

One-Liners . . . That Changed My Life!

24 *“We earn a reputation; we buy advertising.”*

It was unethical in the 1950’s to advertise for clients. We were a “profession” and were to work only for those who asked us, not demean the profession by asking others for work.

The result was that older established firms did well with their repeat clients and public recognition. But it usually took years of waiting to be asked and patiently building a reputation for young lawyers to become self-sufficient. Although the system was slow, difficult, and sometimes abused, it seemed to produce a sense of worth and responsibility that was healthy for the lawyers and the community.

That all changed when the courts decided the public would be better served if lawyers would compete against one another. The flood gates were opened, and solicitation and massive advertising began. Today, they are commonplace.

There is a maxim, *“We earn a reputation; we buy advertising.”* Advertising is like debt: both give us a fast start, but there is a cost for each. Properly used, both can have some benefits. When either is abused, there is a high price personally and as a society.

As an old man, I can’t help but wonder if the cost of our private, corporate and government debt, or the cost of competition, advertising and solicitation by lawyers has been worth it.

Most of us believe life has always been like it is in our generation. Old men know that isn’t true. But it takes a long time to get old.

From Grandpa With Love

A Note From the Writer

Moving into my nineties caused me to reminisce. It was eye-opening to realize how much I had been changed by one-liners. I decided some of these might give others a new insight or a chuckle, so—enjoy! You can reproduce this material, provided the copies are complete, including this copyright note, and circulated free of charge. © 2017 Marvin J. Martin