plaintiff. Much to my amazement the trial judge accepted Alvin's scheme.

Not surprisingly each plaintiff received exactly \$200,000 actual damages and exactly \$1,387,096.70 as punitive damages. There were 13 separate property damage verdicts totaling \$110,595.

N.B. Alvin is a Jewish lawyer so this seems to be an appropriate time to define the Yiddish word "Chutzpah" [unbelievable gall; insolence; audacity]. It is best demonstrated by the young Jewish defendant in a criminal case who is about to be sentenced for having murdered both of his parents and asks for clemency from the court by reason of the fact that he is an orphan.

In Alvin's Motion for New Trial he complained about the impossibility of all the plaintiffs being damaged in the exact same amount. Of course this was caused by his insistence of putting them all in the same bag for jury deliberations.

UNBELIEVABLY the trial judge granted defendant a new trial as to damages only on personal injury claims on the basis that the identical amounts awarded to each of the 31 plaintiffs was inconsistent with the evidence and irreconcilable with each other as a matter of law. The good news is that this meant that liability was fixed and I would have to retry the case is on damages only.

I KNOW THAT I WAS DELUGED WITH LETTERS FROM MY INNER CIRCLE BROTHERS ABOUT THIS VERDICT, BUT I SEEM TO HAVE MISLAID THAT LAST

SCRAPBOOK AND THUS CAN'T SHARE THEM WITH YOU.

The Kansas City Court of Appeals: Judge Charles Shangler:

As some of you may know an appellate opinion can run from as little as a couple of pages to as many as 20 or 30 pages. This opinion authored by one of the most brilliant judges I have never met was 371 pages together with over 50 pages of exhibits. It was ordered that the plaintiffs should have their individual damages assessed by a jury and suggested that the punitive damages could be rendered for all plaintiffs as a single sum and then apportioned as to each plaintiff.

N.B. As I read this masterful opinion I fully grasped the intricacies of my case and was astounded by what I had done. I was so impressed by the opinion that I ordered 100 copies and sent one to each member of the Inner Circle of Advocates telling them that this was their Boy Scout Manual that would help them finally bring these bastards to justice.

A couple of years later I received a phone call from Inner Circle Brother [Tom Girardi](#) who told me that he was representing over 650 residents against the Pacific Gas & Electric Co. and that he had lost my "Boy Scout Manual". I sent him another copy and lined him up with my expert witnesses. He arbitrated these cases for over \$330 million.

This adventure led to the movie "Erin Brockovich." After Laura and I saw the movie I called Tommy and told him we had seen his movie and as the true hero he was only portrayed for a few minutes in the film. He correctly pointed out that this was really a movie about Erin. I then asked if Julia Roberts had done an adequate job portraying Erin Brockovich and he told me that Erin was Julia times 10. Based on that assurance I arranged for Erin Brockovich to give a talk to the Kansas City Bar Association. It was a great success!!!!

BACK TO THE ACTION: The case was sent back for retrial, Alvin Shapiro was dismissed and [Thomas E. Deacy, Jr.](#) a top defense lawyer in Kansas City was retained. His was the only notch that I did not have on my gun. I had been after him since I started trying lawsuits and in each trial at the last minute he would always send in Ted Mullen to take the whipping. I was most excited about this long-awaited opportunity.

It was not to be. I received a phone call one afternoon from one of the leading defense lawyers in Philadelphia, PA. who advised me that he was representing Rhone-Poulenc, Inc. a French chemical company that had recently purchased Alcolac's parent company and that they were desiring to wind up all outstanding liabilities.

They flew to Kansas City and were sitting on the couch in my office with the coffee table between us and at their request I took a legal pad and listed a number of figures representing what it would take to settle the cases. I totaled them and said that it would take \$25,800,000. This very sharp Philadelphia lawyer was adding the figures upside down and he took the pen from my hand and asked if I would circle and initial the figure of the bottom line number of \$25,800,000. I was somewhat perplexed by this but agreed to do so. He asked if there was a phone he and his team could use and I directed them into our library. After my office door was closed my team said, *"You dummy, you shorted those numbers by \$2 million."* To which I responded, *"So what else is new, you guys know I can't add. Anyway, they will come back with an offer of approximately one half of the demand."*

They came back in and shook my hand and said we had a deal at \$25,800,000.

P.S. As I said, my guys know that I cannot add. More about this later.

My next outing was in June 1988 for the wrongful death of a 61-year-old Higginsville hog farmer. A Yellow Freight truck came on the wrong side of the road and killed him. There was a phantom motorist defense. The offer before trial was \$315,000 and a jury returned a verdict of \$6,000,000.

N.B. Back to my inability to add figures: It was my practice in arguing a substantial case to use 3' X 4' sheets of paper during closing argument to write down the various elements of damages and ascribe various sums of money to each. During this particular argument, the first and only time in my legal career, a juror spoke up and said he had a question. My sphincter closed down and I croaked, *"Yes sir?"*

[This is a very dangerous situation and can easily result in a mistrial.] The jury was on my left and Judge Donald Mason was to my right. I looked inquiringly to Judge Mason raising my right eyebrow assuming that he would defuse the situation, but instead he nodded and gestured toward me with open hand indicating the ball was in my court.

I turned back to the juror and said, “*What is it you would like to say?*” The juror was red-faced and embarrassed but pointed out that I had made a mistake in my addition and shorted my client by \$700,000. I exclaimed, “*No shit!!*” I then rapidly recovered and apologized to the court and jury which was then in stitches.

Now at this point in my career the spectator section was almost always full off judges and lawyers there to observe my closing arguments. They rapidly spread the tale throughout the courthouse about how brilliant Lantz Welch was in getting a juror involved in his summation. This is a good example of how the Lantz Welch legends proliferated. My office knew that I simply was not very good at addition.

The Kansas City Star June 30, 1988

\$6 MILLION AWARDED IN WRONGFUL DEATH CASE

“The wrongful death award is the largest on record in Missouri according to Jury Verdict Research Inc. Lantz Welch, attorney for the Schaefer's argued in court that the Yellow Freight policies had encouraged drivers to put in too many hours and had failed to keep a tired red-eyed and fatigued driver off the road. They were pushing him for a profit, Welch told the jury in his closing argument. Wrongful death verdicts are usually based largely on the earning capacity of the victim if he had lived, and Welch said he thought Schaefer's character and status as a civic and church leader convinced the jury of his worth. They decided that the man's life was worth \$6 million even though he had not made any money in hog farming for seven years, Welch said.”

I settled the case for \$3,030,000.

AWARDS:

UMKC Law Foundation: 1984-1985 William R. Borland Award

UMKC Alumni Assoc.: 1986-1987 “For Reaching Beyond”
Achievement Award

UMKC Law Foundation: 1988-1989 “Man of La Mancha Award”



UMKC School of Law: 1988 “Distinguished Service Award”

UMKC School of Law: 1993 “Emeritus (lifetime) Trustee”

“Best Lawyers In America”: 1983-Present

KCMBA: 1989 “3rd Annual President’s Award”

KCMBA: 1994 “Tenth Annual Litigator Emeritus Award”

Missouri House of Representatives: 1994 “World’s Best Trial Lawyer”

Boy Scouts of America: 1995 “Silver Beaver Award”

Kappa Sigma Fraternity: 1997 “Hall of Honor Inductee”

KCMBA: “Achievement Award” 2001

(Other Recipients)

1960 Dr. Frederick D. Lewis, Dean of UMKC Law School

1961 Justice Charles E. Whittaker, Supreme Court of U.S.

1967 Dean Patrick Kelly, Dean of UMKC Law School

1971	Judge Elmo B. Hunter, U.S. District Court
1980	Judge Floyd R. Gibson, U.S. District Court
1991	Judge Scott O. Wright, U.S. District Court
1992	George Brett (special award)
1994	Justice Harry A. Blackmun, Supreme Court of U.S.
1996	Justice Clarence Thomas, Supreme Court of U.S.
1997	R. Lawrence Ward, Past President KCMBA (My lawyer Vs. the 4 Thieves)
1998	Senator Nancy Kassebaum
1999	Senator Thomas Eagleton
2001	Lantz Welch, Past President KCMBA



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90's

AND NOW FOR THE FINAL NAIL IN THE COFFIN

Remember when I told you that being a trial lawyer was very much like being a gunfighter in the old West? When I first started trying lawsuits in the 1960s the Insurance Industry had the most money, the best lawyers and the best expert witnesses. I was beaten up with some regularity. In the 1970s I acquired some skills and gained some credibility.

In the 1980s I began to strike fear in the hearts of the enemy. The Firestone verdict caught their attention but they wrote it off as a lucky break in a mass disaster case.

A \$17.5 million medical malpractice verdict resonated but again they saw it as against a large hospital defendant. However, in 1990 I tried a bread-and-butter automobile case that caused them to never again want to come out on the street and face me again.

In December 1990 I tried an automobile case referred to me by a St. Louis lawyer against one of the best defense lawyers in Kansas City. Joe Sherman, trained by the Deacy firm, past president of [DRI](#) who was an awesome opponent. My demand before trial was \$14 million and the offer was \$4 million.

The plaintiff was a 44-year-old female who was brain-damaged. While the jury was out the defendant offered \$15 million and the referring lawyer went ballistic when I rejected it. The verdict came in at \$45 million, the largest actual damage verdict ever rendered for an individual in the world and may still be to this day.

The Kansas City Star December 21, 1990: *"Mary Jane McFarland is imprisoned in a wasted body and has been able to do no more than move her eyes and neck since August 3, 1988 said attorney, Lantz Welch. His client feels constant pain that is like opening a window into Hell Welch told jurors in closing statements Thursday. McFarland made some progress with treatment, speaking a few words, but regressed after her family ran out of money and had to place her in a nursing home, Welch told jurors."*

Sherman argued that the verdict should be for no more than \$3.7 million and that McFarland was in a persistent vegetative state and could not benefit from treatment.

I later settled the case for \$30,000,000.



After this verdict I would never again be able to entice an insurance company to go to trial against me. One of my lawyers would prepare a case for trial and I would tell him to demand \$5 million and he would tell me I was crazy. The case would get settled for the \$5 million and then I would tell the lawyer to reduce the client's attorney's fee by 50% since I did not have to go to trial.

N.B. The Inner Circle of Advocates maintained a "Verdict Book" wherein the members reported any verdict obtained in excess of \$1 million. After the McFarland verdict, my in-house moneyman, Dave Brentano, reported to me that he had tabulated the top verdicts and mine totaled \$135.7 million. The #2 man was Joe Jamail at \$91 million [we did not include his business litigation verdict of Pennzoil Vs Texaco], and #3 was Bob Montgomery of Florida.

I was pleasantly surprised to find out that I was the World Champ in my chosen profession.

When I established the Lantz Welch Educational Center:



I received the following heartwarming letter from a great trial lawyer:

Hollis Hanover Letter of 9/25/90

I am sorry I was unable to attend the dedication celebration of the Lantz Welch Educational Bar Center that was held on September 15, 1990. I had a previous commitment to an ATLA Board of Governors function.

Receipt of the invitation gave me pause to consider your involvement in our profession. I am convinced that the respect accorded to and the dignity displayed by the plaintiffs' bar in our area was single-handedly created by you. I started practice in 1967 at a time when it was popular among defense lawyers to consider the plaintiffs' bar as a seedy lot of financially marginal lawyers who were unable to get a job with a defense firm. That perception has changed one hundred eighty degrees in the intervening years and the change is entirely attributable to you, to the lawyers you have trained and to the lawyers who emulate you.

You were the first truly class act in the plaintiffs' bar and over the intervening years you have made a conscious effort to present only the very highest impression of honor, ethics, skill and talent. The stunning results you routinely acquire for your clients have skewed the conceptions of the defense bar so that all clients benefit from you even though they may not have the fortune to be represented by you.

I believe it is unlikely that you will ever receive adequate credit for the great debt that is owed you by the public and by the plaintiffs' bar generally. I can tell you

that I daily acknowledge that my path is easier because you have broken the way.

Thank you for your philanthropy and for your example. Our profession would be poorer without them.

Very truly yours,

Hollis H. Hanover

MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, *the members of the Missouri House of Representatives are proud to applaud the achievements of an individual who has long distinguished himself through his conscientious and dedicated service in the legal field: Mr Lantz Welch of Kansas City: and*

WHEREAS, *on April 29, 1994, Lantz Welch will be formally honored as a recipient of the Tenth Annual Litigator Emeritus Award from the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association; and*

WHEREAS, *Mr. Welch is being given this award for his enviable record of achievement as a top litigator who has brought in verdicts exceeding one million dollars for thirty-seven clients and whose litigated personal injury awards above one million dollars total 135.7 million, more than any other lawyer in the world; and*

WHEREAS, *a graduate of the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law, Lantz Welch has provided valuable leadership on behalf of his profession as President of the Law Foundation of the School of Law at UMKC, as President of the Kansas City Bar Foundation, as a member of The Inner Circle of Advocates, and as a Fellow in the International Academy of Trial Lawyers; and*

WHEREAS, *Mr. Welch, who specializes in personal injury trial practice, has lectured and done seminar work throughout the country on the subject of "Trial Practice", and*

WHEREAS, *the recipient of the 1987 Alumni Achievement Award from the University of Missouri-Kansas City, Lantz Welch has been listed in The Best Lawyers in America since the book's inception in 1983:*

Now, therefore, be it resolved *that we, the members of the Missouri House of Representatives, Eighty-seventh General Assembly, hereby join unanimously in extending our warmest congratulations and very best wishes for continued success to Lantz Welch as he receives this well-deserved recognition from the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association; and*

Be it further resolved that the Chief Clerk of the Missouri House of Representatives be instructed to prepare a properly inscribed copy of this resolution for Mr. Lantz Welch, as a measure of our esteem for him

*Certified by Bob F. Griffin, Speaker
House Resolution No. 602, adopted
April 28, 1994*

When I accepted this award I told the Missouri House that I thought it was rather amazing that a “C” student, who could not even get admitted to most of today's law schools, could have done so much for so many people.

The day following this honor the KCMBA presented me with “The Tenth Annual Litigator Emeritus Award” with the following:

“He has zealously protected client’s rights, been courteous to the Courts, fellow lawyers and litigants and has for more than 34 years demonstrated outstanding skills as a litigator.”

The Kansas City Star Magazine [weekend] ran this in November 1992.



Though I had always avoided an in depth interview to the media, I felt that I was probably through trying lawsuits and the only reporter I trusted was Joe Lambe so I agreed:

“LANCELOT AND THE LAW”

“He fancies himself a modern-day knight. His courtroom opponents might scoff, but so what? He has a career he believes in, the means to build his own Camelot, and time to chase his dreams.”

Lantz Welch: teen-age rebel, college waiter, powerhouse lawyer:

*The facts about **Lantz Welch**: Born: Sept. 25, 1932.*

Raised: Spent most of his boyhood near 39th Street and Prospect Avenue in Kansas City. He started working odd jobs when he was 9. Because of a bad attitude and a quick mouth, it took him five years to graduate from high school.

"I got thrown out of so many classes that it created problems," he says.

*Education: **Welch** earned his undergraduate degree at the University of Missouri-Columbia, where he paid his way by working as a waiter and a building contractor. Never better than a C student, he finished law school at the University of Missouri while working full time as an insurance claims adjuster. That's when he decided to fight insurance companies.*

"I was appalled at what we in the insurance industry did to people - it was a totally unfair match. It was like being a bully. Most people had no idea what their bodies and their lives were worth.

*Family: Twice divorced with two adult children, he is engaged to Laura Gault. The wedding is to follow the completion of Camelot, a castle **Welch** is building on an area lake.*

Hobbies: Aerobic flying, scuba diving and underwater photography, bicycling, sailboat racing, wind surfing, fishing, ice boating, downhill skiing, racquetball, table tennis. He's known for buying the best equipment, studying his sports and practicing.

"Everything I get into I approach from the standpoint that I want to be in the upper 10 percent. It's amazing how easy that is if you make up your mind to do it.

*Philanthropic interests: In 1985 he created the **Lantz Welch** Charitable Foundation. It is now about a \$3 million fund that donates \$250,000 a year to a variety of programs, including those that help the homeless and troubled youths.*

"Most of it goes to disenfranchised people who aren't making it on their own, the kind of people I represent in lawsuits. I'm having almost as much fun with that as I have trying lawsuits.

Pet peeve: Competitors who spread false rumors that he's retired.

Self-image: "My self-image is that of a guy who went to work at age 9 and worked hard all his life. Mostly I've outworked everybody I've gone to court against. "

I FELT THAT MY CAREER AS A TRIAL ADVOCATE WAS COMPLETE!!!!!!!!!!

At this point I had not lost a case for my last 28 years and it seemed like I would never get out of the starting gate again.

N.B. Definition of a WIN: The insurance company is in complete control. If they make an offer of settlement that the client can not refuse there will be no trial. If we get a verdict larger than there last offer, we WIN.

However, in the summer 1998 I had the opportunity to start my final trial. I started trial in Liberty, Missouri a venue noted for small verdicts, with the exception of my case against Worlds of Fun 20 years earlier.

It was an automobile case wherein the 55-year-old plaintiff suffered fractures of the hip, arm and ribs and her 89 nine-year-old mother was killed.

N.B. Wrongful Death verdicts for an unemployed 89 year old woman based on pecuniary losses were miniscule.

I spent the entire first day in Voir Dire and most of the second day in Opening Statement. At the end of the second day we settled the cases for \$5.2 million.

When I told the trial judge we settled he told me that all of the judges had a pot going. That the low number was \$150,000 and the high was \$550,000. He was certainly surprised when I told him the settlement amount.

That was my Last Hurrah!!!! AND I LOVED IT WHILE IT LASTED!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



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K.C.M.B.A.

1973 was a watershed year in my legal life. I had never been active in the Bar Association activities, but my good pal Max Foust, was asked by the “Secret Group” to become President. Max was smart enough to realize that his success would depend on a good Program Chairman. So he told them that if Lantz Welch were willing to take on the job of program Chairman, then he would serve as President.

“The October 26th program was one of the most successful programs in the history of the case K.C.B.A. Over 400 attended and many others were turned away. My November 9th program was a sellout crowd. Quoting the “News Headnotes”: Lantz says he has a gala social season planned, which opened with our Annual Christmas party; a Dinner Theater Party at the Waldo Astoria and a fantastic wine tasting party for June 7th.”

We put together a trip to Rio de Janeiro for February and scheduled eight other seminars that were all sold out.

In May I created a four day float trip down the Green & Yampa Rivers.





Son Rick & I on the Yampa River



I caught enough trout to feed everyone breakfast.

I forgot to mention the end of March of 1972. I brought Jacob D. Fuchsberg, President of ATLA and first lawyer in America to ever achieve a seven-figure verdict, who was then the best known plaintiff's trial lawyer in America to be our featured speaker at the Annual Tort Seminar. Jack went on to serve on the highest appellate court in New York.

To say that Max Foust had a successful year as Bar President would be the understatement of the year.

At this time I realized that there was much that I could do for the profession that I loved so well as President of the Kansas City Bar Association. As a contingent fee lawyer I realized that it was not a very smart economic move.

N.B. The real power in the Kansas City legal community lay in [The Lawyers Association](#) These were the lawyers who represented the moneyed interests.

The Kansas City Bar Association had always been a bunch of scufflers who did not have any real clout. The Bar President's were chosen by a mysterious backroom group of men led by: Ernie Hubbell, Ben Swofford, Clem Fairchild and others. It was the practice at that time to choose a plaintiff's lawyer one year and a defense lawyer the next year. Following Max's term Roy Larson had been chosen so I asked Max tell the group that I would like to be president for the 1975-76 slot. They stalled until I finally found out that Bob Schroeder wanted this for his partner, Jack Furry. I warned them, through Max, that if they went forward I would create the first open contested election in the history of association. Since Jack Furry was a good friend of mine I kept putting off campaigning until two weeks before the appointed date and was beaten. The next slot went to my neighbor, Joe Sherman and the cabal gave in and I was selected president then for 1977-78 term of office.

October 20, 1977 Bar Officials Installed

I was deeply honored when the President of The International Academy of Trial Lawyers, Sid Mc Math, agreed to be my guest speaker. Sid was a General in the U.S. Marines, past Governor of Arkansas, current President of The International Academy of Trial Lawyers:



THE KANSAS CITY
BAR ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL MEETING

October 20, 1977

LUNCHEON

**INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS
for 1977-78**

GUEST SPEAKER

Sidney S. McMath

President of the International
Academy of Trial Lawyers

SPECIAL HONORED GUEST

*Joseph P. Teasdale
Governor, State of Missouri*

Spouses Especially Invited

Radisson Muehlebach Hotel Trianon Room

At this time my old handball pal, Joe Teasdale, was Governor of the State of Missouri, so my first official act as President of the KCBA was to make him an Honorary Lifetime Member [the only other was Harry S. Truman].

I loved my congratulatory letter from Congressman Ike Skelton: *"I am downright proud of you, and know that you will do an excellent job."*

I received the usual similar letter from Senator Tom Eagleton, but little did he know that I would become a thorn in his side on the subject of the selection of Federal Judges.

What follows is taken verbatim from "The Story of The Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association, LIBERTY AND JUSTICE."

LIBERTY AND JUSTICE

THE STORY OF THE KANSAS CITY METROPOLITAN BAR ASSOCIATION

Whether he's tackling the Presidency of the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar association [KCMBA], representing a personal injury victim, or pursuing his

philanthropic interests, Lantz Welch's modus operandi is the same: Preparation and Perfectionism.

Welch is justifiably proud of the time and effort he has devoted to the legal profession and the results he has achieved. A watershed year in Welch's era of service to the bar came in 1977 when he became president of the KCMBA. During his tenure he instigated and promoted passage of a new constitution and bylaws that achieved, among other things, an open election process for future bar officers.

Upon taking office as bar president, Welch discovered the association was nearly bankrupt. He personally signed a note to keep the association afloat and then, in the face of stiff opposition, pushed through a substantial increase in bar dues. Because of the quality of continuing legal education and social programs during Welch's tenure as president, the association was in the black, and the bank debt was retired by the end of his term in office.

Welch had another surprise when he became bar association president. He learned the organization had never filed a tax return and therefore was operating illegally. Welch was able to convince the executive committee to advise the Internal Revenue Service of the situation. The IRS assessed no penalty, and the KCMBA received section 501 [c] 3 status, permitting creation of the Kansas City Bar Foundation, which in turn gave birth to the bar association's present Bar Center.

During his presidency Welch began an effort to convince Missouri United States Senators that they needed input from the KCMBA to aid in the selection of federal judges. The endeavor was a lengthy one, but in 1981 the merit selection process for the federal judiciary in Missouri's Western District was born.

He is a past president of the Law Foundation of the School of Law of the University of Missouri-Kansas City and a past president of the Kansas City Bar Foundation.

Preparation and perfectionism likewise form the core of Welch's law practice. Welch has been described by a colleague as, "One of Kansas City's hardest-working attorneys, one who absorbs every detail of a case and engages in methodical planning of its' prosecution." His reputation is such that the majority of his clients are referred to him by other lawyers.

In 1989, Trial Lawyers for Public Justice, founded by Ralph Nader, nominated Welch for the organization's annual award given to the private practice attorney who most exemplified the organization's ideal by winning a "cutting edge" case-one that had, and will have, significant impact for the public good.

The "cutting edge" case was Welch's representation of 31 residents of Sedalia, Missouri, who suffered personal injury and property damage as a result of toxic spills and emissions from the Alcolac, Inc., chemical plant in Sedalia. The lawsuit was a 10-year endeavor during which Welch expended more than one million dollars in case expenses on behalf of his clients. The four-and-a-half month trial ended with jury verdicts totaling more than \$49 million. Of Welch's work on behalf of the Sedalia residents, the Trial Lawyers for Public Justice said, "For doing so much to preserve our air, land, and water, he is truly deserving of honor as one of the very best trial lawyers of the year."

Welch has been on the cutting edge with other cases as well. He represented the plaintiff in a case in which the Missouri Supreme Court first permitted an award of punitive damages against a health care provider, and he represented the plaintiff in the case in which the state's high court abolished the practice of remittitur.

Welch has been listed continuously in The Best Lawyers in America since the book's inception in 1983. He has been selected by his peers as a member of the Inner Circle of Advocates and as a Fellow in the International Academy of Trial Lawyers.

Lantz Welch's philanthropic endeavors also receive his trademark investment of time and effort. The Lantz Welch Charitable Foundation contributed nearly \$100,000 to establish the Lantz Welch Conference Room and the Lantz Welch Educational Center at the KCMBA headquarters.

But the Lantz Welch Charitable Foundation does not limit its financial assistance to the legal profession. The foundation donates up to \$250,000 a year to a variety of programs, including those that help homeless and troubled youth. Welch says most of the money from his foundation goes to "disenfranchised people" who have difficulty making it on their own. He describes the recipients as "the kind of people I represent in lawsuits."

A few more details: I had to hammer the executive committee into amending the By-Laws in order to create an Open Election process which continues to the present day.

At our first meeting I asked to see the tax returns and was met by a stony silence. It seems that this group of lawyers and never bothered to file a tax return in spite of the fact that the President five terms earlier was our city's leading tax lawyer. I decided to correct this.

Our annual Christmas party had always featured free drinks and I installed a cash bar. An effort was made to impeach me for this that went nowhere. I acted as my own Program Chairman and because of the quality of the programs we retired my personal loan and the Bar Assoc. ended up in the black.

In March of 1978 I created a program called "Trial Encounters of The Best Kind". I brought him Phil Corboy, the best trial lawyer in Chicago; Gerry Spence, trial lawyer from Wyoming; and John Shepherd, the best defense lawyer in St. Louis.

March through June of 1978 my correspondence from Sen. Tom Eagleton did not improve on the subject of Merit Selection for Federal Judges although Sen. Jack Danforth, the junior senator, thought my proposals were simply wonderful.

N.B. Jerry Wolf followed me as President & he brought my long and laborious task of Merit Selection for Federal Judges to fruition. I believe that this was a first for the United States.

Jerry also followed through on my plan to achieve legality with the IRS which in turn allowed us to obtain 501 [c] 3 status. We needed this in order to receive charitable gifts. This in turn allowed "The Lantz Welch Charitable Foundation" to create the "Lantz Welch Legal Education Center".

In my "News Headnotes" of April 1978 I laid out my nominating committee rules for the selection of future officers of the Association. No more backroom politics and this procedure has been followed to the present time.

In May of 1978 I addressed 97 new US citizens who took their oath of allegiance on Law Day.

"It was not the size, power or gross national product and made the United States the greatest country in the world. It gets down to one word -- freedom. There is no country in the world where people enjoy as much freedom as in the United States."

Nobody is above the law. We learned that with Nixon and Watergate. Some say we learned that politicians and lawyers can be crooked, but that was the wrong lesson. It was the courts and the lawyers that enforced the rule of law. One of your first opportunities as citizens will be to serve on a jury. Here, no one can be falsely accused and be forced to prove his innocence. Another is your right to vote and I hope you take advantage of that right."

In June of 1978 I created a SECRET BALLOT for the lawyers to fill out on the upcoming election of 22 candidates in Jackson, Clay and Platte counties who were running to become Associate Circuit Judges. This had never been done before and got a great deal of attention in the local newspapers, all favorable. My plan was to keep several incompetents off the court and I was successful.

I received some heat from "The Women's Lawyers Association": *"You indicated that the reason for the lack of women in the judiciary was the unavailability of qualified female candidates."*

And what was really said on TV 9 was:

Mr. Welch, are there any lady judges in Jackson County at any level?

LW: No, there are none, at any level.

Mr. Welch, doesn't this look poorly on the part of the Kansas City Bar Association?

LW: No, it looks poorly on the part of the ladies for their unwillingness to come forward and present themselves as candidates.

In September of 1978 I created "Ask A Lawyer Day" wherein the K.C.B.A. furnished 12 volunteer lawyers to furnish free legal advice. As was said in the Kansas City Star: *"We received a call from Southwestern Bell saying that there were 10,000 busy signals with 5,000 calls overflowed into other exchanges. The TV station's switchboard completely conked out."*

In November of 1978 the Missouri Association of Trial Attorneys presented a mock Circuit Court jury trial on how to try a major injury case with *"An opportunity to see six of Missouri's most prestigious trial lawyers in action."* Representing the plaintiff were LW, Jim Hullverson of St. Louis and Ed Murphy of Butler, Mo. Luckily I was given my two favorite subjects: Voir Dire and Closing Argument.

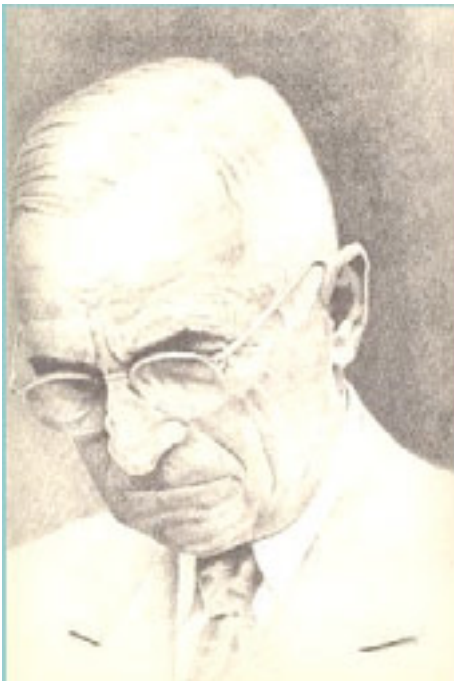
And from MATA I received: *"I would remind you that there is no way for trial lawyers to submit themselves for accreditation in the area of their specialty as*

there is for physicians. However, you can now know that your excellence has been accredited by the many lawyers and judges who have evaluated you as to your true excellence. Everything has been accomplished that we sought including breaking all previous attendance records.”

I am pleased to tell you that at the 1978 annual KCBA Christmas party we no longer had a cash bar and everyone seemed to love the Benevolent Dictator.

I received a heartwarming letter from a lawyer around that time of year:
*“When I saw your picture on the front cover of the KCBA bulletin this morning I was quite proud of you as I have been over the years.
By your trials skill you have brought victory to the little guy and hopefully sensitize those in opposition. I am proud of you.”*

In appreciation the Bar Assoc. commissioned a likeness of me by Al Kennedy:



"The Buck Stops Here" Truman Print

This limited edition, signed, numbered print by Al Kennedy featuring "Harry S Truman 33rd President" pondering one of the many difficult issues during his administration. [\[More Info\]](#)

While I was president of the Bar Association a decision was handed down by the US Supreme Court on the subject of advertising. But first, a little history is in order. At the back of our bar directory we could find a “Minimum Fee Schedule” that recommended legal fees for certain legal services by categories, e.g., Default Divorce, DUI, Bankruptcy, Adoption etc. Back in those days no one gave any thought to price-fixing or that there was anything wrong with suggested legal fees.

However, in Arizona there were two enterprising lawyers named Bates and O’Steen who focused their practice on uncontested court cases such as, divorce, adoption, simple bankruptcy cases, and name changes. Bates and O’steen decided that rather than charge expensive fees for their services they would focus on a large volume of cases in order to generate their income and they would do this through advertising.

Unfortunately the US Supreme Court did not demonstrate much in the way of Street Smarts. Instead of allowing advertising in a handful of limited areas, they totally threw open the doors for any and all advertising by the legal profession.

It is often thought by the general public that lawyer advertisements have tarnished the reputation of lawyers. There is no doubt in my mind about that.

A more insidious result has flowed from lawyer advertising. During the last 10/20 years of my practice virtually all of my cases were referred by lawyers who were not trial lawyers and they needed help for their clients. At the conclusion of the case a portion of the legal fee would be referred to the lawyer who brought me the legal business. I have never knowingly accepted a referral from a lawyer who advertises.

In the top 75 television markets nationwide, 2,000 lawyers advertise on television and spend close to \$200 million collectively on advertising - Forbes 2001.

The predictable result of this is that instead of looking out for the best interests of the client by referring such client to Lantz Welch and waiting longer for the favorable result, the new breed will turn that case for \$.20 or \$.30 on the dollar in order to generate the next advertising fee.

CORPORATE AMERICA SIMPLY LOVES LAWYER ADVERTISING!!!



THE GOLDEN RULE & PATTERN INTERROGATORIES:

When a personal injury case is filed the usual discovery proceeding calls for the filing of interrogatories and thereafter the taking of depositions. Interrogatories are written questions proposed to a party to be answered under oath. They can be a legitimate helpful tool if used properly.

Naturally, the insurance industry and their defense lawyers soon figured out a way to abuse the process. Invention of the computer aided their nefarious scheme.

In automobile cases it became the practice of the large defense firms to unleash voluminous interrogatories consisting of hundreds of questions. The average lazy plaintiff lawyer would fail to file timely objections and there would be a motion for sanctions filed by the defense.

I came up with the radical idea that there should be Pattern Interrogatories to be filed in automobile cases. They were limited in scope and number. I then went to the Circuit Court en banc and at my behest they established a rule on the subject.

At the same time I obtained the passage of Lantz Welch's "Golden Rule" of discovery which provided as follows: If a lawyer wished to file a Motion for Sanctions it was a requirement that the motion be accompanied by a letter signed by that lawyer assuring the court that the lawyer had spoken in person or by telephone to his opponent and that the matter could not be resolved.

It seems that before this rule was enacted lawyers filed motions against one another without bothering to converse. Apparently they felt it was a sign of weakness to call the other lawyer and discuss the problem. By forcing them to speak to one another we were able to cut the discovery motions by 95%.

I understand that Pattern Interrogatories have been copied in the majority of jurisdictions in the United States.

The Bar Association commemorated this activity by awarding me a 25 foot tape measure:



To conclude this chapter as I puff up with justifiable pride I think of the story of the Post Turtle: *"When you see a turtle on a fence post you know he did not get there by himself and he needs help while he's up there."*

I then remembered the great driving force that shaped our organization for over 30 years, The Beautiful and Bodacious Bobbie Lou:

SINCE 1970, BOBBIE LOU
NAILLING HAS BEEN A
DRIVING FORCE OF THE
KANSAS CITY BAR ASSOCIA-
TION. DURING HER TENURE
THE ASSOCIATION SECURED
PERMANENT QUARTERS AND
HAS DEVELOPED INNOVA-
TIVE PROGRAMS RECEIVING
NATIONAL ACCLAIM.



“Behind every great man there stands a woman.” This was certainly true of the K.C.M.B.A. There is a standing acknowledgement among the Past Bar Presidents that while we may come & go, our Association’s real national prominence and successes flowed from “Bobbie Lou”.



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FEE WAIVED CASES

PLATTE CO. CABLE TV:

In the early 1970s I was approached by John Schott, the owner of Platte County Cable TV about the fact that he was not able to get his product into Weatherby Lake and sought my help. I told him that I was simply a personal injury lawyer and did not think I could help him.

His response was that he had heard there was no problem I could not solve and I'll be damned if I did not prove him right. After accomplishing his goal he came to me and asked how much he owed me. I told him that I was simply glad that I could help him, but he insisted that he wanted to give me and my family free cable TV for the rest of our lives. He sent me a letter to that effect on his company letterhead and luckily I saved that letter. At that time I never had the luxury of watching TV.

Years later John Schott sold his company to Time Warner cable and some aggressive corporate geek decided to send me a bill for cable services and when I ignored it, they cut off my T.V. I explained to them that when Time Warner obtained the assets, they also took on the liabilities which included my free lifetime cable TV. I was forced to take them to federal court where a judge entered an order affirming what I had told them.

N.B. This is a good time to point out what defense lawyers do best: Mislead; obfuscate and stonewall. Defense lawyers go to great lengths in avoiding our discovering their clients' misdeeds. Witness the [Tobacco Litigation](#) that took over 30+ years to expose the bastards.

So, I'm appearing before a federal judge against the usual lineup of Ivy League NYC lawyers resisting my legitimate discovery requests. My motion is affirmed and the judge adds for good measure that if there are any more problems of this sort he will award Mr. Welch his attorney fees. One of the jerks snickers at this; the judge picks up on it & asks me what might be a reasonable hourly rate for my time.

I told the judge that I did not do hourly work, but as fate would have it, my in house money man had recently looked into just that issue. He took the last 5 years of my fee income and divided it by hours worked and it came out to a little over \$10,000 per hour. The jerk gasped & the judge said that he was surprised that it was that low. However, he said, if I was

willing to accept that as my reasonable hourly rate he would assess it if there were any further discovery difficulties. There were none.

Years passed before another corporate geek decided to squeeze some money out of me by sending me a bill from Time Warner for Web services which terminated after I ignored that bill. This time I took them to state court and after spending considerable time and energy Judge Mauer entered the expected order concluding with language to the effect that if Lantz Welch had any future difficulties, the court would assess his attorney's fees and those in violation would be subject to spending time in jail.

Their president approached me through their company lawyer wanting to go to lunch and bury the hatchet. I took them to lunch at the Kansas City Club and before he got started with his spiel I asked how much his company had spent on legal fees in the matter. He feigned ignorance so I asked his lawyer if it wasn't something between \$40,000 and \$50,000 and the answer was yes. I then told this president that they have screwed around with me for an amount less than \$1,000 per year and that he should be fired. I am sure no one ever talked to him this way. He told me that he did not come to lunch to be insulted and I told him he richly deserved the insults and he was going to have to take it if I was going to buy him lunch. I insulted him a bit longer, then reached over the table and shook his hand and admonished him, *"Never poke a tiger with a sharp stick."* I suggested he put that in my file and over the intervening years I've never had a bit of trouble with Time Warner Cable.

ALASKAN FUR:

In September of 1977 there was a flood that inundated the [Country Club Plaza](#). Of the nearly \$100 million in damages throughout the area, there were substantial losses at Alaskan Fur Company to the furs stored in their basement vaults. Those individual losses were paid through Homeowners Insurance Policies. The insurance carriers had subrogation rights to those losses paid. I can just hear those Claims Managers in their monthly meeting of the Kansas City Claims Association discussing who they could sue in order to recoup their losses. They chose Alaskan Fur.

N.B. "Tort Reform" There are more business Vs. business cases than injury lawsuits. A recent study by Public Citizen indicates that the 7 million U.S. corporations file four times as many lawsuits as the 281 million individual Americans, so corporations are 160 times as likely to

sue as an average person. The same Public Citizen study noted, *"Businesses and their attorneys were 69 percent more likely than individual tort plaintiffs and their attorneys to be sanctioned by federal judges for filing frivolous claims or defenses."*

Alaskan was owned by a lifelong pal of mine, Myron Wang. We played on the same championship high school football team.

Unfortunately Myron's insurance salesman sold him a premises liability policy with \$1 million limits, no doubt thinking this would be adequate for covering a slip and fall case. It did not even come close to covering Alaskan Fur for this lawsuit.

A panic stricken Myron came to me begging me to save his family business. I told him that I did not defend people but only represented injured persons against the bad guys. He reminded me of the length and depth of our friendship, so I agreed to save him.

Without the boring details I walked him away from the problem. He kept asking me how much he owed me and I told him that I did not keep timesheets and I was happy to help a friend. He wanted to give me fur coats and I told him that furs were for fags and football players. He pointed out that he was neither and that he wore furs [BTW, Myron is a very tough masculine guy]. It was winter at this time and he prevailed upon me to wear his mink coat. I was amazed by how light and warm it was. I then told him that Laura and I would accept his gifts and Alaskan gave us 8 to 10 matching fur coats.

In 1978 Tom Hullverson, the leading medical negligence lawyer in St. Louis, sent me a case that he'd been working on for some period of time and the Statute of Limitations was about to run. It involved a young man in a serious automobile accident who had suffered a broken back and was taken to a small hospital in a Missouri town near the Iowa border. The patient was allowed to thrash about all night in pain because no doctor attended him and consequentially, he suffered a severed spinal cord and became a paraplegic. Of course, there was no real proof of medical negligence in the hospital records so Tom could not figure out how to hold anyone responsible.

I took Art Stein, my favorite court reporter, to the area in question and lo and behold we found a nurse who lived nearby who had been working that night and had later been dismissed by the hospital.

This trip was a bitter snowy night and we did not get back to Kansas City until early in the a.m. The good news is that the nurse told us what actually happened and we therefore had a good liability case.

The policy limits were \$500,000 and the country Dr. had no real assets so I settled the boy's case for \$500,000 and with Tom's acquiescence I waived the attorney's fee.

Every holiday season thereafter that boy would come to my law offices wheeled in by his mother or father to deliver a turkey to me.

KANSAS CITY PHILHARMONIC:

In July of 1980 [Maurice Peress](#) was the Director of the Kansas City Philharmonic. They fired him.

As reported in the Kansas City Star: *“Lantz Welch, Peress’s lawyer here, confirmed that there are ongoing communications between the two parties. Peress is guest conducting in Europe and is expected to return around the end of the month.”*

Reported in the Kansas City Times July 24th: *“At a big meeting with orchestra officials this month, said Lantz Welch, Peress’s attorney in Kansas City, we reached a certain common ground on the music director's contract. I wrote a long letter to him in Vienna, and if he follows those recommendations I should have something to tell you the next few days Welch said. The attorney suggested that a compromise might be possible.”*

Meanwhile, back with our Music Director: Headline in the Kansas City Star 8/5: ORCHESTRA TO REPLACE PERESS; GUEST CONDUCTORS TO FILL IN.

The media kept the heat on and there was something in the local papers on 8/6, 8/7, etc. until I finally made a public statement 8/15: *“The lawyer, Lantz Welch, said he put a proposal before the Philharmonic's negotiators this week that he was confident would satisfy all sides. I think I can safely say that as of Tuesday, I thought we had structured the handling of this matter that was eminently fair to all concerned, Welch said.”*

Kansas City Times 9/26: PERESS DISPUTE ENDS: *"I think everyone's pleased with the settlement said Lantz Welch, the Kansas City attorney representing Peress. I assure you that we are."*

Kansas City Star 9/26: ORCHESTRA OFFICIAL DISCUSSES PERESS' LEAVING

Kansas City Times 9/27: ORCHESTRA BROKE PACT PERESS SAYS
"We had an accord said Lantz Welch, the attorney for Peress. As part of that settlement, Welch said, the Philharmonic and Peress agreed not to discuss its terms or Peress' past relations with the orchestra. As far as my client is concerned, Welch said, they have already breached the part of the settlement relating to the confidentiality of all matters. They had a deal and they broke it. Contacted in New York, Peress would only say that Welch was acting on his behalf."

Kansas City Star early October: PHILHARMONIC AND PERESS AGREE ON A NEW SETTLEMENT

"Lantz Welch, Peress' attorney, said the former Maestro signed the legal papers Monday. Philharmonic officials had signed the papers Friday. Welch said he and the orchestra officials had agreed that the terms of the settlement would not be released. Welch said last week, however, that the terms included a financial settlement for Peress."

N.B. And now for the rest of the story: This case was referred to me by a past drop dead gorgeous girlfriend of mine. At the time of this incident she was married to a very prominent local whose brother was Chairman of the Board of the Kansas City Philharmonic. Maurice was having an affair with her. The husband found out and ratted Maurice out to the Chairman of the Board brother who conspired to fire Maurice under the subterfuge that the Maestro could not get along with his musicians.

I made the bastards pay his two-year salary in full & execute release documents stating that the payment was for 'personal injuries' suffered by my client. Of course this made his salary tax-free.

His career did not suffer: *"He has also extensively conducted orchestras internationally, including the [Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra](#) in 1980, the [Vienna State Opera](#) in 1981, the [Santa Cecilia Orchestra](#) of [Rome](#) in 1988, the Brno Orkester of the [Czech Republic](#) in 1997, the FOK Orkester at the [Prague Spring Festival](#) in 1988, the Shanghai Radio and Television Orchestra in 1996-1997, the [Melbourne Symphony Orchestra](#) in 1998, and*

the [Barbican Centre](#) Orchestra in London in 1999. In the 2000s, he has toured extensively in [China](#), leading the Shanghai Opera Orchestra, the [China National Symphony](#) in [Beijing](#) and the Shenzhen Symphony.”

MID-AMERICA HEART INSTITUTE:

I had an interesting interview with a potential new client in the early 1980s. Dr. Clark Henry, Thoracic Surgeon, presented himself in my office and discussed the underlying facts of the case that he wanted me to consider. After a few minutes he looked at me rather strangely and said, “*You don't remember me do you?*”

I confessed to him that I did not and he pointed out that he was one of the defendants in the Ray Smith case and that I had cross examined him for many hours in the courtroom. He confessed that he wanted to kill me at the time but on reflection decided that if he ever had a legal problem, I would be the attorney he would hire.

FACTS: Dr. William Reed, Chairman of St. Luke's Department of Cardiovascular Diseases in the Mid-America Heart Institute trained an impressive young surgeon named Dr. David Stephens to learn open-heart procedures while under Dr. Reed's supervision.

Drs. Henry & Graham were also cardiovascular and thoracic surgeons on the staff of St. Luke's Hospital. In 1981 they hired Dr. David Stevens to perform open heart surgery for their professional Corporation known as Henry & Graham, Inc.

Dr. Stevens agreed to join Henry & Graham, but was thereafter confronted by Dr. Reed who charged Stevens with disloyalty and told him he would not be welcome at the Heart Institute if he joined Henry & Graham. The young doctor was intimidated by Dr. Reed and ended up practicing in Macon, GA.

In my lawsuit against Dr. Reed I charged him with trying to monopolize open-heart surgery and we sued the good Dr. for \$1 million in damages. The Kansas City Star reported: “*That the Heart Institute saw more than 4000 patients and performed almost 1000 open-heart procedures last year according to estimates. Patients generally are charged between \$12,000 and \$20,000 for coronary bypass surgeries, according to reports in medical literature.*”

I do not remember the end of this particular journey except to say that it ended extremely well for my clients. I have recently tried to locate Drs. Henry & Graham, as well as the defense lawyer to learn the details of the settlement, but they are not to be found and I fear that they have passed away.

However, I do remember taking Dr. Reed's deposition for two full days and that he was the toughest nut I ever had to crack.

DICK SMITH FORD:

Another challenging case from about the same time period involved the son of Ray Smith. Dick Smith was movie star handsome and owned Dick Smith Ford, a very successful and prominent Ford dealership in Kansas City. He had a wife and children.

Barbara Cox had been a very gorgeous cheerleader with the Kansas City Chiefs who married a fine gentleman who was principal of a prestigious high school in the south part of our city.

Dick and Barbara fell in love and decided to divorce their respective spouses to ride off into the land of dreams together.

Barbara got her divorce but when Dick broached the subject with his wife, his father Ray Smith and the Bishop intervened and sat him down and told him the brutal facts of life.

Barbara and her ex-husband, Mr. Cox, were understandably upset and Mr. Cox hired Ben Swofford to sue Dick Smith for "Alienation of Affections". This is not a popular cause of action and in fact has been outlawed in many states. I had never accepted such a case. However, a good saying in my profession is that, "Good Facts Make Good Law" and this case could not have had better facts.

The rich handsome car dealer sweeps the local high school principals' wife off her feet with trips, gifts etc.

Dick Smith hired one of the leading Silk Law Firms who assigned the case to [Joseph Edward Stevens, Jr.](#), Yale & Mich. Law School, who after 25 years of private practice became a Federal Judge appointed by Ronald Reagan.

Joe was of the opinion that this was a very dangerous and serious case and that none of the insurance policies owned by Dick Smith would afford him any coverage since this was an "Intentional Tort". They recommended that he pay a huge settlement. Dick was paying substantial legal fees and was not very happy.

After I had finished handling the Ray Smith legal matters mentioned earlier I received a visit from Ray who discussed with me his son's legal problems and wanted me to take over the handling of the case.

I told Ray that I was not a Defense Lawyer and that his son Dick was being represented by a large firm with a large reputation. I liked Ray Smith so much that I agreed to take a look at the problem.

Dick Smith came to my office and after reviewing the facts I told him that I thought I could help him but that he would first have to discharge his lawyers before I could enter into representation in his case.

I remembered some law in Missouri that held if an insurance company induced a person into a contract by advertising certain promises, that said promises would be held to become part of the insurance contract. Sure enough I found the case.

I sent a letter to the claims department of Dick's Homeowners Insurance Company demanding that they afford coverage, legal services and reimburse Dick for almost \$50,000 he had paid out in legal fees. When the claims manager finally got back to me he agreed with my legal position and asked if I would be willing to continue to represent Dick on behalf of the insurance company. I told him that I would be willing to do this but in no event would I hide the fact that Dick had insurance coverage available. He replied that he knew my reputation & would never ask me to lie for them; however, would I find it necessary to volunteer the information. I told them that it would not be necessary.

I then caught a break in the case since the plaintiffs' very formidable lawyer, Ben Swofford, became a judge on the Kansas City Court of Appeals. A junior lawyer took over the handling of the case and I settled it for a modest amount.

When Dick Smith came to my office I told him the case was settled and gave him the check reimbursing him the legal fees he had paid to his previous lawyers. When asked how much he owed me I told him that I did not keep timesheets and I was very glad to have been able to help

him. He kept insisting on payment and I remembered that my mother used to drive a Ford Thunderbird. I asked if he would like to furnish a new Ford Thunderbird to my mother for the rest of her life and he was more than happy to do this and amazed that this was all I requested. He and I have been friends since that time.

FRANK SZASZ PORTRAIT:

In the early 80s Max Foust called and asked if I would help a lady very high in Kansas City's society because he had a conflict of interest. It seems that the lady had contracted herpes from a very prominent member of the Kansas City Country Club, our most prestigious Country Club.

N.B. This was the same C.C. that would not admit a Jew (Henry Bloch of H. & R. Bloch) which in turn caused Henry's son-in-law, [Tom Watson](#), to resign his membership.

This member was the son of a very Right-Wing prestigious Circuit Court judge who did not like plaintiffs' lawyers. I began pursuing the case and to my shock the son committed suicide. I later made a very agreeable settlement against his estate. Since I would not accept a legal fee she commissioned a famous local portrait painter, [Frank V. Szasz](#), to paint my portrait.





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THE LANTZ WELCH CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

I had occasion to lunch in the early 1980s with a pal of mine, [G. Robert Fisher](#), our town's leading business attorney, at the Kansas City Club and Bob brought up the subject of my well-known charitable giving. He suggested that I let him help me get organized by creating a charitable foundation. I replied that this was only for rich people and I did not consider myself a candidate. He explained that I could probably lay my hands on more hard currency than almost all of the "rich people" in Kansas City who were all highly leveraged and that I was certainly in the top 1% of people in the community who had real wealth. He told me that charitable foundations were created by some persons for less than \$50,000. He helped me create the Lantz Welch charitable foundation with assets of \$3,000,000 in 1985.

The Lantz Welch Charitable Foundation contributed nearly \$100,000 to establish the Lantz Welch Conference Room and the Lantz Welch Educational Center at the KCMBA headquarters.



Another side benefit was the fact that I was accustomed to giving talks around the country and turning down honorariums, as well as representing judges, lawyers, doctors and others on a gratuitous basis. After the foundation was formed I would present these grateful recipients with "Foundation Envelopes" and suggest they might show their gratitude with a donation. This helped to swell the bank balance.

I regularly ate lunch at the Italian Gardens, a restaurant across the street from my office building. A circular front table was always reserved for me.

*The Kansas City Star Lawyer has own table at eatery. Italian Gardens keeps a place ready for **Lantz Welch**.
HEARNE CHRISTOPHER JR.*

*What do boxer Riddick Bowe, model Christie Brinkley, baseball legend Joe DiMaggio, 1930s thugs Bonnie and Clyde and local lawyer **Lantz Welch** have in common? Would you believe - they've all eaten at the Italian Gardens restaurant? **Welch**'s name concludes a list of those otherwise famous feasters in the eatery's radio spots for its Lasagna Awareness Month promotion.*

*Why **Welch**?*

*"See that table?" asks owner Carl DiCapo. "That's **Lantz Welch**'s table. I won't let anybody else sit there. " **Welch** and his law partners and guests dine at the restaurant every day when **Welch** is in town, DiCapo says. Talk about a dream customer.*

*In return, the restaurant named a salad after him, has a "Reserved for **Lantz Welch**" sign and provides an enlarged table top "so he can spread his legal briefs on it," DiCapo notes.*

*"It's right across the street from City Center Square, where I office," **Welch** says. "I'll bet I've eaten there 30 years or more. " His fave, according to DiCapo, is chicken potpie.*

*You might even call the restaurant **Welch**'s second boardroom.*

*"It's like a daily meeting we have," says Tim Brake, one of his law partners. "He hands out the work assignments and away we go. " But the garden party halts when **Welch** blasts off for a month of deep-sea diving or traveling. His staffers head for the salad bars and the weight-watcher specials elsewhere. "I do try and cut back then a little," Brake says.*

One day in the early 90s [Bill Grigsby](#) ([A Beauuutiful Life](#)) sat down at my Italian Gardens table and brought to my attention the national fame of the Country Club Plaza and it's Christmas decorations. He said, "I think this is something we should do for Parkville, Mo." And I said, "Who is we grasshopper." To which he

replied, *"Of course I mean you."* I asked him if he had any idea what the cost might be and he did not. I advised him that once again he had lost his mind. He assured me that he knew I could accomplish it and he would look into the details. The economics took the foundation a number of years, but "we" accomplished the goal and thus began ["Christmas On The River"](#) at Parkville, Mo.

My pal, and former trial lawyer, [Landon Rowland](#), at that time was running the Kansas City Southern Railroad. He furnished a train where we hosted a cocktail party for the local luminaries and as the train backed into Parkville, Santa Claus, Bill Grigsby, my wife and kids and I would arrive standing in the back of the caboose. We would then step into the horse-drawn sleigh to be taken to the festivities. There were fireworks and a 1000 voice choir.



Another great idea was born at my lunch table and this time it was presented by the owner of the Italian Gardens, [Carl DiCapo](#).

Carl asked me if I knew about all the youths being used as drug mules, caught and being sent to prison to become career criminals. I learned that the recidivism rate is over 95%. Carl told me that we had to do something about

that. My usual response was, "Who is we grasshopper?" And the come back as usual was that he knew I could do something about the problem. I told Carl that the only criminal case I had handled was being appointed as a brand-new lawyer. Carl is very enthusiastic and very persuasive. He convinced me that I was highly respected and if anybody could do the job, I could. Since I share Carl's two attributes I met with the Juvenile Judge, the Prosecutor's Office and ultimately the Circuit Court en banc.

The Kansas City Star Scouts turn their backs on crime. County program aims to keep youths from being statistics. KIM BARKER Staff Writer

*The **Lantz Welch** Charitable Foundation has increased funding for a Jackson County program that tries to get youths off the streets and into the Boy Scouts of America. The foundation will grant \$19,000 this year to the Juvenile Varsity Team, a program developed by the Jackson County Juvenile Court, Black Men Together and the Heart of America Boy Scout Council. About \$16,000 will be provided to the program next year, officials announced Tuesday afternoon at the Gregg Community Center in Kansas City.*

*"The Scouting program has seen what it needs to do, in terms of shifting gears to meet the needs of inner-city youth," said Alvin Brooks, president of the Ad Hoc Group Against Crime. "If we don't deal with juveniles, take time to be with them, they will become statistics. " **Lantz Welch**, foundation president, replied to Brooks: "I'm going to put my money where your mouth is." The foundation provided \$10,000 in late 1989 to start the team. In its first 15 months, 60 juvenile offenders and youths with family problems participated in the program. None has committed additional criminal offenses.*

"When a child is referred to the juvenile court, the community has failed," said Larry Myers, administrator of the Jackson County Juvenile Court, which refers youths to Juvenile Varsity Team. "Last year, the community failed 9,457 young people.

"In this program, we have combined action and vision and are changing the world, at least for those 60 people involved." This year, about 40 more youths have gone through the 90-day program. After the three months, they can enter a regular Scouting program, said Rick Bell, director of the Scouting Outreach program, which includes the team.

In the program, youths take trips and attend seminars on college and careers. They are introduced to Scouting and Scouting ideals, Bell said.

"A lot of these youths don't receive this type of training in their home environments or in the social environment they grow up in," he said. "This program is new, and anything new to them they'll take a serious look at. "We'll take them on trips to penitentiaries. It kind of shows them where they're headed. "The additional funding will be used to expand the program to include tracking the progress of program graduates. Workers will be hired, and the program will be introduced in the McCune School for Boys in Independence. The program is looking for funding to expand into Clay County.

FAST FORWARD: With the help of the Boy Scouts of America we created special Boy Scout troops headed by young black men who were interested in the cause. That scout leader would visit the youngster about to be shipped off to Algoa to begin his sentence and would ask the youth how he would like to not have to go. He would then explain it to the youth that he could join the Boy Scouts, but if he missed a single meeting without proper excuse or did not otherwise participate in the program his parole would be revoked and he would serve his sentence.

The Boy Scouts filed written reports annually with my foundation in order to qualify for the next year's funding. After 300 or so experiments I learned that the recidivism rate was less than 5%.

In 1995 I received a phone call at my office from someone who identified himself as the leader of the scouting movement who told me The Boy Scouts of America wished to present me with the Silver Beaver Award. I immediately thought of the slang definition of the word "beaver" and figured it was a prank. So I told the caller to leave his name and number and I would get back to him. I called one of my local pals who was big in scouting and told him the story. After he got over his amazement he told me that caller was indeed the Head Fred and that it was the greatest honor the Boy Scouts could give, similar to the Presidential Medal so I called the man back and was awarded the Silver Beaver on November 15, 1995 along with the young Governor of the State of Kansas.

N.B. Of the thousands of people who visit Camelot Castle for our fund raisers, I am told that there are a great number who observe the plaque & the Silver Beaver on a red, white & blue ribbon with astonishment.

S.L.I.P.:

“The Kansas City Star New student intern program to move from class to court

TOM JACKMAN Staff Writer

For 19 students at Northeast Law and Public Service Magnet High School, reading about courts trials and lawyers is over. Being there is about to begin.

The Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association announced Wednesday it has established a Summer Law Internship Program, providing paid jobs at law firms and legal agencies around Kansas City.

The interns were introduced at a noon press conference at the bar association headquarters. The students were selected based on their academic performance, school involvement and teacher recommendations. Weekly reports on the students' performance and attendance will be submitted to the program's administrator.

Some of the biggest law firms in the city will be allowing the students to perform tasks around the office, though legal canons prohibit them from doing actual legal work.

*A grant from the **Lantz Welch** Charitable Foundation financed the program.*

The students are being outfitted with blazers, shirts and khaki slacks or skirts from the Jones Store courtesy of the Foundation.”

AND NOW FOR THE REST OF THE STORY:

This was my brainchild. I called a meeting of the managing partners of 25 to 30 of the big law firms in town. We met in the conference room of one of the big firms across the street from my modest offices. I explained the concept as described in the news article above, told them that I would provide all of the funding and I wanted to see a show of hands of those firms that would participate by simply hiring one of these young people as runners, file clerks or other office workers with their firms. My concept was that these inner-city minority youths would be exposed to successful people and learn that those successes were founded upon obtaining an education.

I asked for a show of hands of those who would be willing to employ one of the students. There were no hands. I then told them that they were going forward with this program and that I was going to leave the room for 10 minutes so they could discuss it amongst themselves. I told them that if they did not volunteer as requested I would make them wish to God that they had never heard my name. That they should talk amongst themselves and determine if I was the kind of man who made idle threats and did not keep his word.

When I came back after 10 minutes and asked for volunteers, every hand went up and the program was off and running. Naturally, after this resounding success they probably all thought it was their idea.

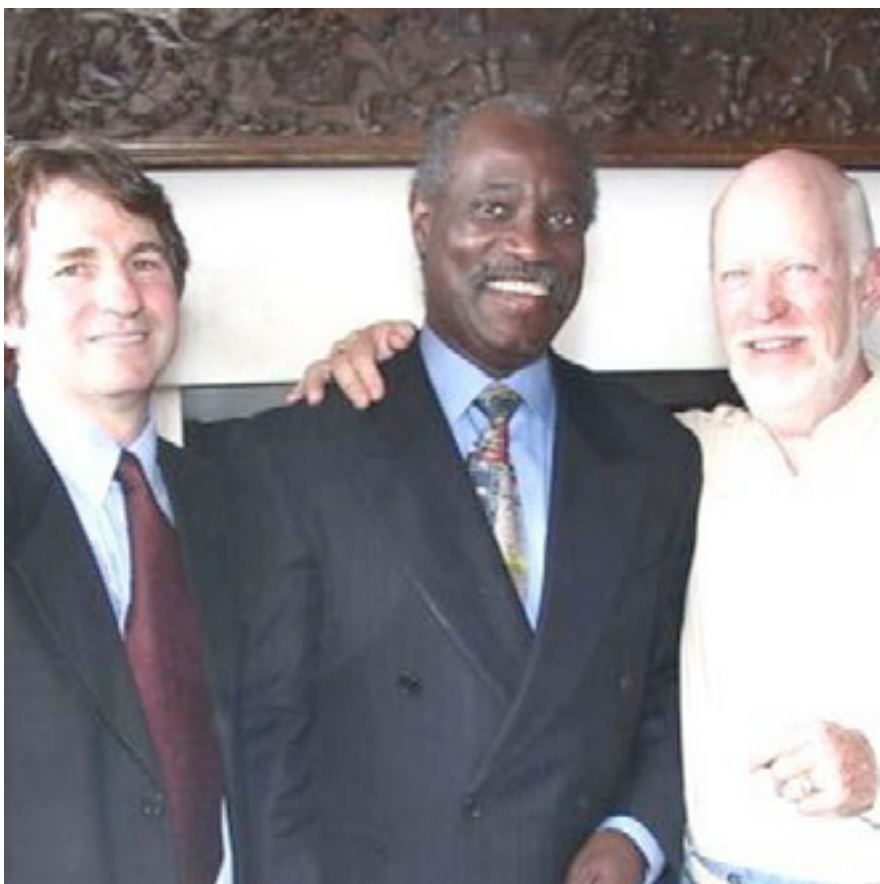
In a few years we went from 50% graduating from high school and almost no one going to college to 100% graduating from high school and 60-70% going on to college.

More on the [foundation](#) that became [The Welch Family Foundation](#).

Laura is president and she has raised over \$7,000,000 using Camelot Castle.



The Foundation is heavily involved in the Innocence Project at the present time.



Barry Scheck/Dean Powell/LW

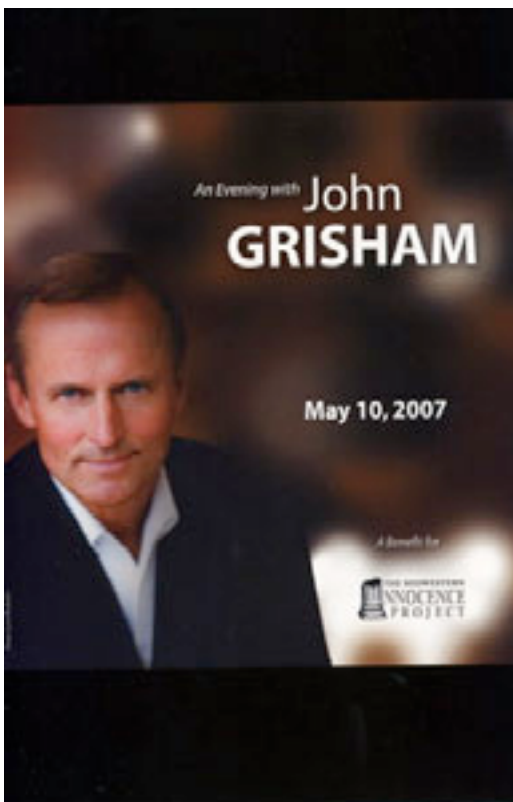
Barry helped us found a 4 state Innocence Project in conjunction with the Law School.



LW/Rubin “Hurricane” Carter who came to K.C. to help us with our fund raising



LW/Laura/John Grisham Who wrote “The Innocent Man” and came to K.C. on his own dime to help us with our fund raising. He is a man with a big heart.



Most of the foundations' \$ and energy goes into inner city projects and disenfranchised youths, e.g.:



Chris Waxter/Chuck Simpson

4-10-07

Lantz,

I would like to say first that you're the world's greatest dad. Lantz I'm so happy that I have a father like you who cares about me and also understands me like you do. Before meeting you, I was confused about men-hood and how can I be a great father to my children (when the time comes). But all that change when I meet you. You have taught me so much about life, happiness, and men-hood that I can't put into words. I learned how to be a better student, teacher, friend, brother, cousin, and leader because of the guidance you have provided me with. I have been thinking lately about my life. I always say to myself, if it wasn't for Lantz and Laura I would dead or in jail because the

street life would've caught me like it caught Chuck. I remember when Chuck and I would come out to Aspen. That was the best times of my life and Chuck's life also. You taught us how to deal with pressure with are families and friends. Lantz you're a life saver in my eyes. You saved my life and I want to thank you for that. I'm in college, I finished high school, and I'm on the right path to be successful in life all because of your guidance and believing in me when nobody else did. Thanks for everything dad. I love my car and cant wait to show you. I love you more then anything. Lantz you're the best man I ever have come across. Your one of the reasons I wake up in the morning, because I know you have my back and you believe in me. Thanks for everything. Your time, love, well-being, and money you have invested in me.

**THANKS FOR EVERYTHING AND I WANT LET YOU
DOWN!!!**

**LOVE YOUR SON,
CHRIS "WAX-MAN" WAXTER**

4-11-07

Chris:

Thank you for the heartfelt message.

You never disappoint me. You make me very proud of your achievements.

You have been one of my best investments!!!!

I know you will keep up the good work and never regret your efforts.

Lantz

Dear Laura and Lantz

August 7, 2004

I just want to say "thank you" for showing me that you care enough to let me come again. I had fun, and I got to talk and say what was going on in my life and it made me feel better to get it out there. I loved all the positive feedback that everyone was giving and the support everyone was giving me too. I've made a lot of goals while I was out there, and I am accomplishing most of them. I have gotten out of the gang. I just told them I was cool and I didn't want to be in no more and just walked away. They called me weak, but it was just talking. Besides that, everything was cool. I

was determined to do it. I promised people that I was going to do it. So, I did it. I'm kind of happy I did it. I had fun while I was staying at your house. I enjoyed going to the personal trainer. I enjoyed going to the movies and all the parties. Laura, you are the best. You are like another mother. You are great. You made my trip so special. Lantz, thank you for being a good role model. I can see myself in you. I can see myself getting a good job and having a nice wife, like you. I feel very special that you would fly me out to a different place and that you cared enough about me to actually spend some time with me. I will never forget my trip.

*Love,
King Chuck*

All of our foundation efforts do not have a happy ending. Chuck did get out of the gang and one day he was walking home with a report card full of good grades for the first time in his life and it was reported by witnesses that he stopped to talk to car full of blacks and then he turned to walk up his front steps when he caught a back full of bullets and died.

An energetic life, cut tragically short at 15

Charles T. Simpson always brought a smile to the faces of those he cared about. At 15, he had his life ahead of him.

But on Saturday afternoon, hundreds of his family, friends and community members filled the Lawrence A. Jones & Sons Funeral Chapel in Kansas City to pay their last respects.

On Feb. 10, he was shot several times as he walked about a block from his mother's house in the 5800 block of Indiana Avenue. He died later at a hospital.

Published on 2005-02-20, Page B4, Kansas City Star, The (MO)

Patterns of violence defy prevention

A ceremony took place outside of Chuck Simpson's house last week. It was the second gathering at 59th Street and Indiana Avenue since the evening of Feb. 11, when the 15-year-old was shot in the back as he walked toward his mother's house.

The first rendezvous was a vigil, where Simpson's many friends mourned his death. He was a popular kid who'd been trying to overcome a hard life. Published on 2005-03-11, Page B7, Kansas City Star, The (MO)

Chris on the other hand had better luck and made the kind of grades he had promised us and as a reward Laura and I took Chris and our nephew Kent to Spain.



KENT/LAURA/CHRIS AT THE ROCK OF GIBRALTER



The locals thought Chris was Eddie Murphy

We later bought Chris a nice car and he is attending college. He has spent a lot of time with us in Aspen, CO working with Laura and the Aspen Youth Experience, AYE, projects.



CHRIS ON FAR RIGHT IN RED



WINE

I started collecting wine when it was not popular to do so. With the help of Sam DiGiovani, Happy Hollow Liquors, I would buy a few bottles at a time & store them in a small, 5' X 8' fruit cellar in the house next door. As my collection grew I utilized a basement bedroom in the house I owned across the street. August Grasis & I would order Wine Futures. We would acquire wine cellars for sale.

When we built Camelot we created a first rate cellar that at one time housed over 6,000 bottles of wine + my cigar collection.



This is a circular cellar built under our circular Formal Dining Room. The outer circle holds many times more bottles than what you see. The ceiling is many feet thick & serves as a tornado shelter. It has been written up in the local papers.

We transferred over 2,000 bottles to our Aspen cellar, have donated much to charity auctions and we are now down to several thousand bottles. Enough left for my widow to go trolling. □

We have a Wine Dinner Group consisting of: LW, August Grasis, Bob White, Dean Lawrence and our significant others that just celebrated it's 25th year of annual dinners.



We take turns hosting and the menus:



are only overshadowed by the wine that the 10 of us bring:



"In Vino Veritas" In wine there is truth.



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MAFIA

When I went to work for Mr. Quinn it was with the expectation that I might learn to be a good Civil Trial Attorney. I was in heaven when he tried a sprained neck auto case in 1959 and I was allowed to sit second chair at the trial even though I had not passed the bar.

Not long thereafter things went downhill for me because Mr. Quinn took on the handling of the [Sharon Kinne](#) murder cases.

Since Mr. Quinn did not need the money I guess he decided it was more exciting to be a Criminal Defense Lawyer. He soon began representing [Nick Civella](#) and soon thereafter Nick and many of his associates spent a good deal of time at the law firm.

An even stranger thing happened when Nick Civella took a peculiar and paternalistic attitude toward me and would frequently stop at my office door, rap on it and say, "*Sir Lantzlot, do you have a few minutes to chat?*" I would frequently invite Nick Civella in and we would discuss diverse subjects such as politics, religion, law etc. Nick had a modest education, but was extremely well read.

AN INTERESTING STORY:

In 1960 one Kenneth Bruce Sheetz was under the federal witness protection program in Kansas City, Missouri. He was to give testimony against Anthony Biase, head of the outfit in Omaha, Nebraska. On June 20, 1960 it was claimed that Felix 'The Rat' Ferina & Anthony 'Tiger' Carderella appeared at his house and put a number of bullets in him while uttering, "*Here's something from Tony.*" Unfortunately for Tony, Bruce Sheetz survived and testified about who shot him as well as the near fatal utterance.

The case was first tried in State Court with my best pal Larry Gepford as the prosecutor and Mr. Quinn as the defense lawyer. The case was won by the defense based upon the alibi testimony of a real estate agent named Lillis who brought his appointment book to court to prove that he was showing property to Ferina at the time of the shooting.

DOUBLE JEOPARDY: When you have offended the Sovereign and then found not guilty of the offense, you cannot be tried twice. However there

is a little twist. It seems that there are two Sovereigns: The State of Missouri and the US government.
Ferina & Carderella were tried on a state charge of attempted murder.

After they were found not guilty the US government tried them on the charge of [Assaulting a Government Witness](#).

One of the reasons that accused persons do not like being tried in federal court is that the trial judge is allowed to comment on the evidence after the lawyers have made their closing arguments. This is sometimes referred to as the third closing argument. Ferina and Carderella were convicted.

N.B. Many years later my pal, the United States Dist. Atty. for the Western District of Missouri, and I were having some drinks after work and he confessed to me that the FBI had learned during the course of the first trial in state court that Tiger Carderella had not really participated. I asked him why the hell they had not dismissed the case against Carderella and he quite candidly responded that it would have destroyed their case against Ferina and besides, they knew that Carderella was guilty of a number of other things they could not take to court. I realized then that I would have been a pretty poor prosecutor.

N.B. The real estate agent, Lillis, who gave the alibi testimony in the state case was later indicted and convicted by the Feds for perjury.
It seems that they could prove that he had altered his appointment book and entered Ferina's name at a later time.

In the early 1960s Attorney General Robert Kennedy created Federal Strike Forces in many major cities, including Kansas City, Missouri. These organizations accomplished many good things, but like all matters involving extremes they were guilty of some bad deeds. They not only went after the "Bad Guys", but went after the individuals who hung out with them as well as the criminal defense lawyers who would dare to represent them. Their position was that if anyone was associated with or represented the "Bad Guys" they were also to be targeted and/or harassed.

When my friend Larry Gepford was no longer the Jackson County Prosecutor he quite naturally became a criminal defense lawyer. As such he represented a number of people that the Strike Force labeled as "Bad Guys". It came to my attention that some of these FBI investigators were

knocking on doors in the neighborhood where Larry and his family lived and asking questions designed to infer that he was some kind of undesirable person of questionable morality.

One day I was sitting in my office when the receptionist told me that there were two FBI agents who wanted to speak to me about Larry Gepford. I asked if they had an appointment and was told that they did not. I told her to offer them a seat and I made them sit for three hours before inviting them into my office. After showing me their identification I had my secretary scan it. I sat them on my sofa and turned on a tape recorder and placed it on the coffee table before them. They told me that this was not necessary since agent so-and-so was a very accurate note taker.

N.B. Pals of mine in the federal prosecutor's office had told me that some FBI agents were not adverse to giving perjured testimony if they had already determined that the guilty S.O.B. deserved it.

I ignored the comment and asked them if they were the sons of bitches that had been intentionally blackening my best friends name and reputation. They were quite taken aback, confused and embarrassed but hastily told me they heard about the incidents and those two agents had been taken off the investigation.

I did let them ask me about sums of money I paid to Larry as case referrals and told them that the bulk of my law practice was based on referrals of cases from other lawyers. I told them that all referral fees were reflected in my records and I would be absolutely amazed if Larry failed to report those fees as income. The interview ended on a pleasant note.

Turning to the hypocrisy of the “Good Guys”: The Federal Strike Force in Kansas City was run by David Helfrey and when he retired from his job, guess who he [started representing](#).

So, this is no different than Larry Gepford becoming a criminal defense lawyer. Or for that matter, Lantz Welch working for State Farm Mutual, and after seeing the light representing injured people.

In the summer of 1969 Nick Civella came to me with a tale that was very difficult to believe. He told me that 18 Italians had gone on a junket

arranged by Carl Caruso as guests of Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas for golf and gambling and had been harassed by Sheriff Lamb of Clark Co.

Nick showed me the front page banner headline from the Las Vegas Sun: **LITTLE APPALACHIA HERE?** *"Sheriff Ralph Lamb interrupts four-day meeting of Kansas City members of the Mafia here to elect a successor to [Vito Genovese](#)."*

It is true that Genovese was a Mafia member, but the headline turned out to be absolutely false as it related to the Kansas City golfers.

Nick Civella asked me if I would be willing to help these 18 men and I told him I would look into it. As mentioned earlier, the United States Dist. Atty. for the Western District of Missouri was a pal of mine. I gave him a list of the 18 names and asked him to get back to me with those who had no criminal record and certainly were not involved in organized crime. He did so and I agreed to represent approximately 13 men (I say approximately since I have not gone back to the files and this is from memory).

The 18 men were removed from the chartered Frontier Airlines airplane by sheriff's deputies and placed in a school bus with sealed windows to cook in the sun for four hours before being taken to the Clark County Sheriff's Department. When they arrived they were stripped and deloused and then arrested as Vagrants in spite of the fact that they were all carrying thousands of dollars on their persons.

I told Nick Civella that I would represent the 13 men, but that I did not want any help or interference from him and he assured me that I would be in charge.

I sued Sheriff Lamb and the citizens of Clark County under Section 1983 of the Civil Rights Act. I sued Hank Greenspun and the Las Vegas Sun for libel. These lawsuits were filed in federal court.

As I was a busy young lawyer it was very difficult for me to carve out a week where I could go to Las Vegas and take the depositions of those involved. I did in fact take their depositions for 10 hours a day for six days.

Before the depositions started the smart ass insurance company defense lawyer asked me, *"Aren't you a little nervous representing these kinds of*

people?” I got right in his face and told him that when I was finished with the depositions he would retract that comment and apologize to me.

I deposed the owner of the newspaper as well as the two authors of the story and they could not remember who might have told them about a meeting to elect a successor to Vito Genovese. Likewise, I deposed the good Sheriff and his chief underlings about any knowledge of such a meeting and of course there was no such meeting.

When I was done I told the defense lawyer that this was the only case I had ever handled where I felt I could get a directed verdict on the issue of liability. He regretfully agreed and quickly followed with an apology for his earlier remarks.

NOW FOR THE KICKER: The court reporter disappeared with all her notes and we had no finished product. I immediately assumed that Sheriff Lamb had planted her in the desert. He was known for such things. As it turned out, the “Good Guys” relocated the woman, to work for a federal judge back east.

The bad news: For me to carve out another full week in my busy life was not bloody likely.

The good news: The “Bad Guys” paid very handsome settlements and we disposed of the cases.



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BETRAYAL & OVERTHROW

In 1980 LW hired attorney Tim Brake. In 1986 LW hired Grant Davis as a law clerk. Davis was later hired as an attorney in 1987. Attorney Scott Bethune was hired in 1992. Tom Jones was hired in 1997.

In 1990 LW created an unheard of generous fee arrangement for his associates. LW would continue to bear all the operating expenses and case advances, but would retain only 1/3 of the legal fees in order to pay the costs of running the law firm. During the period of 1992 through 2000, LW spent \$4,472,819 on operating expenses and had a case advance balance of \$984,825 in December, 2000. In addition, there were expenditures for the law library, new conference room, furniture, computers, etc and capital improvements. The four associates spent \$0.

CAUSE OF THE REVOLT: September 1999 Grant Davis obtained a 160+Mill [mostly punitive damages] verdict in a RR crossing case [Alcorn], a case produced by LW. [It was settled for 38¢ on the dollar] The thought that LW might want to participate in these potential legal fees, if they ever became a reality, was too much for Grant Davis to bear so he & Tim Brake planned the takeover of the law firm.

EXECUTION: December 6, 2001 LW received a letter, from Tim Brake that made it obvious that he was acting as a conduit for Davis/Bethune & Jones, (D-B-J). The letter demanded that LW voluntarily retire in two days or all the cases [clients] would be withdrawn by Tim Brake.

All clients at that time were all signed to contracts with "The Law Offices Of Lantz Welch, P.C." and were later taken over by D-B-J and are presently being represented by that firm, not Tim Brake.

"Date: 1/10/01

Memo To: Tim, Grant, Scott & Tom

Subject: Agreement To Transfer Control of Office & Clients

After yesterday's full day mediation hearing, there can be no doubt about how I feel about your conduct starting with your 12/6/99 "Notice of Termination". Since there was no written record, I now confirm some of those thoughts in writing with this memo.

Since the Agreement of Jan. 1992 that we operate under was designed for the eventuality that a lawyer might wish to leave the firm, I never ever considered the possibility that all four of you would decide to take over the firm and force me into early semi-retirement.

As I stated yesterday, I believe that about 90% of these 57 clients chose to retain LWPC because of Lantz Welch. Since I entrusted you to handle their cases, and thus establish bonds with them, I can understand why you claim that virtually all of them will now wish to stay with you.

I do not intend to see my clients' end up being damaged in our fight over money.

Therefore, I am resisting my natural instincts to fight your wrongdoing and am cooperating in your take-over of the firm.

Lantz Welch"

N.B. I do not believe that Scott Bethune was one of the wrongdoers, but merely a passive participant and beneficiary of their misconduct. Tom Jones acted as Grants cheerleader.

In our pleadings we requested Arbitration proceedings between LW & all four of the defendants. As mentioned earlier, Tim Brake had signed the only written Agreement with LW, so it was Davis, Bethune & Jones who stole the law business.

N.B. Many years earlier I had occasion to lunch with a pal of mine, G. Robert Fisher, our town's leading business attorney: <http://www.martindale.com/G-Robert-Fisher/1030975-lawyer.htm> who wanted to draft some agreements for the other three lawyers to sign in order to protect me. Naturally I ignored his sound legal advice with the prophetic response: *"Hell Bobby, I give them 100% of the legal fees & have made two of them multi-millionaires. I treat them better than my sons. Why should I think I can't trust them."*
[In 1991 & 1992, I **gave** Tim Brake & Grant Davis \$4,047,970 from two cases that I had tried]

N.B. ALWAYS LISTEN TO YOUR LAWYER'S ADVICE!!!!

HINDSIGHT: Perhaps I should have listened to my two good pals, Bill Sanders & Max Foust, who at the outset advised me to throw the ungrateful young bastards out, change the locks and hire four honest lawyers to handle my legal business.

As was observed by another good friend, *"Lantz, I know you to be a student of history so you know that history is replete with stories of sons killing the father so they might become the king. Be grateful that these scumbags simply stole your money and not your life."*

THE CLOSING LETTER FROM MY LAWYER, LARRY
WARD:

"The Law Firm Of Shughart, Thomson & Kilroy, A Professional Corporation

R. Lawrence Ward

April 5, 2004

*Lantz Welch, Esq.
10000 NW 75th St.
Weatherby Lake, MO 64152*

RE: Welch v. Brake & Davis

Dear Lantz:

I enclose at this time a copy of a letter from the Clerk of the Supreme Court of the United States advising us that our Petition for Writ of Certiorari has been denied.

It appears to me that the denial of our Petition for review ends our legal effort to correct the injustice we have been attacking. I see no additional avenues or approach from a legal standpoint.

In my forty years of trial practice I have never been involved in a case that has been more disappointing nor more troubling. The fact we have been unable to convince any court to give you a full and fair hearing is a bitter disappointment. The fact that a case would end up like this is bad enough, but the fact that I represented you, one of the most outstanding trial lawyers of our time, makes this ending very difficult for me.

Lantz, I regret more than I can say my inability to turn this situation around and to get you any relief. Beyond on that, I frankly don't know what more to say.

Best personal regards,

LARRY WARD

Twelve Wyandotte Plaza, 120 W. 12th Street, Kansas City, MO 64105 « (816) 421-3355 » www.stkiaw.com”



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HOBBIES

SKIING

I took up skiing in the mid-1960s, a little late I will admit but I approached it with my trademark enthusiasm and optimism.

We created the Flatland Challenge Races which of course excluded cities like Denver. We eventually prevailed upon Budweiser to underwrite our parties. In Crested Butte our forerunner was none other than [David Gorsuch](#).

Unfortunately for David he was a recipient of my typical enthusiasm when I won my first skiing medal:



David eventually opened Gorsuch's in Vail and ultimately in Aspen. Our ski club grew as did our races which eventually became the world's largest downhill skiing race of over 500 racers.

I was known to be a very aggressive skier and no one cared to ski in front of me. Gorsuch sold me a pair of Fischer Imperator skis that were guaranteed to be unbreakable. I made it a habit to jump over and off of anything that seemed exciting. After I broke the third pair of skis David told me Fischer was no longer willing to offer me their guarantee.

And I sometimes pushed the limits:



This brings up the interesting story of my medical treatment in Vail, CO. According to eyewitnesses, I took a face plant at 60+ miles per hour and did an eggbeater fall for 70+ yards. I was unconscious for over one half hour. While I was in the hall at the hospital I asked a passing nurse about the identity of the best seamstress since I knew I was going to require some stitching. She gave me the name of a doctor and while I was in the surgical suite being prepared I asked another nurse for the same information and was given the same name.

A distinguished looking gentleman examined my wound between my eyes and prepared to go to work on it. I quickly learned that this was not the doctor I had been told about and requested that person work on me. The doctor was offended, told me that he was Chief of Staff and quite capable of sewing me up. I informed him that I was the customer and insisted on having the other doctor work on me. The doctor became angry and instructed the nurse to wheel me out of the room. I raised my voice and told the gentleman that if they moved me I would sue him and his hospital and he scurried from the room.

Some time later a younger doctor appeared and laughingly said that he heard that I had been looking for him. I was under a local anesthetic during the procedure so we visited. It turned out that this doctor was a former lineman for a Big Ten team and we talked football while he took

approximately 27 stitches instead of the probable 6 to 8 that would have been used. I raced for the K.C. Ski Club day the following day at Vail.

A month or so later I visited the leading plastic surgeon in Kansas City, Dr. McCoy, who was pleasantly surprised by my appearance and told me that I would need no future scar revision.

THE MORAL OF THE STORY: Know what to ask for and never give in.

ENDEAVORS: It is time to share my theory of how to excel in life's endeavors. I have proven that with a modest amount of effort one can rise to the top 5 to 10% of any chosen endeavor.

When I wanted to move from Silver to Gold in skiing I went to [Pepi Stiegler's](#) ski racing camp and accomplished my goals.

As a racquetball player I wanted to move from a B to an A player by attending [Steve Strandemo's](#) Camp. I became one of the best players in the state in my age division.

As a sailboat racer I paid attention to [Dennis Connor](#). I raced Lightning's & Snipes all over the country and could always finish in the top 5 to 10%.



HOWEVER, if you want to be the best in the world at something you really regard as important, you must give it all you've got. These are the Vince Lombardi quotes I kept in my office:

If you can accept losing, you can't win.

Success demands singleness of purpose.

The harder you work, the harder it is to surrender.

Winners never quit and quitters never win.

FLYING

In 1965 I purchased a 1966 Cessna 210. This was a high wing retractable gear aircraft with a range of just under 1000 miles at a cruising speed of about 180 mph. I bought it after about three hours training in a Cessna 150.

At a time when I had less than seven hours flying experience I was at the downtown airport shooting touch and goes in my Cessna 210 with my instructor Eddie Holloway in the right front seat. My son Scott was in the rear seat. We were taking off on runway 18 when I noticed what I thought were bugs on the windscreen and as we gained a little altitude the entire windscreen became covered with what turned out to be oil. Holloway panicked, grabbed my right leg and screamed what are we going to do? I took his hand in an iron grip and told him to calm down. I told the tower I was declaring an emergency and we were coming around to land on 21. The landing gear was still down and by peering through the far left side of the wraparound windscreen I could see the runway. I made a perfect landing and taxied over to the hangar. On investigation I learned that the line boy had neglected to replace the filler cap when he added oil to the engine. I made some inquiries about Eddie Holloway and learned that he had panicked with another student with smoke in the cockpit. I saw to it that his instructor's license was revoked.

There were at least two occasions when Mr. Lucky cheated death while flying Cessna 9477T.

In the mid-60s Judge Horn and I flew a couple of young ladies and all our ski equipment to a small airport near Sun Valley, Idaho. By habit I told the line boy to top off the fuel. Some days later on departure I realized how foolish this had been as we were running out of available runway on take off because of the altitude/weight problem. The control wheel was mushy and I was not getting off the ground. Horn was in the right seat glancing nervously at me, the girls were obviously chatting in the back, and I was sweating bullets. We lifted off at the very end of the runway and I immediately raised the landing gear as we were running out of valley. I then gradually banked the airplane. Now as you bank an airplane you lose lift. The wheel was still mushy and as I made my white knuckled turn, the belly of the plane scraped the trees.

Some years later Judge Horn, Gwen and I were flying back from a weekend in New Orleans. As it grew dark we realized that we did not want to deal with the mountains to the north so we landed at an airfield near Tupelo, Mississippi. My charts did not show any obstructions for the approach but as an added measure of safety I lowered 40° of flaps which steepens the angle of approach. The next morning before takeoff we observed electric power lines on our approach path the night before that we would have surely have hit with a normal landing approach. I observed that we had cheated death once again.



LW/JUDGE JIM HORN

Normally, the times I've faced death were singular events. However, on November 27, 1967. I was quite sure that I was going to die three times that day. Judge Jim Horn and I flew my Cessna 210 to Florida for the Notre Dame-Miami football game. We flew out the next morning for Nassau where we planned on some fun and frivolity.

We had adjoining rooms and I remember hearing Jim arguing with Sunny South Aviation about whether an inflatable life raft would be furnished as promised. We had made the flight a number of times and you always rent May West life jackets along with a raft. I chimed in that we did not need the raft, but fortunately Jim prevailed [familiarity breeds contempt?].

Our normal procedure was to gain altitude over Florida and start out across the Straits of Florida at 8,000 to 10,000 feet and fly directly to our destination of Nassau. This particular day we decided to fly southeast over Andros Island and thence northeast to Nassau. There was a 3,000 foot cloud cover and we were flying just under it. We were about 70 miles out from Miami passing over an island called Riding Rock when the engine quit. Horn was hung over, and asleep in the backseat and he suddenly came awake and asked what was going on. It seemed rather obvious that the propeller had stopped and I was busy switching tanks and activating the electric fuel boost pump. Interestingly, when I would pull the throttle the engine would fire and when I pushed it in for power it quit. I later learned that there were two fuel injection systems on this engine, one for taxi RPMs and another for full power.

I turned into the wind by heading southwest and set up a controlled rate of descent. The landing gear stayed retracted. I realized I was going to die, but I kept saying to myself, *"They're not going to get me."* To this day I have still not figured out who "They" were.

We had lap belts but no shoulder harnesses so I pushed the seat all the way back. I could not reach the rudder pedals and was controlling the wheel with my fingertips. I was playing with the mush of the yoke and the stall indicator warning horn and I knew it was important to keep a fixed rate of descent. I did not find out until later, how important.

I am convinced that my disciplines learned as a boxer and a trial lawyer kept me alive. When my instincts told me I was about to hit the water and that I should pull back on the wheel, my intellect told me not to and a long time passed before we hit. I later learned that they get less than

5% of pilots back out of these situations primarily because they stall out and plunge into the water nose first.

I neglected to mention that while we were descending Judge Horn opened the right door and wedged it open with the life raft package. He did the same with the left door and wedged it open with a copy of the Wall Street Journal. When I asked him what he was doing, he told me that he did not want the doors to be jammed shut if the fuselage buckled. [Amazing, all the little things that can go wrong].

Horn kept saying that we were going to skip like a flat rock, but instead it felt like I had run into a brick wall. I was totally doubled forward, but did not strike the instrument panel. This was a high wing airplane with the fuel tanks in the wings and very little fuel had been burned. Thus, the cockpit was immediately underwater. The plane had big wide aluminum doors so Horn used his legs to open the right door and went out with the life raft packet. This caused the plane to list precipitously and the only injuries I suffered that day came from banging my left shoulder into the door that refused to open. If I really was the cool dog I imagined myself to be, I would have simply waited for the water level to rise, taken a deep breath and exited the door. Instead, I panicked and lost consciousness when I became trapped under the 40° of flaps I had lowered for the landing and I drowned. Since I drowned that day I count this as the second time I faced death that day.

Judge Horn later told me that he came around the tail with a partially inflated raft and saw me on the under the wing, got me into the raft and somehow revived me. Of course this had a very large effect on our life long friendship, because whenever we became involved in a heated argument he would say, *"What is it that you owe me?"*

We went into the ocean about 40 miles due South of Bimini Island. The Gulfstream and the south westerly winds drove us northeast. We drifted about six hours and during that time I formed my "Life Raft Philosophy". As the sun was beginning to set in the west I complained to Horn that since we obviously were not going to be rescued that we would probably die in the damn raft. I observed that my ex-wife and her new husband would probably get everything I owned. Horn wryly observed, that probably meant my tabletop stereo, records and charcoal cooker which lightened my mood considerably.

I then decided that if I made it I would start saying no to people and I would get rid of the “Takers” in my life. I was handling all manner of cases wherein people simply needed my help, always thinking I would find some way to help them. Lawyers would ask me to have a drink with them at the Lincoln Inn, discuss their case with me, ask my advice, and then not refer the case. It would come back to me later that the lawyer had used the threat of referring the case to Lantz Welch in order to get it settled.

When I returned to my law practice I got rid of about 60% of my cases and concentrated my efforts on the balance. I started saying no to the “Takers” and my fortunes changed dramatically.

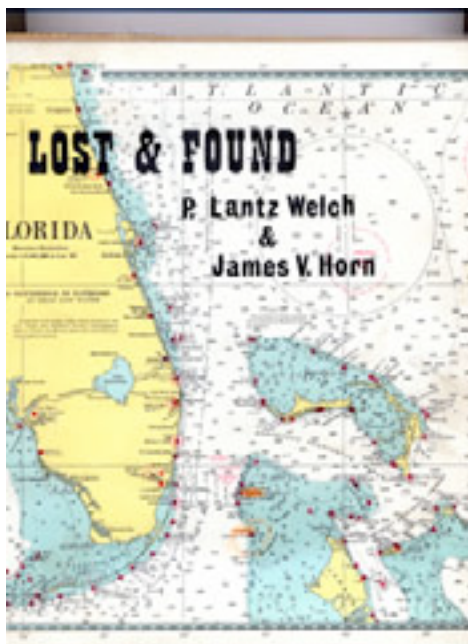
As the sun began to set in the west we saw what looked like a small boat coming our way from the crash site. It turned out to be a very small boat that resembled the African Queen, about 25 feet long, which held two Cubans. It was powered by a small two cycle engine, had a tiller that was a tree branch and did not have a compass. It took us approximately 30 minutes to fly from Miami to the crash site, and approximately 12 hours to return to Miami in our rescue boat. Being apprehensive, I told Horn that I would take the young guy and the old man. Our fears were not justified as they turned out to be two fine human beings. They indicated that they had seen our airplane fall into the ocean.

Having cheated my way through college Spanish we communicated through sign language. We asked to be taken to Bimini but they were afraid of “*la policia*”. It seems that they were in the business of catching “langosta” illegally and suggested we stay on the boat for some unknown period of time. We countered with “*Take Miami. Mucho pesos.*” They went to the front of the boat, conferred, and agreed to go to Miami.

At about 4:00 AM I was sitting in the stern with the old man who asked how many “*anos*” was I. Remembering “anos” to mean years I held up three and five fingers. He nodded solemnly and replied, “*No, uno*”. This turned out to be rather poignant since my father later gave me a birthday card celebrating my 1st birthday.

Horn and I carried several thousand dollars each and when we arrived in Miami we each held back a \$20 bill and gave them all our money along with our gold watches. We later chuckled about the fact that if we were so apprehensive when rescued, we should have simply given them all our money at that time.

We caught a ride back to Kansas City in an airplane that had been chartered by some of our friends who had flown down for the football game.



Home After Lonely Drift at Sea

TWO Kansas City lawyers whose single-engine airplane crashed Saturday in the Atlantic ocean, off the Florida coast, returned here yesterday after spending four hours in a life raft and riding nearly 12 hours in a fishing boat before reaching Miami.

Lantz P. Welch and James V. Horn were greeted at the Municipal Air Terminal by...

To Football Game

The men left here Thursday and flew to Georgia, then to Miami for the Notre Dame-Miami football game Friday night. At 10:08 o'clock Saturday morning (Kansas City time) Welch, the pilot, and Horn departed Miami International for Nassau.

A search for the airplane and its passengers was begun by the Coast Guard after a fisherman reported seeing flares over the horizon north and west of Bimini.

At the airport yesterday, Horn said, "It was very wet and very lonely."

Horn, 3202 Michigan avenue, and Welch, 6904 West Fifty-second place, Overland Park, scrambled from the aircraft into a life raft and floated four hours before a fishing boat, the San Francisco, spotted them.

"We didn't know how long we would float out there before someone spotted us," Horn said. "We didn't have any supplies."

It took nearly 12 hours for...

A HAPPY REUNION TOOK PLACE yesterday at the Municipal Air Terminal when Mrs. James V. Horn, 67, was on board a light aircraft that crashed Saturday in the Atlantic ocean, 60 miles off the Florida coast.

the boat to return them to Miami. There was no radio on board.

At 3:30 o'clock yesterday morning (Kansas City time), Welch called the Coast Guard and informed them he and his passenger were safe.

Calls His Mother

Mrs. Philip Welch, the pilot's mother, said her son called her early yesterday to inform her that he was safe.

"All I could think of all night was the mothers of those boys in Vietnam—waiting and wondering, it's awful," Mrs. Welch said. "Then he called and you'll never know how wonderful his voice sounded."

Welch declined comment on the accident. Horn said information should come from Welch. "He was the pilot, he knows what happened," Horn said the craft sank about three minutes after touching down.

The Associated Press in Miami said Welch reported his plane developed engine trouble 50 miles east of Miami near South Riding Rocks, as he followed a radio course to Nassau in the Bahamas.

With the motor dead, Welch said, he jockeyed the plane to a water landing as Horn hauled their survival equipment into position for a quick exit.

According to Mrs. Welch, the men did not have any flares on board the raft and it still is not known who set them off. Mrs. Welch said the plane, a Cessna 210, is owned by her son.

Neither man appeared to be injured, but both were exhausted.

"I haven't been to bed since Thursday," Welch said.

Mrs. Welch said the men went out yesterday morning to purchase clothes in Miami. Everything they took on the trip was lost in the crash.

The Federal Aviation administration in Miami is investigating the crash.

Both men are associated with the law firm of Peebles and Quinn.

Welch and Horn returned to Kansas City on a chartered flight, accompanied by several persons who had taken the flight for the football game in Miami.

After losing my Cessna to the Bermuda Triangle I rented a Piper Comanche from a lawyer friend of mine for about a year:



In the late 1970s I went for an airplane ride in a Great Lakes biplane that was owned by a pal of mine named Dr. Pat Hunt, a radiologist. He let me take the controls and I flew a roll and a loop and I told him over the headset that I was going to have to own his airplane. He told me that he did not think so.

As fate would have it Dr. Hunt was sued in a medical negligence case seeking punitive damages for which he had no insurance coverage. He pleaded with me to take his case and save him. I did and he turned over his treasure to me. I flew the Great Lakes for about three years.





It turned out to be a perfect seduction tool for a certain beautiful young secretary who worked for my law firm. She later became the Queen of Camelot.

One of my hanger partners was Dr. Merle Kline who flew a Christian Eagle. This was a kit aircraft that took Doc a number of years to build. It was designed by [Frank Christensen](#).

I flew to [Oshkosh](#) one year with Doc and he introduced me to Frank Christensen. It turned out that a 2-hole Eagle, 24HR, had been donated to the EEA by [Tom Watson Jr.](#)

Sooooooooooooo, here was Mr. Lucky at the right place & at the right time. In return for a substantial donation to the EAA and an additional payment to Christensen Industries for all the current upgrades, I came into possession of one of the finest aerobatic aircraft of its time. Incidentally, my pal John Denver flew an Eagle, but more of that later in the story.



I flew the Eagle for approximately 5 years and gave rides to many happy people.



Including my son Rick.



And my mother Evelyn, shown here in her 80's.

Sometime in 1982/1983 my pal John Denver and I were at the Aspen airport watching an air show. We were at 8,000 feet and saw an [Extra 300](#) performing gyroscopic maneuvers a couple of thousand feet above us. This was the airplane of choice for the US Aerobatic Team. It was designed and built by Walter Extra in Germany.

I told J.D. that we should split the cost of one, but because of his divorce and other problems he was not able to. Instead, he purchased a Long-EZ and I will now insert what caused his untimely death:

"PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

Mr. Lantz Welch

Re: John Denver, Long-EZ N555JD Air crash on 12 October 1997

Our File AV-MCM-7233

This is just a short note to thank you for thinking of us in the above referenced matter. You told me over the telephone that you didn't want a referral fee, but let me express my thanks by giving you a short synopsis of what happened.

The case was settled (confidential settlement) for \$_____, most of which went to the minor child, at the end of September 2000. Only last

week, have I disbursed the final funds on this case. We wound up representing John Denver's only heirs, namely his mother, two adult children, and minor child, pursuant to the California wrongful death statute.

The cause of the accident was the malfunction of the fuel selector valve which was stuck between the left tank and the right tank, "as found" after the accident. The NTSB never disassembled this valve, but we did. The evidence that it had become stuck was apparent to even a layman, as deep scour marks were evident on the respective mating faces of the valve body and valve plug. Although the valve had been taken apart and lubricated about 15 months prior to the accident, an improper grease had been used, which was antithetical to a brass valve. The seizure of the fuel selector valve resulted in fuel starvation (not fuel exhaustion), as the fuel was exhausted from the left tank. Tragically, the fuel in the right tank, of which there was about 10 gallons, could not be reached. This caused the engine to lose all power and control of the aircraft was lost at about 100-150 ft. above the water, as John evidently tried to force the valve and inadvertently hit the right rudder pedal with his foot.

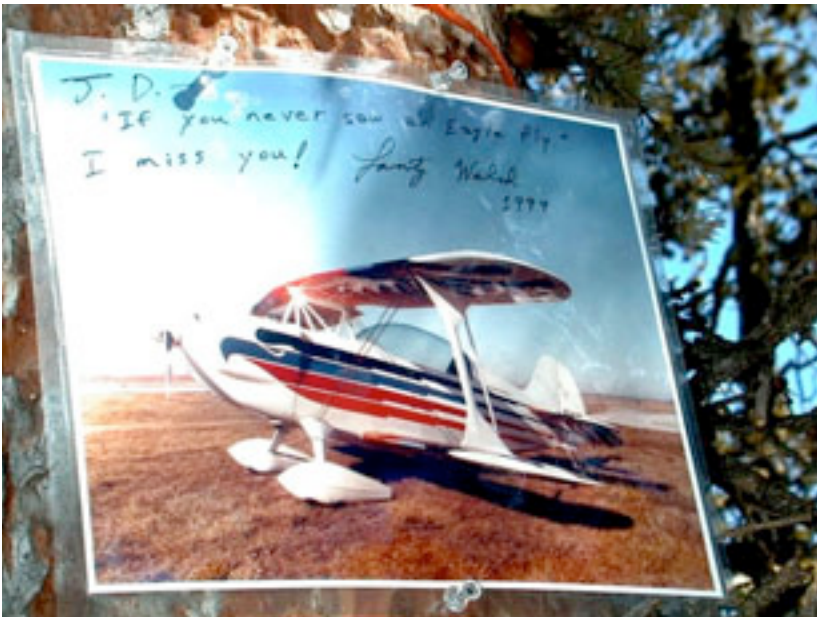
The responsibility for the seized valve was placed squarely at the feet of the valve manufacturer and the retailer of the valve for selling a defective product without adequate instruction on the proper grease to use during periodic maintenance of the valve. In fact, there were no maintenance instructions ever published for the valve by either the manufacturer or retailer. This was particularly poignant, given that the chief engineer at the manufacturing facility at the time this valve was manufactured testified that they were aware the valve had killed a couple people and had made recommendations to all their customers at the time that the valve not be used in airplanes. Despite this fact, the valve manufacturer was sold, resold, etc., until the valve, after various mergers and acquisitions, worked its way back into the aviation market.

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of this case was tracking down the actual manufacturer of a valve without a serial number, that had been manufactured since 1930, and had been through about 20 mergers and acquisitions. Fortunately, I was able to find the builder of the aircraft, who retained the invoice for the purchase of the valve. With the date of purchase and a unique logo on the body of the valve, we were eventually able to pin down the date of manufacture within a three-year period prior to its retail sale. This is how we were able to get the right defendants.

It was a very interesting case from a technical standpoint. An engineer at NASA was finally able to identify the grease with an infrared trace of what little was left. I truly enjoyed the opportunity and the challenge. It was a privilege to be of service.

Thank you again for thinking of us. Good health and best wishes in all of your endeavors. If we can return the favor in the future, please depend upon us to do so."

JOHN DENVER MEMORIAL HIDDEN ON A SKI RUN ON ASPEN MTN.



A PHOTO I POSTED IN THE MEMORIAL SPOT (We had both owned Christen Eagle aerobatic biplanes)



MATT MORRISEY/PERRY PEREZ/L.W./"DOC" CLINE

Three very important men in my aviation life:

[Matt Morrisey](#), one of the top aerobatic pilots in the world. Matt helped me fly "Excalibur" from St. Augustine, FLA to K.C. MO.

His father is Col. [John Morrisey](#), coach of the U.S. Aerobatic Team. BTW, the team flew the Extra 300.

Perry Perez: Who flew B-24s in WW II & became one of the best flight instructors in K.C. area. Taught me to fly: Great Lakes; Christen Eagle; and Extra 300L.

Merle "Doc" Cline: Survived the Kamikaze attacks of the Battle of Midway to become a famous big game hunter, medical doctor and aerobatic pilot.

This is the extra 300 L that I purchased and flew for about seven years:



Matt Morrissey helped me fly Excalibur to its home base in K.C. from Florida.





This was created by my graphic artist, Ricci Racela, by placing an actual photo of Excalibur in front of a Neuschwanstein Castle in Bavaria.

One of the big reasons I purchased the Extra was so that I could perform gyroscopic maneuvers that are very hard on the engine [and incidentally on the pilot]. In particular I wanted to learn the "lomcovak," something few pilots have done. I have never exposed a passenger to this maneuver. I have however taken a couple through an "Inverted Full Power Flat Spin."

"Lomcovak" translated into roughly means "cause of a headache" or "hangover." The expression "Lomcovak" originated from the Moravia region, famous for its Jelinek Slivovitz, a traditional Czechoslovakian alcohol, and is commonly used to describe the rotating motions of one who has had one too many.

For a visual experience visit: [How to Lomcevak II](#)

FISHING

A Buffalo River float trip in the famous John Boats.





Larry Gepford [the Prosecutor] trying to make off with one of my secret fishing lures.



My Cessna 210 airplane. Stan Zeldin/Judge Horn/LW



Judge Horn



Steve Millin



A day's catch in Canada



Alex Peebles [my old boss], his son & son-in-law & my father in Canada



My three best pals: Larry Gepford, Judge Horn & Max Foust [my only competition as a plaintiff's trial attorney in K.C.]



Max Foust & his son and Art Stoup [A thank you trip for Art's representing me in my continual legal battles with Diane]



A young Lantz had time to catch a tuna.



Another Buffalo River float trip with father & sons.



It was cold in the mornings on the river.



Greg does some ocean fishing.



As does Diana.



Rick was not to be denied.



There were bass to be caught in Weatherby Lake.

And then there were the Striped Bass to be caught in the Atlantic Ocean.
One of my good pals, Bill Lucchesi, an ex-professional ski racer:



He has a place in Rhode Island where we go fishing with his brother Mike.



This is Mike telling me I should not get on board his boat with my tiny Weatherby Lake fishing rod. That to catch the big stripers I needed real equipment with 120 pound test line and a huge rod. I told him that was for sissies and real men give the fish a fighting chance. He relented and let me board his boat.



In the morning much to everyone's amazement I landed a 31 pound Striper in a little under one hour. Mike asked me what I intended to do for an encore and in my typical self-confident fashion, I told him I was going to catch a 50. Understand that after thousands of hours the biggest Striper Mike had landed was a 46 and his first mate Bob a 43. He told me I was crazy and laughing said I should get off his boat.

Guess what Mr. Lucky did that afternoon.



YOU GUESSED RIGHT!!



This is the 50 pound Striper that hangs above my fireplace in my Aspen home.

And just when you thought this fishing story could not get any better I will now put the icing on the cake.

I took everyone to dinner at the Olympia and we were joined by legendary fisherman [Al Golinsky](#).

Al and Mike were to go out at some ungodly hour the next morning to participate in the big Striper tournament. During dinner Mike asked Al what he thought about some Midwestern fisherman claiming that he caught a 31 in the morning and a 50 in the afternoon. Al opined that man was a damn liar. Mike gestured to me and said, "*I would like you to meet a damned liar.*" Mr. Lucky had his camera with him and I showed how the picture of the 50. Al's face turned red and without another word he left the restaurant. When I asked Mike what the problem was he said that Al no doubt figured I had cost him many thousands of dollars by catching his potential winner for the next day. Of course this was silly and Al returned and we had an enjoyable evening.

Aspen has some great fishing:



Caught in a lake. Not a lot of fight.



Caught on my birthday. Largest ever caught on the Frying Pan River by a non-professional. The photo usually hangs in window of Pomeroy Sports across from the Gondola.

SAILING

In the mid-60s Judge Paul Vardeman helped me select a [Lightning Sailboat](#) which I named "Footloose" as I was single at the time.



This is a model of the Lightning I raced that was built by my father.

Judge Vardeman raced a Lightning at [Lake Jacomo](#) and the Annual Trophy bears his name more than any other racer. I will never forget his advice as he began to teach me the intricacies of the Lightning: *"Lantzer, I will teach you all you need to know in ½ hour about how to sail this boat, and then you can spend the rest of your life learning how to race her."*

Boy was he right. I raced Footloose every Sunday during the season and at regattas around the country for many years & could never do better than the top 5%-10%.

"One design racing offers the immediate gratification. If you are ahead of a boat, you are ahead, and if you are behind, you are behind. Simple. One small error or one beneficial tweak of the sail can change the outcome."

In one design racing, just as the name implies, a single boat type is used by all competitors. These designs are termed "classes"; some are quite large, others very local in number and character. All have in common a design standard and class organization to maintain an even footing."

One design sailing puts the premium on crew work, sailing skill, and racing savvy rather than spending money to go faster and thereby win. “



A Jacomo race: Gwen & Rick are crewing.

When I bought the house at Lake Weatherby in 1970 it needed extensive work. I hired George Croasdale and one of his requirements for new customers was that they purchase a [Snipe](#) and race it:



A SNIPE RACE

I later purchased a [Sonar](#) and named it “Excalibur”. I later sold it to a neighbor, [Scott Wedman](#).



Sunday was race day at Weatherby Lake.

Another fun sport at the lake was ice boating:



This was a homebuilt [DN](#) called "Blue Max".
Shown here with Judge Paul Vardeman.

I later graduated to the [Nite](#).



This is known as the Skeeter Class:

SKEETER: Today's Skeeters evolved from a design dating back to the mid 1930's. Since the formation of the class association in 1939 the 75 sq. ft. sail area has been the only limitation of the development of this class and boats are both homebuilt and professionally made. These boats are very swift and graceful and can reach top speeds of 140 mph.





Sometimes the ice wins.

SCUBA

Myron Wang, Alaskan Fur, got me involved in diving at about the time the double hose regulator went out. He also taught me underwater photography:



Housewarming gift from Myron.



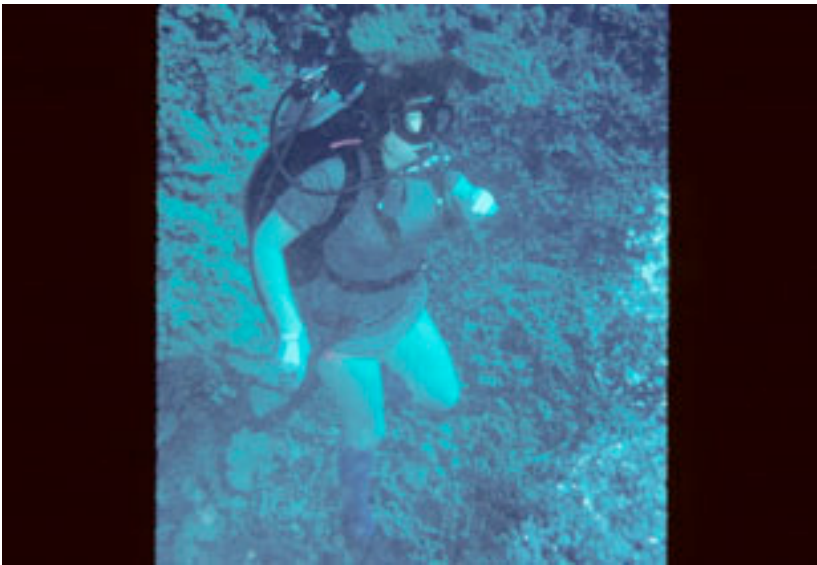
Status Galleries in K. C. sold my work.







SON GREG



DAUGHTER DIANA



GREG & TIGER SHARK



RICK & TIGER SHARK

BICYCLING

I grew up on a bicycle & earned my early living by using a bicycle. As an adult I bicycled over much of Europe, England, Ireland & Nova Scotia with B & R. I even helped them design their Liability Release Form:

PARTIAL WAIVER OF RESPONSIBILITY AND CONSENT TO ASSUME RISK

I, _____, hereby acknowledge that I have voluntarily decided to participate in one of the trips conducted by Butterfield & Robinson Inc., ("B & R") as described in its brochure or other material ("the Trip). I acknowledge that the Trip may involve certain dangers and risks, inherent in the form of transportation, physical exercise and other activities of the Trip. I take full responsibility for my own conduct, health condition, decisions and actions.

In return for my payment, I expect that B & R will exercise reasonable care in providing all of the arrangements connected with the Trip but I accept that B & R (including its employees, officers, directors, agents and assigns or other personal representative) CANNOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE for any claims or loss arising out of risks or dangers inherent in the nature of the Trip, or the willful or negligent acts of any other Trip member, or other act or event, BEYOND THE CONTROL OF B & R.

I have carefully read this document and all relevant items and conditions outlined in the brochure (especially the Cancellation and Refund Policy) and other materials. I UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS A PARTIAL WAIVER OF LIABILITY AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK on my part in advance of my taking the trip. I am aware that this is a contract between me and B & R and that it is only in reliance on this agreement that B & R permits me to go on the Trip.

PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURE

You will notice that we do not give them a carte blanche free ride if they negligently injure one of us.

DO NOT EVER SIGN A RELEASE THAT DOES SO.

N.B. Our SCUBA group was on a 10 day dive trip in the Pacific Ocean when the Captain passed out Release Forms that we were to sign before diving. They were the usual that would relieve a wrongdoer for all legal responsibility for negligent misconduct [and legally enforceable]. We were told we could not dive unless we signed them.

I took the Captain into his cabin & told him we would not have booked the trip had these “Releases” been required up front. That if he & his company persisted in this madness I would sue him personally & everyone else involved: I would take their personal belongings, their bank accounts & all their future earnings. I gave him 5 minutes to decide & left his cabin.

He emerged with a big smile & said there was no problem.

THESE RELEASES ARE ENFORCEABLE AND YOU ARE A FOOL TO SIGN THEM. ANOTHER GREAT EXAMPLE OF HOW THE CASUALTY INSURANCE INDUSTRY TAKES IN PREMIUMS AND ELIMINATES THEIR RISKS BY SCREWING THE GENERAL PUBLIC [**YOU**].

Back to bicycling:

Parma Italy: I am drafting on our Leader with my front wheel tucked 6”/10” into his rear wheel [We had a 20/30 mph headwind]. A gust hit Tony [huge guy] and he gave way and I swerved left & hit the pavement at 25/30 mph. Serious road rash. First day of the trip, so I was liberally painted with iodine & finished the trip. No lawsuit against anyone!!!!

I have had a number of bike accidents in Aspen:



My neighbor boy [who raced for Aspen Velo] took me on a single track across a couple of mountain ranges to Lenado. As he would come to logs in the narrow trail he would simply launch his bike over them. I did not know how so I would be launched off the trail into nearby trees. When we got home Laura was aghast and ran him off. BTW, he is the grandson of Friedl Pfeifer, one of the founders of Aspen as a Ski town.

I used to ride around Weatherby Lake & try to improve my times. One day I was at the north end looking down on the Welch Family Bridge & noticed a number of dirt clods on the pavement. In my usual "patient" method of solving problems I decided to power through them. My last memory was 35 mph over the bridge.

When I came to I was laying downhill with my head to the south in a ditch and a man was looking into my face. I asked him to help me up since I was going to meet Laura & Joyce for lunch. He said, "*Bud, you're not going anywhere.*" To which I replied, "*O.K., I'll help myself.*" He told me that he was an ambulance driver, off duty, and had witnessed the incident from the nearby intersection. That if my neck was not broken, it was no doubt severely damaged and the only way I should move was on a body board. I surveyed him a few moments & decided he might be correct so I said, "O.K."

When I got home from St. Lukes later that day [after quite a few stitches] I had Laura take this picture to remind me to be more patient:



I have one of these at each of my bike racks in K.C. & Aspen to remind me to be more careful.

HUNTING

There were two hunting adventures in my life that bear mentioning. First there was the duck hunting trip I was invited to join in Mound City. Larry Gepford was quite insistent that I buy a pair of chest waders for the trip. I noticed as we all walked out to the blinds in the morning that I was the only one wearing waders. When I asked Larry about this he simply said that the other guys had screwed up and forgotten theirs. However, when the first duck was shot and landed in the water about 30 yards away I asked Larry how got the dead ducks got back to the blind. He shouted out, *"Did anyone here remember to wear their waders?"* I quickly realized that the joke was on the new guy and I retrieved ducks all morning.

When I was practicing at 1111 Grand Ave. there was a lawyer named Hank Bittiker who was quite a seasoned hunter. He invited me to go goose hunting. Hank knew how to call them in and he offered me the first shot at the flight. I took my three shots, killed two and wounded the third. The third fell into the water some distance away and as we proceeded toward it I noticed another goose circling low making noises and Hank told me that was probably its' mate.

The next day there was an article in the Sunday supplement about geese and how they mate for life and that was the end of my interest in goose hunting.

PING PONG

My table tennis days started at Central High School Teen Town that took place on Friday nights. In the girls gym the girls all danced with each other hoping that an occasional boy would dance with them. In the nearby boys gym the boy shot hoops and there were four ping-pong tables at one end. The rule was quite simple, you stayed on the table until you were beaten. I got to the point that I could stay on the table all night.

Intramural athletics at a large university like M.U. were quite competitive because there were a number of great athletes that were not playing on the university teams. My skills were such that I always came in the top 2 to 4 spots.

Fast forward 50+ years to October 2008. I had a stroke which resulted in diplopia [double vision] so I Googled “stroke therapy” and the answer was that I should play table tennis. It was also suggested that this therapy was good for Alzheimer's.

I purchased a table as well as a [robot](#). Within five days of practice my double vision disappeared.

Table tennis is back in my life and I have a table at Camelot as well as at our Aspen home. I can beat everyone that I play with the exception of Pete Pierce and Scott Wedman, but they are next on my list.



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CELEBRITIES

KENNY LOGINS: In 2004 Kenny's fortunes were at low ebb. Divorce & depression plagued him.

One of Laura's fund raisers was the Celebrity Ski Races and Kenny, his son & manager were our guests. I contrived to have Allan Harris obtain a guitar & lure Kenny up on stage:



He performed a half dozen songs & the crowd went wild. Laura convinced him that he was denying his public his great gifts, so we got him to appear at JAS the following year:



AT THE JAS FESTIVAL



LW/SRI SRI [RAVI SHANKAR](#)/LAURA

INTRODUCING THE 4 Xs WORLD CHAMPION:
Contessa of Camelot, a.k.a., Tessa





The Queen spent two years searching for the perfect dog and came home with Tessa. She is shown here in Aspen, Colorado. I invented a method of keeping her in shape. She weighs approximately 10 pounds.

Laura announced that she was going to take Tessa to Ohio to compete in the Lure Coursing Championships and I promptly told her that she had lost her mind. I discovered that Tessa would compete against 15 to 18 pound, mostly male, dogs and I was not interested in spending the time or the money for the adventure.





To my utter amazement the girls came in first place. The following year I was asked to participate in Texas and I told Laura that Ohio had been an aberration and would not be repeated.



Boy, was I wrong. So, the third and fourth years I traveled with the girls to Atlanta, Georgia and San Francisco, California where Tessa repeated her remarkable performances. She is the only Italian Greyhound in history to have competed only four times and retired undefeated.





LAURA/TESSA/DOG WHISPERER



LAURA & CESAR MILLAN

Here Are Some Celebrity Ski Racers:



SHLOMO/LW/[DEAN CAIN](#)



MY TEAM



[EVANDER HOLYFIELD](#) / LW

N.B. WHAT A MAN!!!! Whenever I looked around the tent I would see Evander at a table surrounded by our kids.

When I suggested that the kids would really be excited if he raced and he replied that he had just now put on his first skis. I talked him into going up the hill with Ivan Petkov, ex World Cup racer, and snow plow the NASTAR course.

He not only did as I requested, but he ran the race, finished the course and the kids went absolutely wild. What celebrity would put his ass on the line like that????????????????



LW/DEBORAH & [JUDGE JOE BROWN](#)



LINEMAN/LW/DAN MARINO



KARL MECKLENBURG/LW/EVANDER HOLYFIELD



[BILLY KIDD](#)/LW

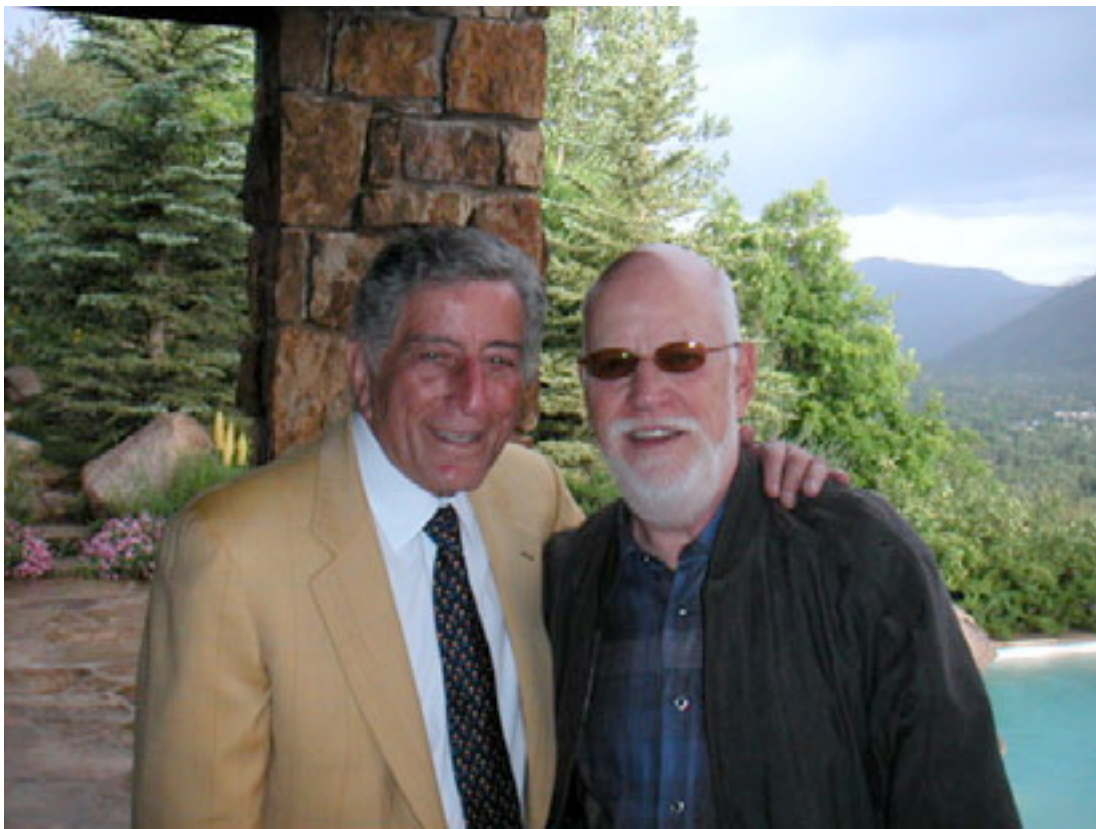
AND NOW SOME JAS CELEBRITIES:



[CHRIS CAIN](#)/LAURA/MATT DILLON
[Incidentally, Dean Cain's father]



[SCOTT WEDMAN](#)/LW/[BILL WALTON](#)
[Scott is my neighbor at Weatherby Lake]



[TONY BENNETT](#)/LW



LAURA/[EMERIL LAGASSE](#)/LW



LAURA/[LEE ANN RIMES](#)
(Two ex-professional Gospel Gals)



LW/[JIM MESSINA](#)



LW/SHERIFF [BOB BRAUDIS](#)

N.B. Bob was the anchor in my local Aspen Poker Group consisting of:



[Joe DiSalvo](#)



[Jerry Greewald](#) (CEO of Chrysler/Untd. Airlines)



[Charles Dale](#)



[Chris Cain](#)



[Jim Fifield](#) (CEO of North Face/EMI Records)



(Parenthetically, Jim's wife Betsy, after a ride in Excalibur)

And filling out the table were Dru Handy [my painter] and Billy Belfy [a local notorious cab driver].



LAURA/[HERBIE HANCOCK](#)



[BARBI BENTON](#)/LW



[AARON RALSTON](#)/LW “127 HOURS” MOVIE

Aaron has worked with us through the years with Aspen Youth Experience.



LW & [DAVID DREMAN](#) (The Contrarian)



ALASKAN FUR MODELS



LW/[ANGELA](#)



DAVID BASSE & BOBBY WATSON



L.W. & DAVID BASSE



LW & [FRED PRYOR](#)



RON HANDS LAURA A VERY POISONOUS SNAKE



RON TAYLOR



Johnnie & Dale Cochran in Montespertoli

At an Inner Circle meeting Johnnie asked me to lunch to pick my brain about Eagle & Pitkin counties since a friend of his was defending Kobe Bryant in a criminal matter.

Before he started I asked, “*Well big shot, how many cases are you getting to try after all that publicity?*” To which he responded, “*None as I’m sure you well know.*”

I assured him that I knew he did not seek all the O.J. publicity. He told me that the good news was that he had opened a half dozen satellite offices and business was booming.

HOW I PERSONALLY AVOIDED THIS PROBLEM:

I kept the following saying taped to my phone:

“Success has ruined many a man.” Benjamin Franklin

When I received a phone call wanting a personal interview about my career, someone wanting to do a book about me, or a number of movie feelers I would first puff up with pride and then look at the quote and say to the caller: *“Give me your name & phone number and I will get back to you on that.”* Of course I never did.

You see, once you become a Celebrity Lawyer the juror looks at you with arms folded across chest and thinks, *“What load of bullshit are you going to try to sell to me?”*

That is why I always went to trial in my navy blue suit, subdued tie and no jewelry because I wanted the focus to be on the client, not the lawyer.



TO TRIAL LAWYERS FROM THE U.S.A.

**The law is an instrument for attaining
Justice and lasting peace for humanity**

On Friday 22 September, the Holy Father addressed a group of trial lawyers from the United States at his summer residence. The text of the Pope's address was as follows.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, I am pleased to have this opportunity to meet with you, the distinguished members of the International Academy of Trial Lawyers, and to welcome you and your spouses to Castelgandolfo. As trial lawyers, you are committed to the resolution of conflicts and the pursuit of justice through legal and rational means. This work is indispensable for the construction of a truly humane and harmonious social order, as the centuries-old juridical experience of the West bears eloquent witness.

The Church has always recognized in the law an essential aspect of human social and political life. Her concern for a legal order imbued with the spirit and values of the Gospel led not only to the formation of an immense and technically refined body of ecclesiastical law, the Corpus Iuris Canonici, but also to the elaboration of legal and canonical theories which combined profound human wisdom with a vision of man and society drawn from Christian faith. At the heart of this process was a profound conviction, born of faith, that an ordered and just society is a requirement of human nature itself, and consists in the pursuit of the common good through the cooperation of each of its members, under legitimate authority.

Today, as in the past, this conviction must be defended against those forces within our world which would deny and undermine the authentic human values upon which the rule of law and the pursuit of the common good are founded. More than ever, men and women are called upon to commit themselves to the belief that the law is an irreplaceable and morally worthy instrument for attaining a human society marked by justice and lasting peace. World events constantly remind us that the desire to build a society based on mutual respect, freedom and equity under the law is one, which is inscribed within the human heart itself, and is fundamental to the progress of civilization.

As men and women engaged in the practice of law, may your service of others always be inspired by a deep faith in man and in the goal of a just and genuinely human society. Conscious of the importance of your work I invoke upon each of you the blessings of Almighty God, the author of peace and the source of all justice."



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LAKE

In 1970 I purchased a home at Weatherby Lake, built a turret at the front entrance, placed a huge stone with an English broadsword buried in it which held the mailbox and erected a large hand hewn sign that said “Camelot”.



This \$40,000 purchase was the only debt I ever had and I retired it quickly. I created the first launching ramp at our lake complete with electric winches.



My 2nd home, Camelot Castle featured in the background of the sailing race.



Fishing is always good at Weatherby Lake.



For the Blue Herron also.



Fourth of July at Weatherby



Ice boating is one of our favorite winter sports. Since I had named my Extra 300 EXCALIBUR I thought it fitting to name my ice boat EXCALIBUR TOO

I HAVE SPENT CONSIDERABLE TIME AND MONEY OVER THE LAST 40+ YEARS SUPPORTING THIS LAKE COMMUNITY THAT I LOVE:

When the seawall in A cove urgently needed repairing I provided the \$80,000.

When the pedestrian bridge at Barry Road was needed I provided the matching funds for the “Philip A. Welch” memorial bridge:



I purchased the sailboats that became the Junior Sailing Program.

I underwrote the costs of producing “The Chronicles Of Weatherby Lake”.

I have made numerous gifts to the lake through The Lantz Welch Charitable Foundation.

I provided free legal services through the years whenever our leaders dug themselves a hole they could not get out of.

I created the annual “Joseph Sherman Community Service Award” which annually grants \$1,000 to the recipient who has done the most for our community.

Past recipients are:

1994 Joe Sherman

1995	Bill Maxwell
1996	Peggy Blazer
1997	Tom Webber
1998	Rick Noble
1999	Marge/Ray Stockwell
2000	Don Coleman
2001	Armand Mathews
2002	Barb Brooks
2003	No Award Given [<i>Paul Gross & Pauli Kendrick tried to manipulate the outcome</i>]
2004	Bert Woods /Neil Brown
2005	Tom Henke
2006	John Bugg
2007	Ray Staton
2008	Pat Medill
2009	Kathy/Don Birmingham
2010	Hank Nussbeck

This letter came from Joe as the first recipient: *"I am deeply moved, honored and surprised by the action of you and the board of the Lantz Welch Charitable Foundation in establishing the 'Joseph A. Sherman Community Service Award'. This generous act will serve our community over the years as a reminder that our great quality of life at our lake is also the result of unselfish devotion to many tasks by a few.*

Your foundation, in sharing with our community, provides a great service, as it has done on many occasions in the past. I join with our neighbors in thanking you for this and past acts of generosity."

N.B. Joe Sherman was the Defense Lawyer who opposed me in the McFarland \$45,000,000 case tried in 1990. He was my next door neighbor at Weatherby Lake as well as the top floor of City Center Square where my law office was located.

Why did I do all this you ask? It is not so difficult to fall in love with a community populated by independent, thoughtful, giving humans is it? I count myself blessed for the privilege of being a part of this great community and raising my children at Weatherby Lake.

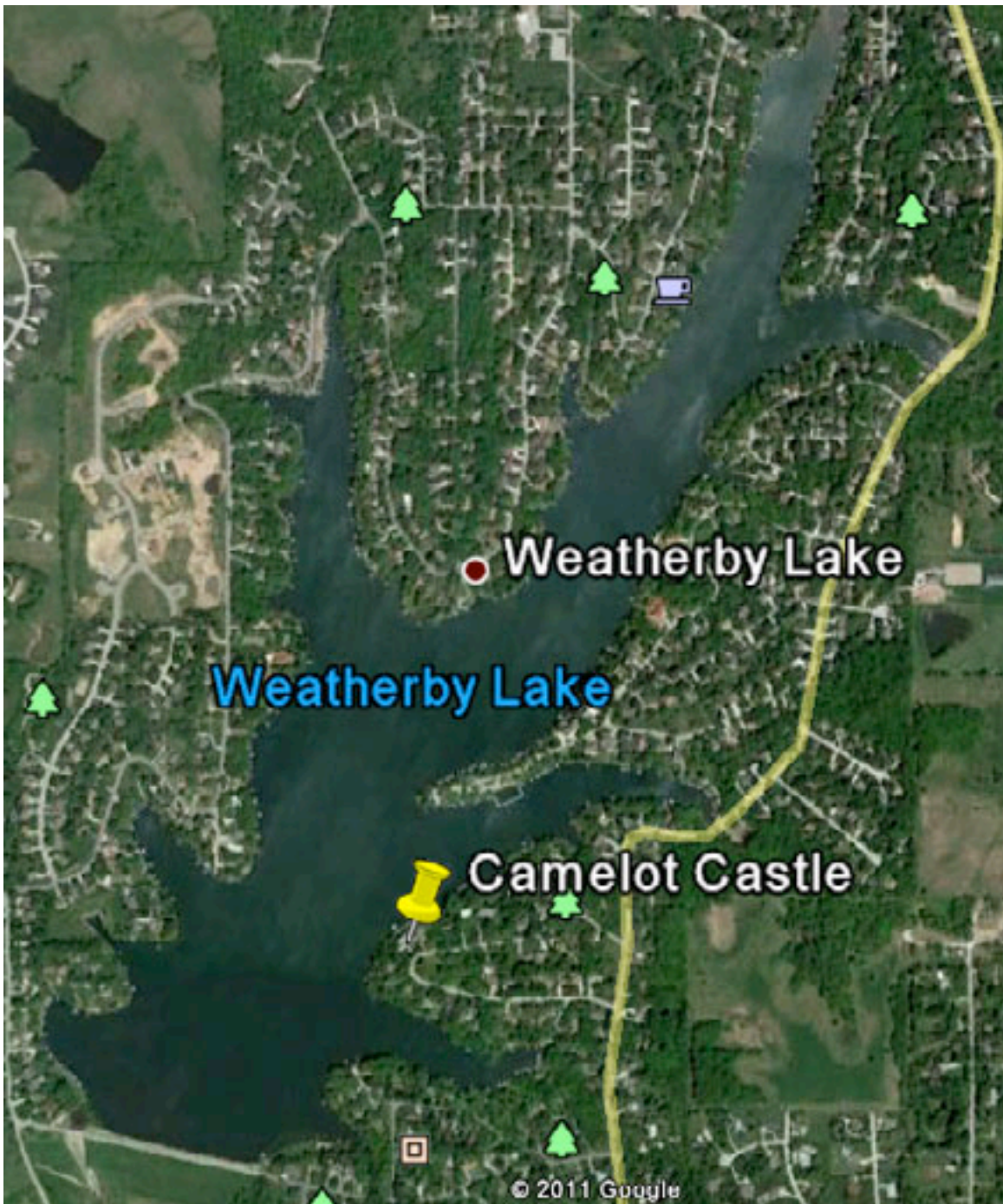


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CAMELOT CASTLE

Is located on Weatherby Lake which is located midway between Downtown K.C. and the airport [MCI]



We also own the six [6] lots across the street which affords us privacy.



Before starting the project we employed an architectural artist to create an architectural rendering before we turned any dirt:





The electric entry gate that is controlled by telephone from anywhere in the world.





I am often asked about the many thousands of decisions we had to make for the project. As people know my propensity for perfection so they inquire if there is anything we would do differently. YES, we installed the mailbox at the exit gate thinking that as we came home we would simply pull alongside and retrieve the mail.

In actuality, Joyce retrieves the mail by walking clear around through the entry gate. With foresight we could have simply installed a chute from the mailbox at the entry gate to terminate at the rear of the support column. However, not a bad batting average for our first effort.

The actual building of Camelot Castle began in 1990 and took approximately 3 years to complete.



The preparation however took place well over 10 years previous to the actual construction. Laura and I traveled extensively through Europe

bicycling and taking photographs of castles as well as collecting photos from books. We acquired various items for the Castle that would ultimately be incorporated in the ultimate design. For example we acquired two [2] fire surrounds. One for the great room and the other for the formal dining room. Both of these fire surrounds are almost as old as this country.



As it turned out, we closely resemble [Ashford Castle](#), Cong, Ireland.



As you can see, we came pretty close. What we lack in size we make up in spirit:



The Queen has raised over \$7,000,000 for charitable purposes by using her castle.

We hired an excellent architect, perhaps one of the best in the country, Howard Nearing, and he was able to incorporate these acquisitions into the final Castle plans.

Speaking of the plans, we had a stroke of good luck at the beginning since we had originally designed an indoor racquetball court that would've made this project one third larger. As fate would have it my arm failed me and I had to give up racquetball. Fortunately we eliminated the court from the project. We saved enough to pay for the land acquisition as well as the architect's fees.

We had the good fortune of retaining Jeff Martinique as the builder. We quickly nicknamed him "Merlin the Magician" since there was virtually nothing that Jeff could not accomplish.

N.B. It should be noted that Jeff is the builder of the home of Pete and Lynn Pierce on our Lake. He also built Charles Garney's dream home in [Briarcliffe](#).

As you look at the outside of the castle you will notice two very unusual features. First, the stone that makes up the bulk of the exterior is quite unique. Most stone homes built in the Midwest are built from Kansas limestone.

Kansas City is known for its [underground storage](#) caves and our stonemason, John Scafe, and his father-in-law, Jim Long, were able to take a layer of stone that was well below those excavations. Thus, this stone is a much darker gray in color and is 50% harder than your typical stone thus allowing a steeper pitch to the faces.



The other thing that one notices about Camelot Castle is a great amount of trim stone. You will see this on the corbelling and the arches. We were lucky in that a 100+ year old Carthage marble house just north of the Country Club Plaza was torn down in order to make way for Crosby Kemper's Modern Museum of Art. I was able to acquire all of that stone and this was later turned into the finished product that you see on the Castle.



N. B. There was not a large enough piece of marble to cover the front threshold of the main doors. As luck would have it my old high school was being torn down at Linwood and Indiana. I was able to acquire the threshold piece from Central High School and it is now in place in front

of my huge front double doors. Some of my old classmates and I laugh about the fact that I was frequently expelled from Central and they would've thrown me out over this threshold many a time.



On the subject of the double doors it should be noted that every single door [and there must be hundreds] in the Castle and all are hand-hewn one-of-a-kind.



INTERIOR OF MAIN ENTRANCE

N.B. Note the huge dead bolt. Howard Nearing warned us at the beginning of this project that a project his huge might produce serious disputes for us. Divorces have come from such projects. As a precautionary measure Laura & I agreed that any serious differences of opinion would be divided between Function & Form. Function disputes would be resolved by Howard Nearing. Form by [John Rufenacht](#) our designer.

Unresolved disputes settled by Merlin the Magician, Jeff Martinique. I contended that the massive wood dead bolt was obviously a functional item & Laura thought it was an ugly stick. Jeff came down on the side of function.

Of the thousands who have toured Camelot Castle it has been interesting to note the number who have looked at the doors and commented on how perfect and attractive the "Dead Bolt" is. I always smile & wink at The Queen.

All of the metal strapping, the metal hinges and door handles are one of a kind made for Camelot. For that matter every single light fixture is one-of-a-kind made for Camelot Castle.



Our lighting designer won a coveted award for this project based on whole house computerized lighting:



The floors are either stone or quarter-sawn oak plank.

Of course the stone floors & the granite floors in the master bath are heated in winter.

The slate roof is the heaviest slate ever used on a home in the K.C. area.



All of the castle windows are architecturally designed one of a kind.





Another source of wonderment to Architects & Builders is this view to the right of the main entrance hall. They marvel at how this difficult space was so adroitly handled.



The 6,000 bottle wine cellar is circular and built under the formal dining room. It surrounded by earth and has a thick concrete ceiling. It is also our tornado shelter.



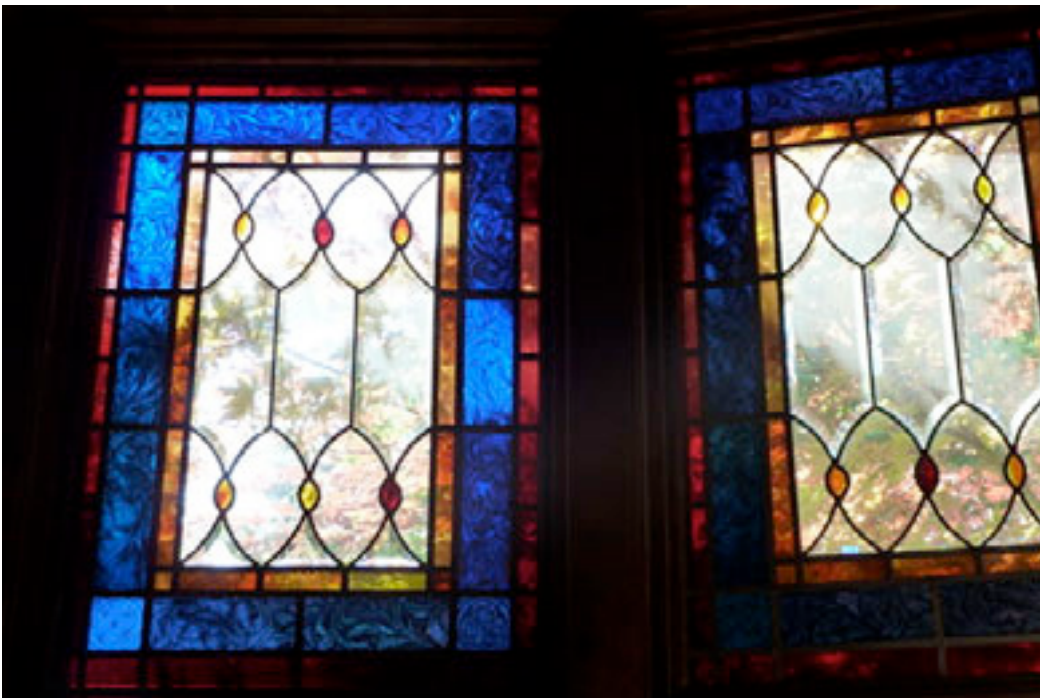
This is the potting room. Note the details of the work table.



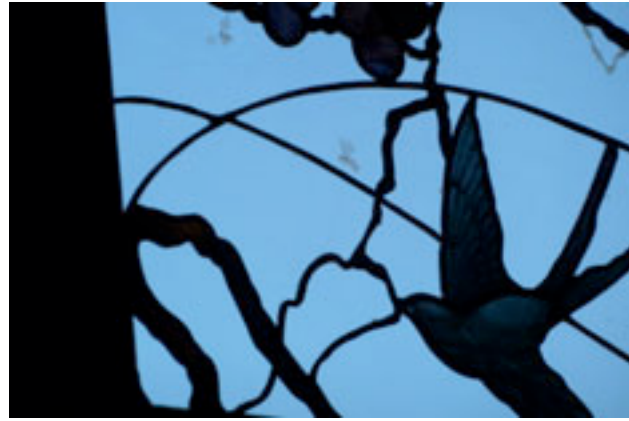
And naturally this leads us into the five formal gardens [this one in the front drive].



The Greenhouse is one of The Queen's favorite rooms. In winter it is full of plants.



The stained glass in the Greenhouse, Kitchen, Dining Room & Office was done by [Kathy Barnard](#).



We are home to flocks of Purple Martins which Kathy features in our kitchen windows. Note the small insects in the right piece.

I belong to a group of the 500 best Trial Lawyers in the world, the [International Academy of Trial Lawyers](#). Our meetings take us all over the world. When in England we are with the top Barristers & naturally with The Queen. In South Africa we induct Nelson Mandela.

This brings us to Italy and [Gandolfo](#) and our time with Pope John Paul:



Which in turn brings us to one of our beautiful art objects:



Which came from [Mosaic Art Source](#).

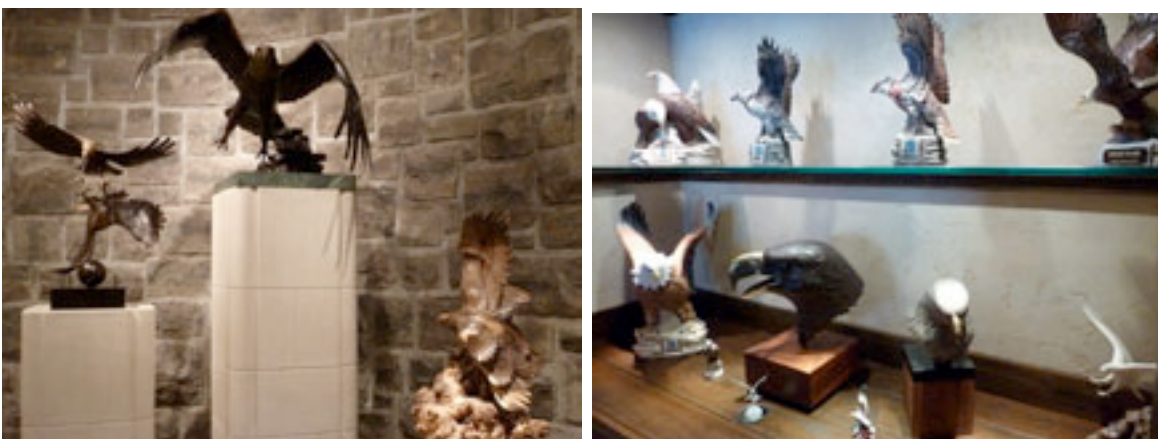


When one tours St. Peters Basilica and views the magnificent oil paintings on the walls, you do not realize that these are [mosaics](#).

Some other unusual art pieces flowed from the fact that it is very difficult to buy gifts for me. My 2nd aerobatic airplane was a Christen Eagle:



This was a perfect invitation for gifts of eagles:





THE POWDER ROOM

Of the 10 bathrooms this one gets the vote of most visitors as the best in the castle. An artist painted the ceiling with our Zodiac Signs, Gemini & Libra. The gold is 24K. The silver crackled canvas wallpaper is one of a kind. The mirror was purchased on a visit to [Venice](#).

Speaking of wall coverings, the entirety of the castle walls were created through a five step process that took forever to complete but well worth the time & expense as the interior walls appear to be 100s of years old.



N.B. At a social function our architect, Howard Nearing, looked at the Great Room beams and ruminated about what condition they might be in a couple of hundred years in the future:





He was amazed to learn that Merlin, our woodworking genius, had fabricated these out of separate pieces of wood.

Camelot Castle took approximately 3 years to complete. It is built like a commercial building. There are six separate HVAC zones that control the geothermal efficiency system. The sound system is distributed by over 10 miles of speaker wiring through 12 separate sound systems that can be turned on independently or all at one time.

And of course you can see Laura's fine hand as the Interior Designer:





FORMAL DINING ROOM



Lancelot & Guinevere are oil on canvas by a Broadway Set Designer.



CHRISTMAS IN THE GAME ROOM



THE MASTER BEDROOM

Merlin turned the 90" bedposts out of single pieces of wood. He broke four [4] lathes in the process.



ENTRY HALL

The chandelier came from a real castle and is one piece we did not have to invent.



Gates, fences, stairs & all of the iron work was one-of-a-kind designed for Camelot by [Austin Iron Works](#).



CAMELOT MIRROR: 7 principal characters of the Camelot legend are hand carved ivory. The 2,000 lb. project took two [2] years to complete in [Pietrasanta](#), Italy.

"The area, like most of Tuscany in general, has long enjoyed the patronage of artists. Pietrasanta grew to importance during the 15th century, mainly due to its connection with marble. Michelangelo was the first sculptor to recognize the beauty of the local stone."

Giancarlo cast the 2,000+ lb. mirror in one piece. The ivory carver was [Jill Burkee](#) who was the primary ivory artist for [Buccellati](#).



A self piece of Jill Burkee created by Jill out of Carrera Marble





And then there is "Mimi of Paree", my massage therapist, who kept me going back to do battle for those many years. Mimi is happily married and living in, guess where??

Of course the one who keeps it all running smoothly is Joyce, The Guardian of Camelot, my housekeeper for over 30 years.



JOYCE IN ASPEN



JOYCE AT HOME



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ASPEN

My first exposure to Aspen, CO. came through the Kansas City Ski Club. With the help of Jefferson Van Lines we had invented a “sleeper bus” that enabled us “po’ boy” skiers live beyond our means.

We constructed a sleeper bus which allowed us two seats facing with the table between to be turned into top and bottom sleeping bunks.



LW AND SON GREG

We would board the bus Friday after work and arrive at the ski area in the morning allowing us to ski Saturday and Sunday and arrive back in Kansas City for work Monday morning. In Aspen we would stay at the Alpine Lodge, 8 men to a room with 4 bunk beds. We would shoulder our skis in the morning and walk from the E. end of town near the city limits

and walk to Lift 1A which was at the far W. end of town [WOW!! How did we do that??].

In the early 60's Aspen still had dirt streets and was highly populated with hippies and dopers. It never occurred to me that I would someday be spending the majority of my time in Aspen.

Fast forward to 1990 and 66 Alpine Court came into our lives:



And in the year 2000 we acquired 69 Herron Hollow:



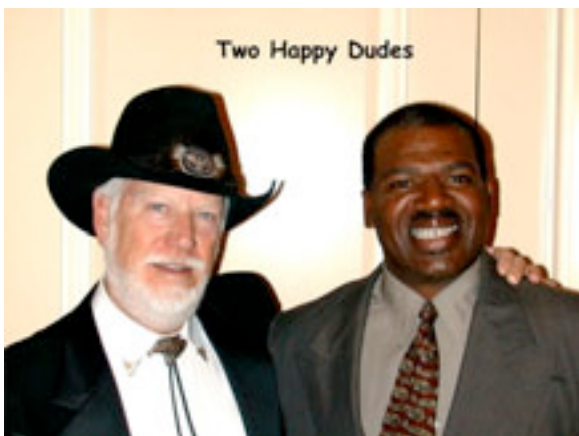
With great views of Aspen Mtn., Highlands & Buttermilk:



As the local realtors say, “You come to Aspen for the skiing and stay for the summers.” This certainly held true for us and we spend more time there than at Camelot.

There is a lot to do in our valley and The Welch Family Foundation has found itself involved in many worthwhile projects.

It started when a local “Gentlemen of Aspen” rugby player, John Reid:



who started “Grassroots Aspen Experience” came to me and got our foundation involved. We later changed it to AYE (Aspen Youth Experience). The Queen created The [Celebrity Downhill Races](#):



JUDGE JOE BROWN/EVANDER HOLYFIELD

We sold teams for \$10,000 each & held a huge auction at the Ritz Carlton:



DEBORAH BROWN/LW/LAURA

JAS

[Jazz Aspen Snowmass](#)

In the late 80's/early 90's I was approached by Arthur Horowitz, a well-known restaurateur from Miami Florida who had a home in Aspen Colorado. He was very high on his son Jim Horwitz, an excellent pianist and great jazz artist who wanted to start a jazz festival in Aspen Colorado. Arthur twisted my arm in order to get the foundation to help underwrite this adventure. I look back with some embarrassment to remember telling Arthur that I hoped that it would fail because I did not wish to commit that much of our budget to such an undertaking.

As we all know it was far from a failure and in its 20th year has become one of the most renowned and respected jazz festivals in the United States. A very large part of his success was due to Laura agreeing to go on the Board of Directors as Vice President in Charge of Development. Through her energies and innovations she was a major factor in making [JAS](#) a financial success.

JAS AWARD FOR PHILANTHROPIC CONTRIBUTION HONORING LANTZ & LAURA WELCH
FOR THEIR TIRELESS COMMITMENT TO JAZZ ASPEN SNOWMASS AND THE
ROARING FORK VALLEY COMMUNITY.

Two of the most generous and beloved members of our community, Lantz & Laura Welch contribute significantly and consistently to a wide range of non-profits including Jazz Aspen Snowmass, GrassRoots Aspen, The Aspen Buddy Program and Aspen Theater in the Park, among

others. They are also widely active in Kansas City, their first home, with a range of social service and cultural organizations, including Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Re-Start, The Spelman Medical Foundation, The Innocence Project at UMKC School of Law and many others.

Lantz Welch, one of the country's most preeminent trial lawyers, and Laura Welch, a pas-



sionate creator of special events for organizations, are the Chairman and President of the Lantz Welch Charitable Foundation. They are not only shining lights in their philanthropic work, but their winning personalities (and wardrobes, especially Lantz) endear them to our community. They have been singularly faithful and dedicated to helping build Jazz

Aspen Snowmass from a fledgling festival in the early 1990's to an established, world-renowned jazz education and performance organization.

Past recipients of the JAS Award for Philanthropic Contribution are Bill & Marilyn Getz, Dena Kaye and the Fleck Family.



The Queen receiving her just reward.

There were summertime activities with our kids such as the down valley bike ride to the [Woody Creek Tavern](#):



The leader, center foreground with Laura on my right, would give the group a serious lecture about the rules of social conduct & bike safety. This was met with gang signs etc. since these were some pretty tough kids. I would tell them there would be prizes for those who could make it up “Heart Attack Hill” on the way back without dismounting. More chuckles.



It should be noted that all but four (4) of these are locals. Thereafter, I was treated with much respect and referred to as Mr. Welch. □



The Queen exercises her considerable kitchen skills for some hands on help from youths from Wash. D.C.



She also shares her Boxster with the kids (That's our adoptee Chris in the drivers seat).



Chris on how NOT to hold a trout.



And I usually wore him out.

ASPEN BUSINESSMEN'S LUNCH:

This is a monthly luncheon attended by some of the wealthiest & most high powered businessmen in the U.S. I had been invited a number of times to speak on the subject of "Tort Reform" and what I do for a living. Wisely I had always declined because what business did Daniel have in wanting to visit the Lions Den?

I finally gave in & it was the most highly attended luncheon in their history with persons being turned away.

I started by asking the audience: *"How many of you have actually sat on a jury in a personal injury case through to verdict?"*

One hand went up. I said, *"I will direct my remarks to the rest of you ill informed, highly propagandized people who really only know what you read in The Wall Street Journal, Forbes, and hear on FOX news."*

With that insult a handful of people left. I then laid into the rest of them.

When I concluded I asked for questions and was prepared for the most recent banality, the [McDonalds Coffee Spill](#) case.

I asked: *“How many of you feel that case proves the jury system is out of control and our legal system needs to be drastically altered?” “How many feel that punitive damages are being abused in personal injury cases?”* Every hand went up in answer to both questions.

I then shared the real truths about the McDonalds case as well as Newt Gingrich’s schemes to abrogate punitives in P.I. cases (The Wall St. Journal had a recent article showing that punitives were wielded in business Vs. business cases many, many times that of P.I. cases)

I then repeated the same two questions and not a single hand was raised.

The highlight of that summer came when 20/30 people came up to me and introduced themselves and thanked me for opening their eyes by my luncheon talk.



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THE QUEEN

AND NOW YOU WILL FINALLY LEARN WHY I AM
CERTAIN THAT I AM MR. LUCKY!!!!

In 1981 the law firm of Lantz Welch, P.C. had the good fortune of hiring a secretary to work for Jim Bartimus. Her name was Laura Gault, age 22, and an ex-Gospel Singer with a group out of Nashville called "The Bridge".

I quickly realized that she was not only cute, but had an inner quality that was most extraordinary. It was not until I had given her an airplane ride in the Red Baron then I saw her inner fire and courage:





Sometime in 1981 we started "seeing each other" and it did not take long for me to "fall for her".

Against all common sense I knew that I had to change and improve Laura. First, we had to get rid of that ridiculous mustache:



I next took Laura to an Inner Circle meeting in the hopes that the Brothers would approve of her:



It should come as no great surprise that they did. Our relationship ripened and I saw a great future unfolding for us. Not having a crystal ball I had no idea how great it would really become. She has brought me more peace and happiness than I ever thought possible. She is truly the best thing that has ever happened to me.

AND I THINK THE FEELINGS ARE MUTUAL:

"Honey, you make our good times together the best times of my life."

This was the message of a Valentines card from the love of my life in 1983. She went on to say, *"I want to thank you for all the beauty you have brought to my life. You are the perfect lover, teacher, counselor, friend, advisor, companion and sweetheart! I love you for your positive attitude that makes these statements so true. Laura"*

And for the next 27 years it only got better.

LAURA-WILL YOU MARRY ME?-LANTZ

Sky-high proposal at game signals wedding for couple

By Jeff Taylor
A Member of the Staff

For Laura Gault, the big question came from out of the blue — the blue yonder, that is.

With thousands of spectators cheering her on, Ms. Gault said afterward, how could she not have said yes? One thing's certain, she never expected a proposal quite like the one that she got.

On Sunday afternoon, during half-time at the Kansas City Chiefs game against the Houston Oilers, a plane from out of the east soared over Arrowhead Stadium. Trailing behind it, in 5-foot, red letters, were the words: "LAURA — WILL YOU MARRY ME? — LANTZ."

For a moment, the question didn't register with Ms. Gault. One double-

standing next to her and jokingly answered, "Well, maybe." Then, to the cheers of hundreds of spectators, she quickly gave a firm, "Yes."

"We both love to surprise each other," Ms. Gault said after the game.

Mr. Welch, a Kansas City lawyer, said he came up with the uncommon proposal a few months ago. It was a fitting way to pop the question, he said, for a relationship that some might consider uncommon.

"I guess you could call ours a May-to-December relationship," said Mr. Welch, who declined to say how old he is. "Let's put it this way. I've been trying lawsuits for longer than she is old."

Ms. Gault, 25, said the couple didn't have immediate wedding plans.



J. Kyle Keener/Star

With a banner flying over Arrowhead Stadium, Kansas City attorney Lantz Welch proposes to Laura Gault on Sunday afternoon at half-time of the Chiefs' game against the Houston Oilers. Above, Mr. Welch offers an engagement ring to Ms. Gault. She accepted.

In 1984 I bought a ring, hired a biplane and popped the big question.





In 1986 after the completion of Camelot Castle she consented to the final step:

Then what happened? 'They lived happily ever after'



KANSAS
CITY People
LAURA R.
HOCKADAY

The fairy tale romance of trial lawyer **Lantz Welch** and his fiancée, **Laura Gault**, was sealed for real Saturday night, when they were married at the Camelot castle he built overlooking Weatherby Lake. The groom had planned a fitting sequel to his proposal — 12 years ago — when he chartered a plane to fly over Arrowhead Stadium trailing the question, "Laura, will you marry me?" in 5-foot, red letters. At the time, thousands of football fans attending a Kansas City Chiefs-Houston Oilers game cheered when Gault gave a definite "Yes."

Welch hired another plane to fly over Weatherby Lake with the message: "And they lived happily ever after," punctuated with a heart.

Retired Judge **Charles Shaugler** of the Missouri Court of Appeals in Kansas City and the Rev. **Stuart E. Whitney**, executive director of **reStart Inc.**, were asked to preside at the ceremony.

The bride's father, **Larry Gault** of Gallatin, Mo., gave her away and her sisters, **Robin Bridges** of Weatherby Lake and **Stacy Krawieter** of Manhattan, Kan., stood up with her during the vows. **Greg Welch** of Laguna Beach, Calif., was best man for his father.

Others in the wedding party included another son, **Rick Welch**; the groom's mother, **Ernest Welch**; his sister, **Jody Searing** of Overland Park; his two grandchildren; the bride's three nephews; her stepmother, **Joyce Gault**; and her mother and stepfather, **Barbara** and **Tom Fagan** of Junction City, Kan. The groom's father, **Philip A. Welch**, died in 1972.

As the ceremony concluded, the party began. Shuttles from the Weston Crown Center hotel and trolleys from Park Hill High School arrived, carrying 435 guests for the reception, planned around the theme "Once Upon a Time." Actors in Shakespearean garb, mimes, jugglers, fire-eaters and buggies welcomed everyone to "Camelot" as the **KoKoMo** band played on.

Lantz Welch is known for his opulent flair but he also is recognized as one of the top trial lawyers in the country. He is responsible for verdicts exceeding \$1 million each for 37 clients, but he has won other personal-injury suits resulting in many millions for individual plaintiffs. For his achievements he was invited in 1978 to join the Inner Circle of Advocates, an elite group of 100 trial lawyers. About 20 of them traveled across the country for his wedding. But the president, **Pat Maloney**, and his wife, **Olivia**, of San Antonio, were unable to come.

Welch and his bride both grew up in the Kansas City area, but in opposite directions. He went to the old Central High School, graduated from Southwest and worked his way through the University of Missouri-Columbia and the University



TRIAL lawyer Lantz Welch and Laura Gault Welch were married Saturday at the Camelot castle he built overlooking Weatherby Lake.

of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law.

She graduated from Hickman Mills High School and attended Southwest Baptist College in Holvart, Mo., before quitting to join a professional gospel group, the Bridge, and tour the East Coast.

When the group broke up, she took up typing and was hired as a legal secretary by Welch's firm nearly 15 years ago. She soon met the boss and her future husband. Their marriage is his third and her first.

Age has never been a factor in their relationship, they say. "It's a state of mind," says the groom, who is 63. His bride will be 37 on Tuesday. They ski, scuba dive and do aerobics in his biplane.

And they have become a strong team for the city, underwriting and sponsoring many nonprofit projects, particularly those that help the homeless and improve the quality of life for children in the urban core. Each year they allocate more than \$300,000 from the Lantz Welch Charitable Foundation, established in 1985.

They say they don't have any special secrets to their relationship, which the groom says has lasted longer than his first two marriages put together.

"You have to love yourself, first," said Laura Gault Welch, "then each other, then your family and then your community. Those have been our priorities and our goals. And you have to realize you can't change the other person; you can only change yourself."

The Kansas City Star 1996-06-09 KANSAS CITY PEOPLE

Then what happened? 'They lived happily ever after'

LAURA R. HOCKADAY

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She even arranged for a small wedding in 1996 with 435 guests:

AND IS THIS NOT THE WORLDS' MOST
BEAUTIFUL BRIDE??



The Queen has gone on to excel at everything she chooses to undertake. She is a world-class chef who has studied at La Verenne en Bourgogne and Giuliano Bugialli's Cooking in Florence.



She has also learned a thing or two from you know who.



As well as Lidia.



And Charles Dale.

She knows how to throw a party:



Buffalo Soldiers at Kansas City's 150th Anniversary party that Laura chaired for over 700 guests.



And when she had her 45th Birthday Party she turned it into a fund raiser for Quality Hills Playhouse.



And when she chooses to sing, she can really let it loose.



She even does Marilyn Monroe as "Santa Baby".

And on the athletic side of things she excelled at racquetball, table tennis, swimming or anything else that she chooses to do.



She has scuba dived all over the world.



And in doing so has made some most unusual friends.



She has bicycled most of Europe and other parts of the world.

She knows no fear:





As she demonstrates by being the only participant to take the plunge upside down.

In case I failed to mention it, Laura single-handedly remodeled the Aspen house:



She definitely proved that her efforts at Camelot Castle were not a fluke.

Back to the athletic side of Laura's life, she likes to hike:



LAURA/TESSA/FRED PRYOR

And she likes to race up Aspen Mountain on snow shoes:



And recently conquered Mount Kilimanjaro:



Laura has proven herself to be a Citizen of the World:





LAURA/ [YVES LEBRETON](#)



AND THEN OF COURSE, THERE ARE THE MANY
BEAUTIFUL FACES OF LAURA:



AND THIS OLD GRUMP WONDERERS HOW SHE PUT UP
WITH HIM THESE 29 WONDERFUL YEARS!!



FINITO



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REFLECTIONS

As I reflect upon my chosen profession I can't help but marvel at all the opportunities I have been given to help those who I have served through the years.

I have witnessed some highs and lows in my profession over the last 50+ years as is certainly true in many professions. Having just read "The Borgias" by Alexandre Dumas & reflecting on the remarks to the I.A.T.L. by Pope John Paul: *"As trial lawyers, you are committed to the resolution of conflicts and the pursuit of justice through legal and rational means. This work is indispensable for the construction of a truly humane and harmonious social order."* I am equally struck by the highs and lows of the Papacy. These afflictions know no boundaries because of the extremes of avarice and goodness of mankind.

We should look with pride upon the contributions of 24 lawyers to the Declaration of Independence and 34 lawyers to the U.S. Constitution as we consider with sadness how we have shot ourselves in the foot with advertising.

On a more personal note, my first reaction upon completion of this story was that: *"I don't f***** believe that I did all these things."*

Then, upon reflection, I remembered many of the events recounted here as being difficult and I was often quite pleasantly surprised by the results. I am not sure how I was able to persuade everyone to go along my projects, but they must've made sense at the time. I believe it helped that they were altruistic in nature.

I have suffered a great deal of pain in my life starting with betrayal by Diane and the loss of my two children and concluding with the betrayal by my lawyers. The early screwings I took from the insurance company lawyers and the trial judges heaped additional scars on my psyche. I believe that all of these experiences de-sensitized me. This has no doubt been beneficial to me as a "Trial Warrior", but has been very difficult for those who love me and share my personal life.

But, as Frank sang, *"I did it my way."*

I am fortunate to have two sons who could not have made me more proud.

I am further blessed to have found a woman who could handle the bad along with the good. Laura says that I have mellowed somewhat since retiring and she hopes to see more of it.

N.B. It helps to marry a saint.

P.S. I will conclude this compendium with a poem I had printed and hung in all of my lawyers offices:

THE MAN IN THE GLASS

When you get what you want in your struggle for self
And the world makes you king for a day
Just go to the mirror and look at yourself
And see what that man has to say.

For it isn't your Father or Mother or wife
Whose judgment upon you must pass.
The fellow whose verdict counts most in your life
Is the one staring back from the glass.

Some people may call you a straight shooting chum
And call you a wonderful guy,
but the man in the glass says you're only a bum
If you can't look him straight in the eye.

He's the fellow to please, never mind all the rest
For he's with you clear to the end,
And you have passed your most dangerous test
If the man in the glass is your friend.

You may face the whole world down the pathway of life
And get pats on the back when you pass,
But your final reward will be heartache and strife
If you've cheated the man in the glass.



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