

Live Seminar &
Webinar Schedule

MARCH 2010

WINSTON SALEM - 10
WEBINAR - 15
GOLDSBORO - 16
FAYETTEVILLE - 18
SANFORD - 23
DURHAM - 25
WEBINAR - 26
GREENVILLE - 30

April 2010

CHARLOTTE - 1
WILMINGTON - 6
NEW BERN - 8
WEBINAR - 9
BURLINGTON - 13
ASHEVILLE - 16
RALEIGH - 20
HIGH POINT - 22
GREENSBORO - 27
WEBINAR - 29

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Wade and Me at Chapel Hill

I should have know it was going to be a special afternoon last Friday when I got out of my car at the Sheraton Hotel and ran immediately into Jim Heavner, a long time Chapel Hill fixture who owns WCHL there. Five years ago, Wade Smith and I had done a three hour radio interview with Jim on his program called "The Special Hour" that aired over three straight weeks. In that series, we talked about how we met and became friends, how we were opponents in the MacDonald trial, as well as others, and then how he represented me years later.

This afternoon, about an hour later, that same Wade Smith and I got together again for another special hour before the combined Orange and Chatham County Bar Associations. Our meeting was the brainchild of District Court Judge Pat Devine, a fireball if ever there was one. Pat likes to have a glass of wine, sit and talk about life, and then relax with her large Newfoundland at her feet. Her idea this day was to have me speak for thirty minutes about my personal story and then have Wade talk for the balance of the hour on what it was like to represent me all those years ago.

As I listened to Wade talk, I was reminded once again of what it is like to be in the presence of a great lawyer. He spoke, not of the details of representing a guilty client, but of the concept of helping someone restart his life. He spoke of the twin values of telling the truth and being kind. He spoke of teaching someone the importance of accepting full and complete responsibility. And he did it all with a light touch.

Wade has this notion that "the most powerful idea in the universe is that if your enemy or opponent is thirsty, give him something to drink". He believes that works so well in business, law and all walks of life. He laughs and says "no one expects it, and so it catches the other side off guard".

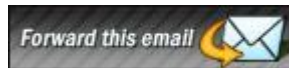
I have long believed that the difference between a good lawyer and a great one is that the great lawyer is someone who helps his or her client to be in a better position at the end of the representation than at the beginning. There are few situations that cannot be made better in some way. I wish this was an original thought on my part. But it isn't. It too came from Wade.

Because his representation of me, as well as that by Rick Gammon, made such a positive difference in my life, and because he agreed to share these thoughts last Friday in a very public way, I wanted to share them with you.

Jim

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www.blackburnseminars.com



Jim's Blogs

For more information about upcoming events, check my website
www.blackburnseminars.com.

In 1993, I turned in my license to practice law in North Carolina, with the result that the Bar subsequently issued a letter of disbarment. As you might imagine, I talk about these matters freely in all my programs.