

A Little Bit of This, A Little Bit of That

93RD CHANCELLOR HON. A. MICHAEL SNYDER (RET.)



The Editorial Board of *The Philadelphia Lawyer* suggested that it might be nice for me to reinvigorate the custom of the Chancellor writing a quarterly column for *The Philadelphia Lawyer*. When I asked them the type of things that they wanted me to talk about, they said, “Oh, write whatever you want!” Such definite direction has, indeed, been appreciated. I can’t ever remember a law school professor giving me such a broad-based direction.

But, in any case, I thought that I would use these precious inches to talk about some of the issues that challenge us, and some of my interests and activities (a little bit of this, a little bit of that). With any luck, I will be able to blend these disparate topic lines into something that is both coherent and mildly interesting.

Some of the things that give me the most enjoyment are cooking, architecture, design, theatre (especially musical theatre), classical music, and art and photography. I’ve realized that each of

these activities and passions of mine share certain common features: they allow for creativity; they have certain rules and formulas which must be understood to produce a desirable outcome; they challenge on many levels; and the rules, once learned, may be broken for a uniquely effective result. The other similarity among all of these interests or avocations is that they demand a balance in their various components to have a successful outcome. A good meal doesn’t happen without a balance between sweet and sour, soft and hard, salty and spice. A great photo or painting demands a balance between light and dark, mass and void. A musical composition demands a balance between fast and slow, loud and soft, legato and staccato. In short, balance is everything.

By now, you are probably asking, “But what does this have to do with law and the Philadelphia Bar Association?” The answer is simple: in law, as in life, balance is everything. As a professional association, we have a dual obligation: we must continue to speak out for, and advocate for, the interests of the members of our society, when those members may not be able to speak out for themselves or to advocate for themselves. At the same time, we need to be aware of the challenges faced by our members, both on and off the bench, and develop strategies that will help our members meet the challenges they face, whether those challenges are professional or personal. We cannot neglect one population to benefit the other; to do so guarantees that we will fail on both accounts. I believe that our success as an Association demands that we keep in mind the formula for any good recipe: “a little bit of this, a little bit of that.”

During the coming year, you will see a continued focus on creating a recipe for success within the Association. If we put in just the right ingredients, breaking a few rules once in a while, I’m confident that

we will produce a pleasing composition; a masterpiece for now and for the future.

I’m going to enjoy the work. Roll up your sleeves and help me do the cooking! ■

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