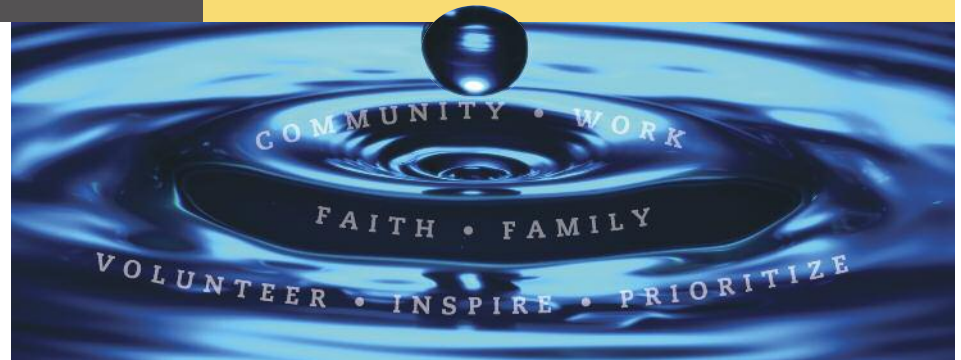




P R E S I D E N T ' S P A G E

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Making Our Lives Count

He was curled up on his bed in the fetal position with his teeth chattering, his face turning blue and his breathing shallow and rapid. It was after 11 p.m. and I sat there telling my son, Samuel, to take deep breaths and relax. Even as I was thinking systematically about what I should do next to help Samuel overcome this unexpected medical emergency, I was also recalling our adoption of him when he was three years old.

Samuel was the first child Joy and I adopted. We were told by the agency that his heart was in bad shape. Yet, he looked and acted healthy in all of the materials we were given. Certainly, we thought, the government officials must be mistaken about his health condition. Therefore, after Samuel arrived in our home, we took him immediately to a heart doctor for a checkup to confirm our suspicions. Unfortunately, the doctor told us that Samuel's heart was in bad shape and there was nothing that could be done to help him. We were devastated, but did not give up. We found a doctor through a friend who was recognized as the top pediatric cardio-surgeon in the world. That doctor was scheduled to retire soon, but he agreed to examine

Samuel. He did and soon after performed one of his last surgeries in order to make a difference in Samuel's life and help strengthen his heart.

Now, 12 years after that important surgery, Samuel was struggling. His oxygen level stats were dangerously low. He was transported to a local hospital and then to Children's Hospital in Birmingham. There, he received great care and, by God's grace, made a wonderful recovery. As I reflect on these events, I am reminded that I have been blessed to be Samuel's father. I have prayed for him, laughed with him and shed tears for him. He is an amazing fighter who has taught me a great deal, including enjoying one day at a time.

All of us probably do a very poor job of enjoying one day at a time. Part of the reason that we don't enjoy each day is because we spend too much time chasing wasteful endeavors rather than focusing on things that matter. **Jere Beasley**, founder of my firm, has always instilled his guiding principle in the lawyers who work here. He told all of us that we must have our priorities in order if we want to be successful in life. Jere says the priorities should be God, Family, Work. I agree with him.

I really don't want to waste another day in my life. I want to savor every moment of every day and proceed with doing good works for others. After all, the days pass by much quicker as I age. The seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks and years are clicking away. Time is more scarce every day. My desire is to make the remainder of my life count, to make an indelible mark on others. I am not gifted to make a mark in some ways (for example, I don't have the science background or opportunity to find a cure for cancer or to bring peace to the world), but I have been gifted in certain ways and I do have relationships with certain people and I do encounter circumstances that are unique to me that allow me to make a unique mark. Sometimes, the circumstances require courage and risk-taking. I pray that I am willing to be courageous and take risks when necessary in order to make my life count. Regardless, life should not be wasted.

This year, I have had the great pleasure to be the Alabama State Bar President. I have been provided many opportunities to love my neighbors—Alabama lawyers and the public that we serve. While I wish I could say not one of these days this year has been wasted, I know that when my tenure ends, I will have some regrets about not accomplishing everything I thought should be accomplished. Of course, I have only had one year which has brought an urgency to continue to work diligently for the bar and its members. Fortunately, I know that **Augusta Dowd** will succeed me and, because of her heart and intellect, will be able to correct my errors and accomplish significantly more during her tenure.

Another bar member, who also happens to be our retiring executive director, **Keith Norman**, has used his giftedness to serve the Alabama State Bar for almost as long as I have been a member. He has left an indelible mark and made the most of his days at the state bar. He is a man who has his priorities in order. Thus, he has been able to serve the Alabama State Bar well while also being devoted to his faith and family. And, I publicly thank him. I thank him for offering wisdom and counsel to me and others in bar leadership. I thank him for being a good financial steward of the monies that flow through the bar office. I thank him for devoting most of his professional career to working at the Alabama State Bar. He is a fine man. I am fortunate to know him and he will be greatly missed.



Norman

When I consider Samuel, his doctor, Jere, Augusta and Keith, I am blessed by their impact on my life. I urge all of us, both individually and collectively as lawyers, to consider the witness of those who have made their lasting mark on our lives and be inspired by them. Let us be lawyers who prioritize our faith, who attend to the needs of our family, who work very hard for our clients and who volunteer to serve others in our communities. I truly believe if we committed ourselves to wasting fewer days, we would not only be happier, but we would impact our spheres of influence for good. ▲

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