

## “When Pride Still Mattered....”

**D**etermination. Self-discipline. Self-restraint. Punctuality. Preparedness. Courage. Resolve. Commitment to doing your best.

In the acclaimed bestseller, *When Pride Still Mattered* (Simon and Schuster, 1999), David Maraniss discusses these qualities as reflected in the life and leadership of Vince Lombardi. Of course, we remember the famous coach of the Green Bay Packers as one of the most iconic sports figures of the 20th century. Coach Lombardi is widely credited with building a football powerhouse during the early struggles of the National Football League. His legacy of greatness endures.

While the potency of the Packers brand resonates, what is seldom remembered is how Coach Lombardi overcame many obstacles and setbacks. His early career was beset with frustrations and disappointments. Indeed, he was passed over for advancement multiple times. When he finally got a head-coaching position, it was not with a robust franchise. Rather, he enthusiastically assumed the leadership of a weak team with checkered finances and dubious prospects. Being from a small market (Green Bay, Wisconsin) certainly augured against the notion that the Packers would one day be perennial champions.

Several years ago, I read Maraniss' book and was captivated by Coach Lombardi's will. He was absolutely determined to maximize the individual contributions of each player, yet to build a team with unified determination. Although I cannot begin to analyze Lombardi's vary-



ing strategies, I was struck by his ability to motivate players from all backgrounds to take pride in their work and to commit to each other to do their best. And doing one's best, in the Lombardi paradigm, was in large part measured by a value system typified by discipline, focused effort, preparedness of mind and body, punctuality, and commitment. In short, very intentional behavior.

I raise the Lombardi example now to urge an examination of your own professional behavior and your interactions with other lawyers with whom you have a relationship. Taking pride in one's work, habits, and behavior is a core value that transcends all endeavors. This sense of pride springs from the quality of one's effort — whether in a well-written brief or a well-delivered presentation. Pride also comes when demonstrating restraint by not overreacting to a given circumstance or ensuring that one has informed the court of the contra-authority bearing

on a given legal issue.

Satisfaction in a job well done is timeless and will never cease to be important. Doing one's best in a positive enterprise will always earn respect. Indeed, modeling such behaviors is key to mentoring and to motivating others to behave in a similar manner. I am convinced, however, that such an approach to practicing does not just happen. Rather, such positive behavior often is the product of modeling the constructive behavior of others and an intention to follow a similar value system.

Over the past several months, as I have traveled throughout Florida, I have talked with countless lawyers of all ages and backgrounds. I am continually impressed that so many in our Bar are committed to doing their best with integrity and commitment. Recently, I spoke before the Public Defender Association, and there was broad dialogue on how some public defenders provide weekly training to associates on ethics, presentation skills, and working with obstinate adversaries. Further, the Young Lawyers Division is focused on practice-ready educational opportunities for young lawyers. Likewise, in speaking at various law schools, I have gained the sense that the vast majority of law students are eager to lead exemplary professional lives.

These commitments are encouraging. However, in relating these impressions, I am mindful that the reputation of our profession is blemished with gross examples of greed,

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dishonesty, sharp practice, conflicts of interest, and elevation of form over substance.

So, back to the teachings of Coach Lombardi: What was it about his efforts, his intensity that motivated players to become their very best, to stretch, to manifest the behaviors of commitment, focus, self-discipline, the elevation of team over self? Why did Lombardi's Packers, some young and some not so young, take pride in their work — not just the outcomes?

Certainly, I recognize that sport and the practice of law are completely different endeavors. Yet, the

values of commitment, preparation, focus, and restraint, are important to success in both realms.

In framing these thoughts, I acknowledge the pressure of our culture to measure success solely by victories and note that the emphasis is often on the urgent and the sensational. As a result, the value of constructive, sustained effort is overlooked.

In the end, though, one's career and reputation are built on consistent, constant efforts of quality. Few long-term accomplishments are achieved with anything less. In this sense, the victory is in the life well-

lived, the career well-served.

Coach Lombardi took pride in his daily efforts as he pushed toward improvement, toward greatness.

I harbor the notion that if we each took greater pride in our work and our day-to-day efforts, the destructive behaviors that besmirch our profession would lessen.

What do you think? Does pride in one's work still matter? □

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in lending on real estate. In Florida, the participation of real estate attorneys as title insurance agents has acted to assure that their clients have enjoyed the greatest protections possible.

W. THEODORE CONNER, Orlando

### Arbitration

It seems the consumers' bar is currently not in favor of arbitration. That led me to review "Re-examining the Presumption in Favor of Arbitration in Complex Commercial Cases" (March 2010).

While my practice is primarily in the area of maritime law litigation, I have had significant experience in arbitrations. In the maritime field, arbitrations still seem to be a favored means of resolving disputes. I find that arbitration of complex commercial cases where millions of dollars are at stake is significantly less expensive than complex litigation either in state or federal court. I found arbitration over relatively small amounts in salvage cases and in credit card disputes to be quick, efficient, and generally with results that are satisfactory to

the parties involved.

One of the real benefits of arbitration is being able to have an arbitrator who has an understanding and experience in the field where arbitration is being conducted. I found that lawyer arbitrators and nonlawyer arbitrators are very helpful to the litigants in resolving their disputes. I am concerned that reaction by our legislature-perceived problems with consumer arbitrations may adversely affect arbitration in other areas.

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