

REMARKS ON PROFESSIONALISM
ORIENTATION AT LOUISIANA LAW SCHOOLS

CHANCES ARE THAT AT THIS VERY MOMENT, THERE IS A VENTURE CAPITALIST IN CALIFORNIA RIDING DOWN THE HIGHWAY IN HIS CONVERTIBLE PORSCHE HEADED TO A PITCH MEETING WHERE HE IS GOING TO LEARN A HIGH TECH COMPANY THAT PLANS TO BRING LEGAL SERVICES TO THE MASSES BUT WITHOUT THE LAWYERS. THE VENTURE CAPITALIST IS ALREADY SOLD ON THE CONCEPT AND PLANS ON CUTTING A BIG CHECK TO INVEST IN THE COMPANY.

THE VENTURE CAPITALIST IS SURE HIS BET WILL PAY OFF BECAUSE HE KNOWS LEGAL ZOOM AND OTHER HIGH TECH COMPANIES HAVE ALREADY AMASSED HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN VENTURE CAPITAL, THAT THE SUPREME COURTS OF WASHINGTON STATE AND CALIFORNIA HAVE OPENED UP THE PRACTICE OF LAW TO NONLAWYERS, AND THAT LAW SCHOOLS ARE SALIVATING AT THE PROSPECT OF INCREASING THEIR ENROLLMENT NUMBERS WITH STUDENTS WHO WANT TO PRACTICE LAW BUT NOT IF IT MEANS GOING TO LAW SCHOOL.

HE ALSO KNOWS THAT LAWYERS ARE NOTORIOUSLY SLOW TO INNOVATE AND THAT THEY HISTORICALLY HAVE BEEN MORE THAN WILLING TO MARGINALIZE EACH OTHER. HE HAS BEEN READING ACCOUNTS OF DISTRICT ATTORNEYS AND PUBLIC DEFENDERS DEMONIZING EACH OTHER FOR YEARS AND RECALLS FONDLY HOW THE DEFENSE BAR FAILED TO RESPOND TO PUBLIC ATTACKS ON TRIAL LAWYERS AND JUDGES WHEN HIS BUSINESSES SUPPORTED TORT REFORM.

YOU WILL LEARN TODAY SOMETHING THE VENTURE CAPITALIST IF FAILING TO CONSIDER AND THAT IS THE LEGAL PROFESSION IS NOT DRIVEN SOLELY BY MONEY BUT RATHER BY A VALUE SYSTEM BASED ON PUBLIC SERVICE, ETHICS, AND THE RULE OF LAW. AND IT IS THIS VALUE SYSTEM THAT HAS MADE LAWYERS THE FOUNDATION FOR DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY FOR OVER 2000 YEARS. YOU WILL ALSO LEARN THAT EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY COMES NOT FROM BEING THE MOST AGGRESSIVE OR BOMBASTIC PERSON IN THE ROOM BUT FROM BEING PREPARED, RESPECTFUL, DECENT, AND HONEST. FINALLY, YOU WILL LEARN THE PASSION THAT BROUGHT YOU HERE TODAY – THE DESIRE TO CHANGE THE WORLD IN A POSITIVE WAY – IS NOT A LICENSE TO BE DISMISSIVE OF OTHERS OR WIN AT ALL COST.

IF YOU LEARN THESE LESSONS AND TAKE THEM TO HEART, I PROMISE THAT YOU WILL LOOK BACK ON YOUR CAREER IN 40 OR 50 YEARS PROUDLY BECAUSE YOU WILL HAVE SPENT YOUR LIFE MAKING A MEANINGFUL DIFFERENCE IN YOUR COMMUNITY AND THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU. THE VENTURE CAPITALIST, ON THE OTHER HAND, WILL LOOK BACK WONDERING WHY HE BET AGAINST A PROFESSION THAT HAS BEEN AROUND FOR OVER 2000 YEARS.

I WISH YOU ALL OF THE VERY BEST IN YOUR STUDIES AND ENCOURAGE YOU TO PURSUE YOU TO USE YOUR EDUCATION TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE. IF THERE IS ANYTHING I OR THE LSBA CAN DO FOR YOU, PLEASE LET ME KNOW. MY EMAIL ADDRESS IS MCUNNINGHAM@JONESWALKER.COM. MY TELEPHONE NUMBER IS 504-582-8536.