

The J. Byron McCormick Lecture

HUMOR, POLITICS, AND THE PRACTICE OF LAW

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I am very honored to deliver the McCormick Society Lecture here at the College of Law of your fine University of Arizona. Ann and I are very pleased to do that. Forty-five years with that woman—married all that time—of course! You have to say that in political life. We have had a lot of great times together, many of them through the practice of law.

It is a fine school that you have here; I always enjoy my times on this campus and have had a good deal of fun at that. I remember one particularly fine occasion here where Mark Russell and I appeared here with Barry Goldwater to benefit the Morris K. Udall Foundation. Barry and Mo were two wonderful Americans to make Arizonans proud and both of them were very dear, personal friends of ours. A great story is linked up with those two. They were warm, wise, witty, irreverent, pungent, earthy, and what fun to be around in every way, just my kind of people! Mo always said that if you ever thought of running for president, the only way to get it out of your system was with embalming fluid. And then after his crushing defeat in the primary by Jimmy [Carter] the press corps asked for his feelings on the situation. Mo said, "Well, you have to be gracious. The voters have spoken—the bastards!"¹ That was Mo. I was very privileged to be at his memorial and participate by giving one of the eulogies.

Well, it's obviously a good time to be here; it's so cold in Boston. The other day I saw a lawyer going down the street with his hands in his own pockets!

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1. BOB DOLE, *GREAT POLITICAL WIT: LAUGHING (ALMOST) ALL THE WAY TO THE WHITE HOUSE* 51 (1998).

You see, you can tell these stories if you are a lawyer, and if you hear somebody else tell them you say, "I was offended by that!"

Nevertheless, you don't want to tell that joke. But if you are laughing at that one, you need to hear the quick Wyoming story: This couple hit the sack and at 3:00 in the morning, the phone rings and the guy says, "How the hell do I know, that's 2000 miles from here!" After he hangs up, his wife says, "Who was it?" The husband says, "I dunno, some nut called and asked if the coast was clear?" You'll think about that when you get home; it will come to you in the night.

On the plane to Tucson I sat next to this grandfather. This is perilous because we have three wonderful grandchildren, but sitting next to a grandparent on a plane is a very difficult thing. You know, all they do is talk about their grandchildren. Finally, at the end of a tedious flight he said, "Have I shown you pictures of my grandchild?" And I said, "No, and I appreciate it."

But the worst one was this older grandfather who told me that his four-year old grandchild was brilliant. He said, "I asked her the other day, what's the capital of Texas?" She looked at me and replied "Austin." He continued, saying that he next asked her, "What is the capital of the United States of America?" She quickly responded, "Washington, D.C." Feeling proud, the grandfather asked, "What does the D.C. stand for, dear?" She said, "Dot com!"

We do have some pungent things here to review with one another. But first, you know about the two guys sitting in a penitentiary in another state. One turned to the other and said, "The food was better here when you were governor." And, of course you're aware of the difference between a horse race and a political race? In a horse race, the entire horse runs!

First, a note about the changes in our lives. I loved the Senate, but life has changed. That's what life is, and you need to know and hope that this is true in your life. Always be looking for change. It's tough to do. You don't want to do it because sometimes it's not safe, but it's important.

So here I am. There is tremendous irony in speaking before law students, for I did not graduate *cum laude*. I graduated "thank the lawdy." And there are many more of us who graduated in that category, yet we admire those who did graduate in the other category, and try to learn from them. I never did get the Rule in Shelley's Case. If you ever use that in your practice write me a letter and embellish it, say what the Rule in Shelley's Case ever did for you, if you learned it, black acre, white acre, and belly acher.

Today I am at Harvard directing the Institute of Politics. Awhile back, I went to one of my old teachers, Mrs. Thompson, who just recently passed away. She taught me Shakespeare. I took her this little bookmark, that says, "[W]hat he hath scanted men in hair he hath given them in wit."² I don't know what it was from, *Comedy of Errors* or something, but I loved it. Mrs. Thompson couldn't see well. She patted my head on that one and laughed. She said, "Now tell me again,

2. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, *THE COMEDY OF ERRORS* act 2, sc. 2.

what are you doing?" I said, "I am directing the Institute of Politics and lecturing at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government." She started to laugh. I said, "You're not supposed to laugh, you're supposed to be thrilled that one of your finest students went on to success after success." She said, "You drove me crazy!" While she was living I took her into the vault of the Folger Shakespeare Library and let her place in her hands one of the first sixty-nine folios of Shakespeare, together with Hollingshead's *History of Scotland*, from which Shakespeare lifted *Macbeth* (he said he did). As Mrs. Thompson held it in her hands, her eyes filled with tears and she said, "You would have gotten a hell of a lot better grade if you had done this earlier!"

Those are things we want to remember.

However, a most stinging offense that still rankles me occurred while I was in Cody, Wyoming at the Irma Hotel, built by Buffalo Bill and named for his daughter. I went in, got my grubs and cowboy boots on, putting me at about 6' 10", like a crane in a marsh. A guy at the counter said, "Anybody ever told you that you look kind of like Al Simpson?" I said, "Yeah, they do." He swiftly responded, "Makes you kinda mad, don't it?"

Enough of that.

I loved the practice of law. I loved the state legislature, I loved the U.S. Senate, but the law was my first love—other than Ann, of course—and I'm still dabbling in the law. Also, our own two sons are both lawyers, and very capable lawyers, in Cody and Denver. They love the law, but they say, "Dad, it's all different from what you described to us." I believe that after listening to them describe it to me. But the law is, to the senior lawyer, so different from those of you who are about to embark on your careers.

So Ann and I through the years have shared much in the love of the law and made lifelong friends from bar conventions, legal seminars, and regional, state, and national lawyer functions; they were always stimulating, productive, and fun. Fun, don't forget that word, fun.

Law and lawyers. Both my father and grandfather were lawyers. My grandfather was kicked out of the public schools in the fourth grade for witnessing a public hanging. Arizona and Wyoming are similar in that type of activity. The teacher said, "If anyone goes to that hanging they will be dismissed from school." He figured that was a "two-fer" and was dismissed from school. Then my grandfather heard about a young woman at the Indian reservation, my grandmother, who was teaching Latin to the Indians—in enlightened times of distress as we look back—but she was not a woman who impressed herself on others in an ugly way. A dear woman, she lived to be 100. He went to see her. He said, "Teach me some Latin phrases. I'll go read the law." So she taught him a bunch of Latin phrases, he went and worked with a lawyer, and read the law. You can imagine what a devastating lawyer he was; he was awesome. My grandfather did not lead an exemplary life, however. He got drunk and gambled greatly and lost my grandmother's house five times. When he died she reached in the casket and said to him, "You didn't think I would stick with you, did you, Billy?"

My father loved the practice of law and I watched him and what he did. Someone said the best thing a father can do for his son is to love his mother. Interesting phrase. For me it was also watching my dad love the law. My dad had a wonderful sense of humor. He said, "If anyone goes to jail, be sure it's your client." This is a key statement. And then, of course, he had fun. He had these book titles, and one of them in his office said, *The Role of the Decedent in Estate Planning*. That's a very important role.

I have a high opinion of lawyers. Even with all of their faults, they stack up very well against those in other professions or occupations. They are better to work with, play with, and have a beer with, than most other varieties of mankind. That is true.

Now, of course, judges are somewhat different. I met some lovely judges last night. But one of the greatest pleasures of my former work in politics was that I would call all of the judges in Wyoming, federal, district and municipal, by their first names. I never did that when I was practicing. I'd later say, "Hi, Bud" or, "Hi, Wade, good to see you." Only one judge we *always* called by his title—Judge Ewing T. Kerr, the federal district judge. He instilled a depth of adulation. Nevertheless, I loved the practice and respected the judges, learning much from them in every way. Of course, you will come across those that are the other side of that equation, too. There was a judge in Wyoming who was somewhat "pixilated," I believe was the phrase they used in *Arsenic and Old Lace*.³ Great phrase. At the end of a trial he said, "I dissent for the reasons stated by the majority." One of our brethren irreverently referred to one of the judges in his district—claiming that the only time this judge joined the majority was when he died.

From my observation post and practice in Washington, please know that you are hearing these things from a man who truly loves his profession. It gave me much excitement, much pleasure, and is a profession that forced me to learn and to grow. I did not always want to do that. And I see some signs, some omens for our profession; let me share with you what I think those are.

This issue of fees is one. Lawyers may well be or soon will be pricing themselves out of existence. Certainly, remember the "average guy" and that there are still average people out there. Only seven percent of the people in the United States make over \$65,000 a year.⁴ You can easily forget that when you are ringing up the register in the law office. Average people have difficulty paying lawyers' fees; I think this is part of the hostility toward lawyers. I know lawyers who are before the bar association on the fact that they've just done a simple will and nailed the guy for \$4,000. It makes no sense and there is no sense to it.

3. JOSEPH KESSERLING, *ARSENIC AND OLD LACE* (1995).

4. See U.S. DEP'T OF COMMERCE, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, STATISTICAL ABSTRACT OF THE UNITED STATES 481 tbl.756 (1999) (Money Income of Persons—Selected Characteristics, by Income Level: 1997). The Statistical Abstract is also available on the internet. See U.S. Census web site (visited Mar. 3, 2000) <<http://www.census.gov/prod/www/statistical-abstract-us.html>>.

I think greed stalks our profession and our fine members, and I think they are easy prey, but not here, and not at Laramie. But in some schools that I have visited we have law schools but not lawyer schools. Law seems to sometimes sharpen the mind by narrowing it. And yet, Lord knows, I thought they would have tightened the requirements after I had got out!

Lawyers and bar associations should be doing positive things, not just talk. We might even eliminate pomposity disguised as dignity—that would be very good—and deal with people as if they were human equals even if they aren't lawyers or if they are a little dumb or dull or witless. For what good is it to go out and practice this great profession of the law if your clients don't know what the hell you're doing for them? What good is it to draw a contract for them if they don't know what it says? What good is it for them to sit in your office and pour out their guts maybe about a divorce, or a mother lost in the fog of Alzheimer's, or a son lost in the fog of drugs, if you can't say things to them in compassion and in an understandable fashion?

I think that's worth remembering. I know how I handled it my first two years of practice—not very well. I didn't know what I was doing, so I covered it up with b.s. and obfuscation. It will be a great temptation, I can assure you, because your secretary will know more about a warranty deed than you do. You will say to her, "What is this, what is this form?" She'll bail you out by saying, "Well, just give it to me and I'll take care of it." Now, of course, you've got it all computerized. But, nevertheless, you will fall prey to that. Be aware, be guarded.

When I was elected to the Senate, I came to observe lawyers in the community in Washington, D.C., the eager staffers—staffers as we called them—they are bright, able, efficient. These staffers, they are wrapped up in their work, you bet. The problem is they come to Washington to make policy. Don't believe it when they tell you they don't. So what we ought to be doing is sending them out first into the wastelands, into the outback, to try a first-degree murder case or two, or have three probate scraps where they are still picking over the body before it's even cooled, or try about three contested divorce cases, repossess a railroad, or replevin a one-eyed mule. You don't replevin anymore, I know that, but we did in my day. They need to represent a defendant charged with affray and mayhem from a neighborhood bar fight where he chewed off a guy's ear because he thought he was at the rodeo. And I was his attorney; when I finished the case I thought I had been through the rodeo. But with that under the staffers' belts, then come to Washington, get on a committee or a congressperson's staff, and begin to work their wonders. The staffers have often forgotten the human equation, the human contact, the human touch. And if you have forgotten that as a lawyer you've forgotten what the law is about.

In Washington, the legislators—and that was me, too—and lawyers and judges heedlessly have piled agency upon agency, remedy upon remedy, jurisdiction upon jurisdiction, and distinction upon distinction. We are in a real danger of making the law a kind of mystery whose performance is absorbing to the pedant, but like the ceremonies of Eleusis, unknowable, save to the elect, and

divorced from all of the realities of life. I think it is time to recall that expediting matters and common sense and intelligence are values in the legal system, as important as symmetry and completeness. We need the courage to recognize that there are areas in which it is better that final decisions be promptly reached, even with a somewhat poorer batting average, than if the game lasts twenty innings, even though the average might be slightly improved. Questions of due process must not be allowed to result in a process so elaborate and time consuming as to be undue. We must not permit the doctrine of exhaustion of remedies to exhaust the litigants and their resources.

As the Dean teaches in her civil procedure course, young men and women, the law does not exist to provide additional business for lawyers, or to amuse judges, or to hone the minds of law clerks, or to get a staff job in Washington, D.C., or to enable law review editors to flap their wings. That is not the purpose of the law school. There are important parts. The law exists for one single purpose, stated in Rule 1 of the Federal or State Rules of Civil Procedure. That is to afford a just, speedy, and inexpensive determination of rights. That's it. That's all. Nothing else. Write it in there now because we forget that. We see people pulling down our profession and it's up to us to pull it back to that course. We in this profession have to turn it around. No one, I can assure you, is going to do that for us. Indeed not.

Soon it will be for you to do, because it must be done, because our status in society is now right along with the politicians and the journalists. That's not a good place to be in America today. We have to pull ourselves back from that, show them the difference between substance and shadow, between a cosmetic approach and a realistic one, admit there are imperfections in our profession and that we are on a course to correct them.

It was fascinating to me where I saw things come to a point in Washington. Every single announcement of the federal government through any regulation is now met by public and private interest law firms on both sides of the issue scratching, clawing, raising minutiae and detail to an absolute art form. Many would really hate to observe a mania of deregulation. They live off of it, and so it is.

Well, I must not leave you in Doomsday. I shan't, but we really must begin to remove the suspicions of our craft because so many of us do so many remarkable things for so many people, but those things will not be reported; only the bizarre, only the stupefying will be.

Also, remember one other thing as you go out and embark on your careers, especially in these times. Remember the role of the media. The media is the only unaccountable branch of society. They are not interested in clarity at all. They are interested in confusion, conflict, and controversy. Clarity is not anywhere in the package. Imagine a profession that still uses anonymous sources to advise us of what's going on. Pick up any paper—full of anonymous sources. That will be the destruction of the media. Of course, there is another one that politicians have to give up, and that is the old phrase, "I want to go off the record." That's as

phony for the politician as the journalist's phrase, "I want to preserve the anonymous source." Have you ever read a newspaper that reported, "She is the most wonderful person I ever met, said an unnamed anonymous source." No. No. What we read is that "She is a 48-carat jerk, bone-headed spavined poop." That's what you hear: "...said a high-placed anonymous source." So you want to remember that. You want to learn to take the media not with just a grain of salt—drag the whole pillar of salt with you. Don't turn around like Lot's wife and get the whole works, but just remember to sift and source better every time you read anything whatsoever.

One note now about some current problems in our country. Remember this—this is so important—America is one great country, else why would everyone in the world want to come here legally or illegally, period? And sure, we have Kosovo, the Irish troubles, East Timor, health care, tax cuts, Waco, social security, Medicare, pay down the debt and return it to the taxpayers—these kinds of things will be with us forever, just with new names.

The election of 2000 is coming up—by March seventh it will be over. Really, we'll have the candidates by March seventh. That's hard to believe. Bill Bradley's driving Al Gore nuts, which is fun to watch. I saw a bumper sticker in Washington that said, "Nixon in 2000. He's not as stiff as Gore." That was a sharp partisan jab. But I know Bill Bradley very well, we came to the Senate together. He and Ernestine and Ann and I had a lot of fun. I do happen to be supporting George W. Bush. You have a fine candidate from Arizona in John McCain. He will be strong. But those things should be finished by March seventh and we will have the final contenders.

My party is a remarkable party, the Republicans. We like to give each other the saliva test of purity, then we lose, then we bitch for four years.

However, Shakespeare couldn't have written anything sadder than what Clinton's been through over the last year-and-a-half. Well, perhaps Shakespeare could have done it.

The other issue in the Republican party is—and it won't matter who we nominate unless we deal with it—the issue of abortion. You do it with one sentence. "Abortion is a deeply intimate and personal decision, and out of respect—you underline *respect*—it will not be part of the platform." If we can't do that we will lose. I campaigned all over this country for Bob Dole and George Bush and ran into thousand. of young women between eighteen and thirty-five who dropped them like a hot rock. They will do it again and again and again. And they will tell their grandmothers and mothers, and they will do it again and again and again. It's sad but true.

Republicans are amazing. They will vote for someone else because their candidate is not conservative enough. A classic example was Ed Zschau in California, a wonderful young man running in the Senate against Al Cranston, a lovely friend, but a very liberal guy. Unfortunately, Ed Zschau wasn't quite conservative enough, so they didn't vote for him. They sent Cranston back for six years. You must have rock for brains to do that, rock, total granite for a gourd to

do that, because if you elect somebody from your party, even if they are a jerk, they are going to track along the party line at least most of the time. Fascinating business—that's our party.

Some old cowboy in Wyoming said, "Maybe there's only two parties left, the evil one and the stupid one!"

Now here's one for you, especially you young people. It's about the entitlements. Oh, "entitlements," where did we ever get the word? It is killing us, killing us in society. It means that when you get to a certain age, regardless of your net worth or your income, you get bucks from the federal treasury with very few means tests, very few affluence tests. Why then don't we get it done? It's because of one group I can define intimately. The AARP, 33 million Americans bound together by a common love of airline discounts, automobile discounts, RV discounts, and hotel discounts. A majority of their members haven't the slightest idea what they stand for. But I'll tell you what they stand for, and it's glorious in its concept. They want long-term health care for everyone in the U.S. regardless of your net worth or your income, and preferably in your own home. Well, my brother Pete and I did that for two wonderful parents. It will cost you about \$125,000 a year. Believe it. And, therefore, that little program of theirs would bring this country to its knees. There's no possible way. You pay at nine bucks an hour, 365 days a year, the insurance, the food, social security, the payments—come on—yet that's what they are in there for!

Meanwhile, the young people are fast asleep with no organization. I only know of one group, called the Third Millennium, in New York, consisting of people between eighteen and thirty-five, charging nine bucks' dues.⁵ I think they have 200,000 members. They are wonderful, consisting of both Democrats and Republicans. However, that's the only organization. Meanwhile, they are facing the AARP, the Committee for the Preservation of Social Security and Medicare, the Silver-haired Legislators, Gray Panthers, and Pink Panthers. When you are sixty-five you will be picking grit with the chickens and you ain't doing a thing about it! And the eighteen year-olds, we gave them the right to vote. A guy walked up to me the other day who said, "Who speaks for us?" He was walking on his pants and had his cap on backwards. I said, "Well, why don't you speak for yourself? We gave you the right to vote; less than fifteen percent of you use it."⁶ Hell, you're just sitting around playing Beavis and Butthead." I said, "It's over for you, you just get in the cattle chute and we'll goose you along every once in a while." Save your money, because when you are sixty-five it won't be there, but you will have taken care of your parents and your aunts and uncles—that was wonderful of you. We will like that.

Anyway, it's funny—but it isn't funny at all—because many in these senior groups are selfish, totally selfish. They must not care a wit about their

5. See Third Millennium web site (visited Feb. 8, 2000) <www.thirdmil.org>.

6. See U.S. DEPT OF COMMERCE, *supra* note 4, at 300 tbl.487 (Voting-Age Population, Percent Reporting Registered, and Voted: 1980 to 1998) (showing that only 13.5% of 18-20 year-olds voted in the 1998 election).

grandchildren. At least the ones I've talked to say they do, but they don't, or they would be saying, "Look, we don't need a COLA.⁷ We are living in a gated community in Florida where we get the COLA, and buy Calloway titanium golf clubs with it." That's not what the COLA was for. It was for the people who really need the bucks, and it ought to go to the people who really need the bucks. I sound like a Democrat! Yet people are still very calm about health care. Why not? You get the best care in the world, and somebody else is paying for it. They are not bitching yet, but let me tell you. The screws are tightening. By 2008, Medicare will be broke. By 2012, they will begin to draw the social security down. Every seven seconds somebody's turning fifty, and every seven seconds in fifteen years they will be at the pay window, and most will be alive. There's no way it can work. No way.

There's really only one way to correct it: either raise the payroll tax or reduce the benefits. All the other stuff is babble. Some will get you little places: change the CPI, change the accrual rate, change the COLA, change this, change that, private investment—all of those are worth trying, but they won't get you there at 33 billion bucks a month.

There are things being done to correct some of the problems. Thank heaven for Senators Breaux, Gregg, Moynihan, Kerry, Chafee, Roth, and Robb. They are on duty trying to do something, trying to correct things with regard to retirement by utilizing the consumer price index, affluence testing, and so on. Bless them, but don't forget that politics is about pleasing people. That is not an evil statement; politics is about getting re-elected. That is not an evil statement, that is reality. And so you just have to know that when you see the politician, you should ask him or her at a town meeting, "What are you really doing about social security? What are you really doing about nuclear high-level waste?" You know how you handle that, carry a placard that says, "Hell No, We Won't Glow!" or "Nobody's Ever Been Killed!"

What are we doing with nuclear waste? Nothing. There's over 30,000 metric tons of spent fuel sitting under sixty feet of demineralized water at 104 reactors throughout the country.⁸ If the water disappeared from that pool it would become re-critical in ten to fourteen days. That doesn't mean it's going to blow up, just means it's going to start to snap, crackle, and pop. What are we doing about it? Nothing, because you will let a politician come into a room like this and he or she will say, "Just know that they will never bring one ounce of it down this highway." And you hear, "Oh, God, bless you, sir. They will never put one pound of it in the earth here." Oh, thank God Almighty. Ask them what the hell they are going to do with it.

Then, when you ask them what they're going to do about the environment and they start talking about the propellant in shaving cream cans or methane gas in cows, you need to say, "What are you doing about the population

7. COLA: Cost of living adjustment.

8. U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, *Information Digest*, 1998 (visited Mar. 3, 2000) <<http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/NUREGS/SR1350/V10/index.html>>.

of the earth?" Because that's the only issue regarding the pollution of the earth—human beings. When you get into that one, watch the politician run. Then you're dealing with religion and ethnicity and all the hot buttons. So there it is. Civilizations have disappeared because they ate the last fish, shot the last deer, burned the last stack of wood, and that's what happens when human beings overtake an ecosystem. What do we do about it? Nothing, absolutely nothing. They don't want to mess with the church. They don't want to mess with this group or that group.

Well, we are going to leave that one for you, but you will all be lawyers and you will be doing things. Hopefully, you will become deeply involved. "Take part and yet taken apart." Good creed.

One final thing, the toughest one of all I think, is to hear people say that there are these groups in society that are extreme, and they are on many issues, but they make fun of other groups. People are often elitist in their views of what constitutes mainstream America. I'm not part of what is the Christian right because, of course, the saliva test of purity to them is often abortion. I've always been pro-choice, but I once asked this couple, "Are you what we call the Christian right?" He said, "Well, I guess so." I said, "What is it that makes you so sinister, whether you be the Christian right, Jewish right or the Muslim right, what is it that makes you sinister?" They said "We don't know." I said, "What do you believe in?" He replied, "Well, we believe in a higher being, obviously, and we believe that the educational system of America is a total failure, and that some teachers are people like the football coach who, after twenty years, lost four in a row and went on to teach American history." And they believe the entertainment industry is debasing America, and they feel that "the soaps" in the afternoon consist of the horniest people in the world scratching at every possible orifice. As I listened, I thought that really isn't too nutty. But, you see, if you're elitist you make fun of people like that. Elitists do that. They make fun of people. Intellectuals do that.

Let me share with you the most powerful statement about politics from Vaclav Havel, who spoke at a joint session of Congress in 1990. He spoke of the fact that he, a playwright, was the President of Czechoslovakia. He said, "I am not the first, nor will I be the last, intellectual to do this [serve as president]. On the contrary, my feeling is that there will be more and more of them all the time. If the hope of the world lies in human consciousness, then it is obvious that intellectuals cannot go on forever avoiding their share of responsibility for the world and hiding their distaste for politics under an alleged need to be independent. It is easy to have independence in your program and then leave others to carry that program out. If everyone thought that way, pretty soon no one would be independent."⁹ There's his quote—rather tattered—because I always carry it with me.

You don't want to forget that one. And then, too, when you hear people bitching and snorting about politics, remember the definition of politics, here it is. "In politics there are no right answers, only a continuing flow of compromises

9. 136 Cong. Rec. H392 (1990) (address by His Excellency, Vaclav Havel, President of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic).

among groups, resulting in a cloudy, changing, and ambiguous series of public decisions, where appetite and ambition compete openly with knowledge and wisdom." That's politics. I always say to people, if you don't like politics and partisanship, then move to a country where they don't have any politics or partisanship and write me in six months and tell me how much fun you're having where you've lost freedom of speech and the right to express yourself and other freedoms. Democracy is not a spectator sport. People who play it are often criticized and looked down on. And yet look at Ireland. Everyone in that room is a politician. There isn't a single statesman in the room, not a single bureaucrat. They are all politicians, those guys, trying their damndest to make something work. So it is a noble craft. I hope you will think of public life. And it doesn't matter what it is, whether it's the city council, county commissioner, or state legislature. I loved it.

Remember too that any damn fool can be a critic. It doesn't take any brains at all to be a critic. A critic is a product of creativity not his own. And so, let me just say it's a delight and an honor and privilege to be here, and there's lots to do—to do something, be at it. And another one, if you are damned if you do and damned if you don't, then do!

But people sometimes say, "Why did you quit Al?" I hadn't told anyone, but I'll share it with you today. I was losing the most precious thing a politician can have, and that's patience. In the door every year would come the executive director of this or that organization, always bringing a different child, of course, so that he or she could rub off on the expense of the trip. Wonderful people—I watched them grow and mature—I mean that. When they would come in, the first ten minutes was just kind of a bitch session, all from the various communities in Wyoming. And, of course, they would bring in the best man at your wedding. He's there as one of the persons traveling with them, a guy who you haven't seen since law school. They may be paying him to show up in there and work on his old classmate. So you listen for ten minutes, "Why don't you get rid of the B-1 and give it to education," or "Get rid of education and give it to the B-1," or whatever. They always had a solution for everything. Then before they would leave my office they would ask for theirs. I never had anybody come into the office that didn't ask for theirs in some form.

"We don't want an appropriation, Al. We're just looking for a change in the tax code. Just a little change in the tariff there, Al, just a tariff. Nobody pays tariffs. That's all free." I would listen, and in my mind I'd lecture—then I'd lecture for real—and I could see that I was slipping away. Finally, I put a can of bag balm on my desk—a beautiful little green can with a little cow with horns and clover blossoms.

They'd ask, "What is that?"

"Well, that's an emollient."

"I see. What do you do with it?"

“You apply it to the extremities of the bovine members of the quadrupeds that issue a lacteal extract.”

“But I don’t get it.”

“Look, the sun shines on the snow and bounces off the snow up on the udder, cracks the udder, the calf comes to nurse all red and sore and the cow kicks the calf in the head. And you rub on this magnificent balm. It’s even good for your zits and feet and for your hands!”

“But why do you have it on your desk?”

“Ah-hah. If America has become a milk cow with 260 million tits, we need all the bag balm we can produce!”

Thank you very much.