

Remarks of William J. Bowe

45th Reunion of the Class of 1967

The University of Chicago Law School

The Racquet Club

May 5, 2012

Welcome

Welcome classmates and guests. Many of you have traveled long distances to get here and we're appreciative of your efforts.

Moment of Silence

Before we go any further, I'd like us to spend a moment in silence, in memory of our deceased classmates. They are listed in your program.

[Moment of Silence]

MC Again?

I'm standing before you again at this reunion as a result of several of your stubborn classmates. Last fall, as Linda Neal began her organization of our program, she asked me if I'd be master of ceremonies, such as this no-pay job is. I asked her to poll the rest of the committee. Here are their far from supportive views:

Art Massolo: As long as Bill is willing to do it, I am willing to put up with him.

Peter Levin: I think we need to continue with Bill until he gets this MC thing right.

Thanks for your support, I think.

Thanks to “What Next?” Panel

I'd like to thank our “What Next?” panelists this afternoon, Steve Sacher, Gene Dye, Art Massolo and the others there. For those of you that weren't at the Law School, it was quite a thought provoking session dealing with work, age, retirement and life span. The whole discussion scared me so much I think I'll skip the panel at our 50th Reunion.

Distinguished Guests – Phil C. Neal and Elaine Morris

Among our many distinguished guests here this evening is our former Dean, Phil Neal. Phil is distinguished for many reasons, but one is that he has successfully and fully lived one path of the “What Next?” question our classmates were pondering this afternoon. Our other distinguished guest is Elaine Morris, Norval's widow. We're honored to have you both with us.

Phil, would you please offer us a few observations from your unique perspective, as you have done at our past reunions?

[Phil C. Neal --- Brief Remarks]

Reunion Committee Menu Selection Problems

Next, I'd like to thank Linda Neal for her usual leadership in getting our reunion program organized. I have often wondered why Linda is so totally devoted to the University of Chicago and why she has become so important to the institution. Recently, I began deep research on this subject at the Regenstein Library. While I'm not a professional historian, I share with you tonight my strong belief that Linda is the daughter that Robert Maynard Hutchins never publicly acknowledged.

Though it's past us now, we had a very hard time this reunion with tonight's menu. I originally suggested we choose from one of the four basic food groups from the food pyramid. You remember the food pyramid. At the bottom is canned, above that are fast food, frozen or takeout.

After I was shouted down, Tom Gottschalk said he wanted beef. In particular, he wanted Pink Slime. Yes, that's the Pink Slime you've been reading about. This is also known as Lean Finely Textured Beef -- LFTB for short.

I immediately called up the University of Chicago's Committee on Student Life to get guidance. They said they knew nothing about LFTB, but they had fully approved LGBT.

Tom said while Pink Slime wasn't nutritious per se, it didn't have all that many carcinogens and it would no doubt give our inner selves a healthy workout.

Then Roberta Ramo put in her two cents. She said her cardiologist husband, Barry, had seen a recent study that found one of 10 deaths are caused by red meat.

That prompted successful dieters on the Reunion Committee, like me, to lobby for strictly vegan fare tonight.

Lester Munson, Mr. Statistics, knocked this idea down saying that if red meat causes one of 10 deaths, it must mean nine of 10 are killed by vegetables.

That's when we said to the Racquet Club chef, "Cook what you want. But remember, you're cooking for seniors, so go heavy on the roughage."

Paper Bag Kerfuffle

I don't want to make a big thing about it, but we had a bit of a kerfuffle during the cocktail hour this evening. I found a paper sack in a corner of the room with a note attached. The note said, "Death to NATO and the Broken Leadership of the Klass of 1967." Class was spelled with a backwards "K" that looked like a swastika.

The bag smelled like it had a pastrami sandwich inside. Now, though I'm not a forensics expert by any means, I do watch a lot of CSI. That's how I know that C4 explosive smells just like pastrami.

Because my mother brought me up to take bomb threats seriously, I excused myself and put in a call to Bernadine Dohrn. Bernadine immediately put me at ease. She said she had just been funning with us. When I asked her what was in the bag, she said it really was a pastrami sandwich.

I asked her if there was anything else she wanted me to pass along to the group. “Yes.” she said. “Tell the class that Bill and I are deeply sorry. We apologize for absolutely everything, from all the way back!”

Changing Dreams and Ambitions from Law School to Today

When I reflect on the 45 years since law school, like many of you, I face the fact that my dreams have dramatically changed.

In law school, I had three main ambitions. First, like many of us, I wanted unlimited power. I also wanted not to be called on by Wally Blum. Finally, I dreamed of getting a higher grade than Frank Zimring in Frank Allen’s criminal law class. Failing miserably in achieving these dreams has caused me over time to reorient my life goals.

Forty-five years later, my dreams are completely different. Both my dreams today have revolved around popular culture.

This last year I developed a serious crush on reality TV star, Snooki Polizzi, of the *Jersey Shores* show. Thinking she was my friend, I had confided in Linda Neal about my crush. I told Linda that if I ever met Snooki, I’d say to her, “You’ve been a bad girl. Go to my room.” Linda told me I shouldn’t talk like that. She said, “Don’t be a sexist, misogynist dinosaur. BROADS hate that.” You can only imagine how depressed I became when Snooki recently announced she was having another man’s child.

Also Depressed Due to Strikeouts in Social Media: Twitter and Facebook

Another dream that has been shattered for me this year was my ambition to conquer social media. The fact is that I’ve been striking out big time online. I have zero followers on Twitter.

I even have trouble following others. Last week, I walked up behind a younger colleague at Encyclopaedia Britannica where I work and asked if I could follow her. She turned around and slapped me.

I do have two Facebook friends. Unfortunately, one is an encyclopedia salesman and the other is my barber.

I used to have three friends on Facebook. I met the last guy on Facebook through the Unlucky in Life Lottery Losers Support Group.

He wrote on my wall that he'd had a rabbit's foot for over 30 years, but that his other leg was completely normal. I think you know why I had to defriend him. I'm sure you agree with me that people just shouldn't say things like that.

Personally, I think Facebook is a lot like a prison. You waste a lot of time there, it's so boring you write on walls, and, frequently guys you don't know that well try to poke you.

Introduction of Frank Zimring

Speaking of unnatural acts in prisons is a perfect segue to our speaker this evening: incarceration expert and our classmate Franklin Zimring.

Frank is now the William G. Simon Professor of Law and Wolfen Distinguished Scholar at the University of California Berkeley School of Law.

After beginning his law teaching career at the University of Chicago immediately following our graduation, he joined the Boalt Hall faculty in 1985 as director of the Earl Warren Legal Institute. He has also been a visiting professor at Yale University and the University of Pennsylvania.

Frank's major fields of interest are criminal justice and family law, with special emphasis on the use of empirical research to inform legal policy.

Frank is the author or co-author of many books on topics including deterrence, the changing legal world of adolescence, capital punishment, the scale of imprisonment, and drug control.

Most recently, Oxford University Press published Frank's book dealing with the phenomenon of New York City's declining crime rate.

The New Yorker's reviewer of *The City That Became Safe* remarked, "Zimring, a scrupulous scholar, is willing to go only as far as the evidence will take him."

That's Frank for you. Myself, I could never see letting a few facts get in the way of a big conclusion. I've always followed the proposition that, whenever you don't know what you are talking about, you should be free to say anything you want.

When you look back at the arc of Frank's career, it's clear he has risen to the zenith of the legal profession.

In contrast, my career has been flat-lined in a legal backwater working for Encyclopaedia Britannica. This is a bookseller that can no longer sell books. Unlike Frank, Britannica doesn't even get book reviews, it gets obituaries.

But there is another reason I deeply resent Frank.

Along the way, he has also acquired a powerful command of mathematics and statistical processes. I on the other hand have never been able to balance my checkbook without help.

It's not like I have no grasp of statistics. I know that 42.7% of statistics are made up on the spot. I can also tell you that 99% of lawyers give the rest a bad name.

Nevertheless, and as if to rub my nose in my limited understanding of his world, Frank has entitled his remarks this evening, "*Occupational Hazards of Empirical Legal Study*."

Frank, never mind my personal pain, please proceed.

[Frank Zimring: "*Occupational Hazards of Empirical Legal Study*."]

[Q & A]

[Al Bellas, Steve Sacher: The Class Gift]

[Bill Bove: Close]