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The "True" Story

Lana Schultz†

"That reminds me of a true story." Anyone who has met Judge Myron H. Bright remembers a "true" story he told them, but few may recall a "true" story written about him. With the exception of his immediate family, few are better qualified to write a "true" story about Judge Bright than his secretary of fifteen years—this writer.

Accolades of Judge Bright's professional prowess have been published before,¹ but few remarks, if any, have been written of his personal prowess. I am referring to those "qualities of behavior... as expressed by physical... activities"² that make up a person's personality. A list of physical activities alone would not provide the full aura of Judge Bright, so I have added some true stories to bring out this charismatic personality.

1. Laughing—loudly, in the middle of a play in New York City—with headphones on.
2. Singing—repeatedly, the titles of songs, with or without the correct lyrics. Does anyone know "Down in Mobile?"
3. Dancing—in the courthouse on his sixty-fifth birthday.
4. Golfing—intensely, not noticing that his motorized cart is heading toward a pond of water.
5. Fishing—passionately, as long as the boat is equipped with a fish finder.
6. Swimming—laps in the pool, and stopping after each lap to visit with vacationers trying to relax poolside.
7. Writing—superbly if his pen is in his hand; otherwise, it must be lost... or in his office... or in his briefcase.

† Secretary to the Honorable Myron H. Bright, Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, 1983 to present.

¹ See, e.g., Jordan Cherrick, Judges Profile, 44 FED. LAW. 26, (March/April 1997); Unveiling of Portrait of Judge Myron H. Bright, 804 F.2d LXXXIII (1986).

8. Traveling—in entourage with family members, and his secretary, to Hawaii for ten days.

9. Sharing—his wife’s home cooking, with family and staff, over holiday meals.

10. Animated—as he conducts marching band music from the passenger side of a car.

11. Teaching—at the age of seventy-five, commuting every week for six weeks to St. Louis University School of Law to teach law students on the subjects of appellate advocacy, brief writing, professionalism, and evidence, and inspiring them with his accessibility to them and with his experience in the subject matter.

Judge Bright’s extraordinary teaching ability has been my good fortune, as he has taught me every day for over 15 years to:

- laugh at yourself;
- live each day joyfully;
- listen with your heart;
- labor hard... then harder, and remain loyal to an extended family
- and to the law.