

## **A Keynote Sampling**

### **I was from Venus and my Lawyers were from Mars –**

A program on ethics and professionalism for lawyers and paralegals based on my experiences as a client when I ran into legal difficulty years ago. My attorneys were two of the best anywhere, and they were my good friends. It was, I am sure, difficult to represent a professional and a former colleague and friend. It was difficult for me taking directions from someone else. In this program, I explore in detail the pressures we were all under and the trust that was necessary, without which, I would not have survived. What makes a good and successful professional relationship? Is it a written understanding between the parties outlining the services to be rendered and the cost that will entail? Is it the attorney being competent? Is it communication between the attorneys and the returning of phone calls? Or is it something more basic like simple trust? What is it that clients really want from their attorneys? The real answer may surprise you.

### **The Unforgiving Minute -**

Rudyard Kipling once wrote that if “you can fill the unforgiving minute with sixty seconds of distance run...you will be a man, my son...” While that is no doubt true, I have learned that your life can take a different turn, based on decisions you make in a single minute, and sometimes there is no going back. How do you make sure you make the best and right decision? How can you avoid mistakes that will follow you the rest of your life? In my life, I made some very wrong ones, and I still live with the consequences today. But I also made some right ones thereafter, and they have changed my life for the better. The wrong decisions were made alone, but the right ones were made with good friends...It is true that no person is an island. Find out how not to make yourself one or how to get off if you are there now.

### **Landmines on the Way to the Top and How to Avoid Them –**

In my twenties, I became a lawyer and often argued cases in the North Carolina Supreme Court. In my thirties, I was the lead prosecutor in the federal murder trial of Jeffrey MacDonald and gained widespread attention and was featured in the bestselling book *Fatal Vision*, and television mini-series by the same name. I was the lead prosecutor, selected by the local District Attorney and the Governor’s office for the special prosecution of the then sitting North Carolina Lt. Governor. In my forties, I became a partner in what was then North Carolina’s second largest law firm. And then I went to hell, largely of my own making. Why did I succeed, and why did I fail? And could any of that apply to you? How can you learn to be successful, how you can get to the top and avoid the possible landmines that may be in your way?

### **Living your life in Technicolor and not in Black and White –**

Isn’t that the way you want to live? When is the last time your life was that way? When was the last time you were carefree and happy? Is it possible to be that way when you are older, or is that the privilege of the very young? These are the questions put to me years ago by my psychiatrist. I have never forgotten them. Living this way is not that difficult. It just requires honesty in being the person you really are. I have learned there is no time barrier involved. It is never too late...to start over or to be happy. After all my problems were made public, and I had no place to hide, after I lost almost everything I had worked my whole life for, I learned that where people put a period, God only puts a comma. Faith, humor, unconditional friendship and love, grace, accepting responsibility, never giving up and angels are the stuff of such a life.

### **Ethics in Life, the Marketplace and Business –**

People are the same everywhere, no matter where they may work or live. And so are businesses. Everyone wants to be happy and successful, to make money, to be rewarded for a good job, to be secure and to be honest. No one starts out wanting to make mistakes. No one wants to be a failure. By asking the question of “how do you want to be remembered”, I talk about ethical decisions that people face every day in their life and work, how to stay out of trouble, how businesses can protect themselves from the mistakes of their people...essentially how to do the right thing, and why that can make a person, many employees and indeed businesses successful and honest and happy. By using some of my own personal life experiences, I can relate what I have learned to hopefully help others and to make sure you will be remembered well.

### **Night Falls Fast –**

The issues of mental illness, depression and even suicide are topics few people enjoy discussing. Yet, they are all alive and happening to some of us every day. I know. I am not qualified as a medical person to give medical advice on these topics. But as someone who became very ill, suffered major depression, was hospitalized for a short time, thought about suicide and ultimately rejected it, I can tell you my story, and what I remember from a dark time in my life. Eventually, against all odds, I became well. I was able to start my life over. I have lived to tell about it. I did not do it alone. No one can. But by shining a bright life in a very personal and dark corner, I want to give people hope, which was the real medicine I needed to make me whole again. This can happen for you and for people whom you know. Let me tell you about it.