

Shoes and Justices



By Anna Von Reitz

Let's call him "Ben" --- a kid in my First Grade class at Black River Falls Elementary School, which was a big, old, rambling nineteenth-century brick building with a spooky Mansard roof structure like something out of the Addams Family movies.

Ben was a strapping boy, tall for his age, with pale skin and dark eyes and dark hair swept over from a side part. I always liked him. He was polite and personable and friendly, but he was poor as the pigeons in the park. His family had eleven children. He was in the middle of the pack. And they and their parents were trying to make a go of it on a hard-scrabble worn out dairy farm somewhere in the back of the back country.

Even with a well-oiled system of hand-me-downs, by the time you hit the fifth or sixth generation, things are worn out. So, there was Ben, and we had all returned to school for the fall semester --- most of us in new school clothes and shoes, but not him. He was wearing a ragged flannel shirt with arms too short, a pair of pants two sizes too big, and a pair of old brown leather dress shoes that looked like they belonged on a grown man. He could barely walk in them, but he was trying.

We were all only six years old, but still, his appearance was arresting --- like a scarecrow or someone playing dress up.

To make matters worse, the whole family was "poor proud" and wouldn't take any help.

So we had to do something, but what?

A Gentle Conspiracy between my Mom, my teacher, and a local merchant took place, in which I played a small part. Our teacher contrived a school lesson about feet and had everyone make an outline of their foot as part of the lesson.

Using this as a guide, my Mom and old Mr. Moe, owner of Moe's Shoe Store, and I --- acting under strict secrecy --- found just the right shoes. They and a shoe care kit appeared in Ben's cubbyhole at school. He couldn't believe his eyes, but he put them on. All that winter, I would see him out in the coat room brushing and shining his shoes. So I asked my Mom if I could have a shoe care kit for Christmas.

She smiled and looked bemused, but agreed. That would be one of my gifts. I made good use of it, too. I polished shoes and oiled boots for everyone in the family.

Years later, when I was in college, I had a roommate from Wayzata, Minnesota, a very upscale neighborhood in Minneapolis. She had never seen anyone polish their own shoes. Well, surprise, surprise, I had been taking care of my boots and shoes, thanks to Ben, ever since I was six years old. And I taught her how, too.

Now, people in the State Assemblies who are grappling with the process of electing Justices of the Peace often ask me how they are supposed to find qualified people to serve their Courts.

Obviously, no Bar Association Members can serve in our courts, thanks to the Titles of Nobility Amendment, and that leaves many people feeling alarmed; they are so indoctrinated into the idea that you have to be a Bar Member to be "legitimate" that they don't know what to think or do.

However, virtually everyone knows The Ten Commandments, and that's what our courts use as our law, with reference to earlier deliberations known as case law, but never being bound by prior precedents.

In our courts, the jury is still king and the Justices of the Peace rule upon the rules of the court and letter of the law, not the facts and law in any particular case. The People decide the facts and the law. So, unlike the Bar Courts, where the Judge is king, in our courts the Justices provide a different function.

In our courts, the Justices assist the juries by answering questions about the rules of evidence and testimony and the meaning of any confusing terms and jargon -- "the letter of the law" --- but from there on, our courts depend on the sense of justice and moral conscience embedded in each juror and also upon each juror's ability to sift through facts and reason their way to reasonable conclusions.

Also, unlike the foreign process, we know our Justices. We don't just vote for a name on a ballot and hope that John G. Finkelmeyer is a good guy because he is recommended by the Bar Association.

So, who do you want as a Justice of the Peace?

First and foremost, a Justice in our courts has to know The Ten Commandments, front and back and sideways. You want someone who is familiar with the Bible, and particularly, with the Old Testament Law which is common to Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

Our Justices carry the Bible with them when they enter the courtroom. This is the origin of having people stand up when the Justice enters the courtroom --- not out of respect for him, but out of respect for the Bible and the Law it contains.

Second, you need people who are hard-headed enough to bear the cost of rendering justice. It's not an easy job to sit in judgement, but there are times when punishment has to be meted out in order to preserve the peace and safety of innocent individuals, families, and communities.

So preserving peace and safety is the goal of our courts and you need people strong enough to lay the gavel down in behalf of the whole community when it becomes necessary.

You want Justices who have firm common sense and a wide range of practical experience in life--- not little tweaky-bird college boys who never learned to shine their own shoes. As a result, most Justices of the Peace are, and will always tend to be, "of a certain age".

Justices need to be smart, hard-headed, logical, and honest ---but they also have to walk the line of moral conscience and have sincere care and respect for people in all conditions of life.

Finally, Justices of the Peace have to have an interest in and familiarity with Due Process, Rules of Evidence, and American Common Law --- which have to be learned like any other subjects.

In about three months of hard study, anyone can learn how to put together and run a competent Common Law Court. My experience with the people of this country suggests that we have thousands of men and women who have by various routes, achieved this basic knowledge, but may need to adjust their viewpoint to exclude additional knowledge they have acquired about admiralty and maritime courts.

In other words, we have no general lack of education about the various forms of law, but there is a common degree of confusion regarding the practices that belong in an American Common Law Court and those foreign practices peculiar to Admiralty and Maritime venues.

Thus, finding competent Justices of the Peace may require candidates to go through a process of "unlearning" as well as learning the principles of our Public Law system---- and for many good candidates, that may include sorting out the jurisdictions in their own minds until they have a firm comprehension of Public Law based on The Ten Commandments and Due Process, versus private law based on Codes and Regulations and Judicial Discretion.

Many former Bar Attorneys are now joining our ranks and undergoing just exactly this kind of "unlearning" process. It takes about two years on average, based on our experience, for people who have grown up in and practiced private law, to thoroughly adjust to Public Law.

So, ironically, someone who has never gone to a conventional law school nor practiced in the Admiralty/Maritime Court system is likely to have an easier road and quicker grasp of the foundation principles and practices of our courts, simply because they don't have as much to "unlearn".

One of the key differences between our courts and the foreign courts, is that our courts consider both the facts and the law, and hold the power of jury nullification. In other words, our courts have the ability to directly overturn legislation and uphold constitutional guarantees ---powers that the Admiralty and Maritime Courts do not possess and cannot consider exercising.

Learning to shine one's own shoes is strangely analogous to learning to run your own State, your own Courts, and your own life. It's simple and practical enough so that anyone can learn to do it, and beneficial enough so that everyone ought to learn. Finding competent Justices of the Peace is just a practical matter of looking among the members of your community and your State Assembly to find those who have "the right stuff" to serve.

So start looking for bright, even-handed, common sense people who have their heads screwed on, a knowledge of the Bible, a willingness to serve, a humble heart, and either the direct experience or the willingness to study Due Process, Rules of Evidence, and American Common Law.

A couple years after Ben got those new shoes, things started looking up for his family. His two oldest brothers matured enough to weigh in on the farm work and took enough burden off their Father so that he could take a paid job in town. With his extra income and the older children taking up position to help on the farm, the family began to flourish. Ben had everything he needed from then on, plus, he had learned to polish his own shoes --- a lesson he would pass on.

Last time I went home to Black River Falls, Wisconsin, I bumped into "Ben" at one of the local hardware stores. He had his son and two grandchildren with him. Every shoe was spic and span.

If we don't already know, we can learn how to polish our own shoes and how to run our own courts. It's all just a practical and caring process of taking care of our own country and community, the same way we care for and maintain a pair of good sturdy shoes.

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