

OPPOSING COUNSEL: HERB CHAVERS

by Donald Cripe

I first met Herb Chavers about 20 years ago. Herb was still litigating. We represented sisters suing each other over a rather mundane issue. As soon as I received discovery from Herb, I fired off one of my infamous letters, impugning not only Herb's intellect but his lineage as well. Within a few days I received a pleasant telephone call from Herb inviting me to lunch so we could discuss our case.

My first impression when I saw Herb was "I can take this guy." Much to my surprise, I met a true gentleman who is also a gentle man. This began 20 years of me learning gentility and patience from Herb. Oh yes, we settled the case.

Herb is the quintessential Texan in stature, long and lean, no bigger around than a fence post. Born and raised in El Paso, Texas, Herb graduated from Austin High School in 1973. For a while after high school he worked in a pawnshop where he met several military personnel from the nearby base. After a period of indoctrination with those people, Herb became a "war hawk" and joined the Navy reserve in 1974 where he became a legal Yeoman, which is a Navy term for a legal secretary or paralegal. Herb was assigned to the U.S.S. Durham, LKA114. The Durham was a transport ship and one of the last U.S. ships to enter the waters of Vietnam at the end of that conflict. Herb witnessed the evacuation of Vietnam as the Durham transported many Vietnamese refugees.

Though Herb was in a world of his own being, the only legal yeoman on his ship, he was pretty much left alone. On February 22, 1977 — two years, three months, 29 days and three and a half hours after he commenced active-duty — Herb celebrated the end of his tour. During his active-duty period, Herb investigated his spirituality.

Instead of returning to Southwestern Texas, Herb settled in Riverside to attend Cal Baptist University where he began in June 1977. Even with the G.I. Bill, Herb found it necessary to work to put himself through college so he took a job as a laborer in the construction industry. After a short time on the job, Herb's boss suggested that he would be much better off pursuing his education than having a career working with tools so with a handshake and goodbye, Herb refocused on life at school where he majored in business and religion. While attending Cal



Herb Chavers

Baptist, Herb met Suzette, who eventually became his wife. (Herb insists that I not relate the story of their meeting — talk to Herb.) Herb graduated Cal Baptist in 1981 with a B.A. in Religion, and in 1982 with a B.S. in Business Administration.

After college Herb worked for a short while, but was having a difficult time making ends meet. Having legal experience during the Navy, Herb decided that it was time for him to give law school a try. He was so broke that after paying the \$100 law school application fee, he only had eight bucks in his pocket. In September 1983, Herb began

law school at Western State. In his third semester, Herb and Suzette married. Law school was going okay until the summer of 1987 when Herb began to experience distinct flavors in his mouth, although not eating anything unusual, led to numerous medical tests that revealed a brain tumor. It was Herb's desire to continue and finish law school and deal with the brain tumor at a later date. The combined efforts of Suzette and Herb's doctors convinced him to interrupt law school. Fortunately, Herb's surgery succeeded and he entered law school from which he graduated in December 1988. After being admitted to practice law in June 1989, Herb focused on real estate matters, transactional and litigation, probate, conservatorship and guardianship matters, and general litigation with Luchs and Mihelich. Apparently, being comfortable as a litigator, Herb and Suzette welcomed their son Nathanael into their lives in 1992. In 1994, Herb joined Heiting & Irwin as an associate and then opened his own firm in February 1995 to focus on estate planning, trust administration and probate, conservatorship and guardianship matters. In 1995, Herb began his own practice with the generous assistance of Heiting & Irwin who rented him furnished office space in their building making his transition much easier. As is the case when one starts his own firm, for a while Herb had to take on court-appointed guardianship cases and other sundry matters while he began his evolution into estate planning and referring to himself as a "recovering litigator." By 1998, Herb had become a specialist in estate planning. In 2008, Herb was certified by the State Bar as a Specialist in Estate Planning, Trust and Probate Law. Herb now practices what he calls "happy law."

Herb currently occupies a very pleasant and nicely decorated office suite on La Mart Drive in the Canyon Crest area of Riverside. Sharing a friendship with this fine gentleman is always accented with pleasant conversation and his happy reports of successes with his clients. Herb develops close relationships with the entire families of his clients so his professional relationship will continue to grow and he can assist those families' families. If you don't know Herb, I recommend that at the next bar meeting you track down this tall, lanky man, and introduce yourself.

Donald Cripe is a retired litigator currently practicing as a full time mediator, arbitrator, and referee/special master in the Riverside and San Bernardino areas.



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Riverside County Superior Court – Proposed Local Rule Changes

Pursuant to California Rule of Court 10.613(g)(1), which states in part, "...the court must distribute each proposed rule for comment at least 45 days before it is adopted," the Riverside County Superior Court proposes that local rule changes be made, effective July 1, 2015.

To review the proposed rule and form changes (Title 3, Title 5 and Title 7), please visit the court's website at www.riverside.courts.ca.gov and click on Local Rules under the General information tab.

Please direct any comments regarding this proposed rule change to the Court Executive Office, 4050 Main Street, Riverside, Ca. 92501, or you may send them via email.

Comments should be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 17, 2015, so that they can be considered as part of the rule and form adoption process.



MEMBERSHIP

The following persons have applied for membership in the Riverside County Bar Association. If there are no objections, they will become members effective April 30, 2015.

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Kimberley Y. David – Best Best & Krieger LLP, Riverside

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Betty Fracisco – Garrett & Jensen, Riverside

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