

INTRODUCTION



Why, one may fairly ask, another book? Why this book? I will allow our author to address this inquiry himself (as he must have anticipated such questions), which he does in his opening chapter. Of deep interest to me, however, is what our author does not set out to write about – himself. Autobiographies, he once commented to me, present a temptation and opportunity to embellish one’s accomplishments and person. And so he writes instead, in his easygoing and straightforward style, about what most interests him – happenings in the South Carolina legal system over the course of his legal career since graduating from South Carolina Law School in 1936. (He still actively practices law today, having recently participated as co-counsel in a multi-million dollar class action lawsuit which settled.)

Yet behind the words, underlying the happenings described, emerges the man. It cannot be otherwise. Speaking of one’s true character, Jesus said, “Out of the overflow of your heart, the mouth speaks.” We speak in words, written or verbal, and in deeds. In her splendid book, *If You Want to Write*, Brenda Ueland applies this truism to writers: “The personality behind the writing is so important ... On the paper there are all the neatly written words and sentences ... But behind the words and sentences, there is this deep, moving thing – the personality of the writer. And whatever that personality is, it will shine through the writing and make it noble or greater, or touching or niggardly or supercilious or whatever the writer is. The personality of the writer will be revealed – by the nature of the subject matter, by the events and happenings recounted, and by the manner of description chosen.”

Bruce Littlejohn writes about that which most interests him – the legal system – and especially the lawyers and judges (“bench and bar”) in South Carolina. He typically chooses events and happenings reflecting change, not merely to reminisce but to reflect upon the dynamic

nature of society and laws as well as the constant need to improve and modify the legal system to meet ever-increasing demands. He describes such matters usually as an eyewitness, because he was oftentimes at the forefront or at least in the middle of many such developments. Because of his personal involvement, his keen interest in the legal system, his astute insight into human nature and societal trends, and his uncanny ability to recount events, no one is more qualified than Judge Littlejohn to address such matters of historical interest. As for his own role, our author does not succumb to the temptation to embellish himself or his personal accomplishments, preferring instead to recognize the role of others and the collective good, the best that can be accomplished when people work together (judicial and legislative, bench and bar, lawyers and laypersons) in a non-confrontational, respectful manner toward a common goal for the common good.

Those who have had the privilege and, indeed, the pleasure of knowing Bruce Littlejohn know of his good humor, his fondness for good company, his intelligence, his convictions, his forward thinking and especially his humility. These have been his lifelong badges, as lawyer, legislator and judge. “Humility” derives from the Latin root *humilis*, meaning low, humble and *humus*, meaning ground or earth. It denotes an underlying recognition of one’s role – significant and insignificant at the same time – in the grand scheme of things. It binds the man of accomplishments to the common man. A humble man remains grounded in his relationships with and understanding of people from all walks of life.

Our author was born July 22, 1913, in the rural community of Pacolet in Spartanburg County. He was the youngest of eight children. His father worked as a rural letter carrier and a farmer. Littlejohn was educated in the public schools of Pacolet, then at Wofford College and finally at the University of South Carolina School of Law. At age 23, he was elected to the S.C. House of Representatives where he served for seven years. As a state representative, he was deferred from the World War II draft, but waived the exemption and volunteered to serve in the U.S. Army. Upon his return from the war, he was again elected to the legislature and served as speaker from 1947-49. In 1949, he was made resident judge of the Seventh Judicial Circuit where he served for 17 years before being elevated to the Supreme Court of South Carolina.

After 17 years as a member of that court, he was elected chief justice, serving until mandatory retirement in 1985.

He has been the recipient of many honors: 1) Spartanburg Chamber of Commerce's Neville Holcombe Distinguished Public Service Award; 2) S.C. Bar Foundation's DuRant Distinguished Public Service Award; 3) Kiwanis' Man of the Year Award; 4) Rotary Club Paul Harris Award; 5) Honorary member of Phi Beta Kappa; and 6) Honorary doctorate degrees from Wofford College, Converse College, Limestone College and the University of South Carolina. In 2004, he was presented the state's highest civilian honor, the Order of the Palmetto. Simultaneously, Highway 176, which connects Pacolet where he was born and Spartanburg where he now resides, was named Bruce Littlejohn Boulevard. On this road, he will return to his roots, his home, his humble beginning – to be buried in Pacolet.

– Alan M. Tewkesbury Jr., Esquire
Friend, neighbor and former law clerk (1980-81)