

PROFESSOR JOHN H. McCORD: A MARVELOUS HUMAN BEING

*Ora Fred Harris, Jr.**

Some individuals are imbued with much goodness; more importantly, some individuals are benefited enormously by such human beings. Indeed, Jack H. McCord (hereinafter “Jack”) is infused with such virtue; and, to be sure, I am a grateful beneficiary. In fact, when I reflect upon Jack from time to time, I am reminded of the following:

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering

. . . .

And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.¹

In view of these inspiring words, I make this heartfelt tribute to Jack.

I. JACK: A MERCIFUL, KIND, HUMBLE, MEEK, AND LONG-SUFFERING PERSON

Compassion is a trait that generally manifests itself in the conduct of a good-hearted person. In fact, this is a common character attribute of some of the protagonists in *The Greatest Generation*.² Yet after reading of the selfless conduct of the Americans profiled by Tom Brokaw, one might surmise that this human trait has lost most, if not all, of its general acceptance in this nation. Nonetheless, when one spends any appreciable period of time with Jack, you are compelled to dismiss this general perception. To be sure, Jack refuses to parrot the fundamental tenets of his

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1. *Colossians 3:12, 14* (King James Version).

2. See TOM BROKAW, *THE GREATEST GENERATION* (1998) (the bestseller that profiles the lives of some Americans that came of age during World War II and, thus, played a prominent role in repelling fascism).

religious faith,³ instead, he steadfastly “practices what he preaches”⁴ by providing succor to others.⁵

Similarly, Jack consistently exhibits unabashed kindness in myriad human interactions.⁶ In this vein, I have observed Jack’s kindness impact the lives of a number of people— his colleagues,⁷ his students,⁸ and his neighbors.⁹ As a result, one can safely say that he has the “Midas touch” in this regard.

Perhaps better yet, Jack is filled with a sense of humility and meekness that is absolutely a breath of fresh air. Without any exaggeration, Jack is the literal embodiment of these fine traits. Because of these various reasons, I suppose, I frequently look forward to having lunch with Jack at the Jolly Roger restaurant in downtown Urbana, where, although I abhor tobacco smoke, I am willing to invoke a “Jack McCord” exception just to be with him for a while. I, moreover, believe that Jack’s unusual long suffering with some individuals in academe, who occasionally become unbearably “full” of themselves, is so heartening that I view our fellowship at the Jolly Roger as a much-needed respite from the stresses of the work environment.

II. THE CONCLUSION TO THIS TRIBUTE TO JACK

Everyone should have the opportunity to interact closely with a truly kind-hearted and decent person. Jack has afforded me this privilege. Indeed, he has been a marvelous, loving human being. Many thanks, Jack.

3. After attending the Holy Cross Church in Champaign, Illinois, with Jack on numerous occasions and journeying to a Jesuit-managed religious retreat outside St. Louis, Missouri, on the banks of the Mississippi River on several summer weekends, I have no doubt that he is a devout Roman Catholic.

4. I am uncertain to whom this colloquialism—practices what he (or she) preaches— can be attributed, but it is a common expression in Arkansas, my native state.

5. I can personally attest to Jack’s compassion under such dire circumstances.

6. I might add that Jack’s unwavering kindness not only extends to human beings but includes his two wonderful dogs, Sparky and Barry, as well.

7. Here again, I have profoundly benefited from Jack’s kindness.

8. Over the many years of his law professorate, Jack has developed long-standing, meaningful relationships with students of all stripes as a result of his unfettered kindness. For example, Edward F. Sutkowski, a prominent attorney and currently an adjunct professor at the College of Law, has a wonderful, long-standing friendship with Jack.

9. Jack’s unbounded kindness has also been demonstrated by his willingness to serve as the caretaker of the pond in the commons of the Yankee Ridge subdivision.