



5-8-2007

My Retirement Speech, May 8, 2007

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Repository Citation

Landever, Arthur R., "My Retirement Speech, May 8, 2007" (2007). *Law Faculty Presentations and Testimony*. Paper 36.
http://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/fac_presentations/36

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My Retirement Speech May 8, 2007

Wow! I didn't know I was such a wonderful guy! I shouldn't have been so modest all these years.

Time flies when you're having fun! Thank you David, Geoff, Steve, Sheldon, and Joel, and Brad and David for your kind thoughts. Thanks Sandy and all the others who had a part in making this party. I don't want to give a long list of people who have been kind to me through the years here. That would be too long a list. Besides, this party is about *me!*

I want to thank all of you so much for coming and celebrating with me and my family. I want to thank those unable to come, who have expressed their fond sentiments. I want to tell you that retirement to me means recharging my batteries. And I want to wish you well.

I have based my decision that now is the time, on the experiences of Alan Ruben, Lou Geneva, Bill Taback, and Steve Werber. I expect that I too will be able to use my newfound flexibility to have more fun with my family and more fun at the law school.

Before I came to Cleveland Marshall, I taught political science at a small branch of the University of Minnesota. My chair informed me one day that I would be expected to tow the department's line at the faculty meeting. I must say I was quite concerned. This did not seem like academic freedom, to me. Of course, I didn't do what he wanted. Needless to say, he was not happy about it.

I must say I had some concerns at my job interview at Cleveland Marshall. The faculty at the time was at war with each other, over the legitimacy of the then Dean. While Steve Werber was interviewing me, he got into what seemed like a heated debate about the Dean, with his closest friend and colleague. And later that day, several faculty members approached me, declaring themselves the "loyal opposition" to the Dean. I wasn't sure what I was getting into.

But I decided to come. Joining Cleveland-Marshall turned out to be the **second-best** decision of my life!

In a way, teaching here has not been easy on my children. They know how much I love Cleveland Marshall. As they've grown into fine adults—Debbie and I are very proud of them—they assumed their jobs would always be great too. But they didn't realize that loving your job meant teaching at Cleveland Marshall. David Barnhizer and I always talk about how lucky we have been here. What a great job, except for grading of course!

What students! I love teaching them. They are the heart of our enterprise. I got this bow tie from my students in Constitutional Law this academic year. I truly appreciated their show of affection for me. I was quite touched.

It's a cliché to say that a teacher learns from his or her students, but it's true here. This term, of course I've had some fine students. But I have an exceptional student in my interviewing course who's been educating me all term.

As for Constitutional law, during the last week of classes, the Supreme Court came down with a major abortion decision in *Gonzales v. Carhart*, two days before the last class. I handed out some materials on the decision. We had much work to cover on the last day, but I decided to spend some time talking about the case. One student, as usual, made particularly perceptive comments. He and I got into a discussion about what Justice Kennedy, in his majority opinion, had said, on a particular point, exactly. He challenged me on it and I promised him an email. I reread the opinion, quoted the exact language and did send him that email. I met him in the hall a day or so later. I expected him simply to concede the point. Instead, he went on to explain the thrust of his position, which I then conceded. Right there and then, and without his asking, I offered to write him a letter of recommendation.

What colleagues, you all have been! Faculty and staff, helping me whenever I asked and being gracious in hearing me out, even though I'm sure I have frustrated many of you by my positions, which probably stamped me as a "fence-sitter." I've had a wonder-filled time here.

Where do I go from here? In an important sense, I'm staying right here, perhaps not coming in as early or leaving quite as late. During the next academic year, I hope and expect to be teaching an undergraduate political science course in Constitutional Law, here at CSU, as I've done a couple of times before. And I told Geoff, I consider myself a utility infielder, being willing to teach the subject, in the law school in an emergency. I will be taking on a number of speaking and writing projects, including giving a presentation on Justice Scalia this fall.

Of course, I will be traveling with Debbie. Our first stop, Dublin. I expect to be the "Ugly American, singing "Danny Boy" in a Dublin pub, challenging all comers, and impressing the natives. It may come as a surprise to you, but I had considered going into show business, as a song and dance man, while attending NYU undergraduate school. Two of my professors had gone into show business. Well, actually, they had gone on TV to teach their courses early in the morning on a program called "Sunrise Semester." But I really already had show business experience. I had had the lead in my college musical, getting rave reviews. Well not quite rave reviews. I was disappointed that the student reviewer had merely written in the student newspaper, "Landeaver was adequate." And the reviewer had been my best friend! Not after that! But at least he didn't say barely adequate. Besides, what did the word "adequate" mean anyway? Originalists like Scalia would look to the meaning understood by knowledgeable people at the time of the musical review. Fortunately, I've never been an originalist. I'm in the "living constitution" school of analysis. I hunt for spirit and purpose and changing meaning. I look at context. I'm quite flexible. Why "adequate" could even mean "superior" in some situations!

So despite the rave review, I chose law. I've never regretted my decision. Well, maybe I have regretted it once or twice.

Immediately after law school, I was already bringing in the big bucks. Well, not quite. Actually, I first moved into the YMCA in lower Manhattan for a few months. And then the YMHA, in upper Manhattan for a couple of years. There, I decided to take piano lessons. My teacher was a student at Julliard. My teacher gave me a cardboard keyboard, to use, to supplement my practicing on a real piano. Little did he know that I rarely had a piano available to me. But I practiced on that cardboard keyboard for hours at a time. I became quite proficient. And I became enchanted with the sweet music I imagined myself playing. And at the same time, I had found the secret for not disturbing anybody on my floor of the Y. After Debbie and I got married, Debbie came upon my cardboard keyboard and asked me about it. One day, my cardboard keyboard was gone and my imaginary piano talent has seeped away ever since. But I think I've retained my love of imagining and brain-storming from that cardboard keyboard.

In addition, I'll be spending more time with my grandchildren. Max, is 9, and loves riding his bike and playing with his X box, even more than school. His mom, our graduate Michelle, told him she'd be taking him out of school today at 2:30 p.m. He insisted on getting out at 12:30 p.m., I gather to make sure that they all got here on time. Thanks, Max. Meggie is 5. She'll be starting kindergarten in the fall. I told her that I'd be there on her first day and to make sure to tell her teacher that I'd be happy to read books to the children. Mikey is 4. He loves to R- U- N, carrying his favorite dinosaur, Sue, of course. I think we'll go to Kenya to practice on the hills there. Livvy is 3. I told her that I may try out to be a member of the Imagination Movers group. Jack is 15 months. He's just beginning to walk, and he's already part of the gang.

You may think that I'm in my second childhood. If so I've been there for forty years. In Minnesota, in the 1960s, every week, over the local radio station, I used to read stories to children, sometimes making the stories up as I talked. And I began to compose children's songs. Irving Berlin used to take some of his old songs out of his trunk, dust them off, and have hits on his hand. That's not quite been my experience. Recently, I decided to dust off some of my old children songs and to compose some new ones. I took them to several Shaker public school choral directors. The Shaker High School chorus director looked them over and suggested I try the middle school. So I went to Woodbury, and the music teacher there suggested I try an elementary school. So I went to Fernway. Finally I got some encouragement! Mrs. Lambert, the Fernway choral director took a couple of my songs and said she would consider them for possible future use. Who knows, one day my songs may actually be performed!

I know Cleveland Marshall is heading in the right direction, and getting better and better. It has the right combination of old-timers, new timers, and mid-timers. I know that Geoff will not try to make us the Harvard of the Cuyahoga, all at once. I know he understands that we all are sensitive creatures who will produce best by encouragement. That's why he has wisely chosen a nuanced, incremental approach, encouraging on, the good, decent, talented and dedicated people who are Cleveland Marshall.

To all of you, I truly appreciate your being here for me now, and for these many years. And I know that I have the good wishes of many of my colleagues who are not able to be here today.

I will not soon forget your kindness and your friendship. Besides, as I said, I'll still be around, observing your efforts and perhaps participating in some of them.

I wish all of you well, professionally and, more important, personally.
Thank you.

Arthur Landever