

Alumni Profile

***The General

Richard Brown

The other day I was in Washington, D. C. in search of a large modern office structure along Seventeenth Street, N.W., a search made very dusty and shattering by the blasting, rumbling, and impact of steel against steel, as the city constructs its Metro. My quiet morning stroll along Seventeenth Street increased to a worrisome pace as I wondered if passers-by from Williamsburg were protected from the ultra-hazardous operations by strict liability imposed on Metro contractors. I was most relieved to duck into the entrance of 888 Seventeenth Street, N.W., the home of law offices of Hanson, O'Brien, Birney, Stickle and Butler, and particularly the office of one Major General Arthur B. "Tim" Hanson, United States Marine Corps Reserve, Marshall-Wythe Class of 1940, a senior partner in the firm.

I was thoroughly prepared to interview "The General," gather a few ideas from a prominent alumnus concerning Marshall-Wythe's alumni programs and be on my way. I had prepared a list of questions to break the ice. My interview, I reasoned, would be rather formal, not especially exciting, and rather one sided with my prepared questions being rather quickly exhausted. I would then be back on my way exposing myself to Washington in the mid-Metro era without a hardhat, at the most forty-five minutes later. I was most confident as I announced my name to the firm's receptionist and stated that I was present at the appointed time to meet and talk with Mr. Hanson about our law school.

I was greeted by a man of dynamite with a cigar that shook the confidence of a first year law student the way his two stars and cigar must shake the eagerness of a newly commissioned Second Lieutenant. He greeted me pleasantly and motioned for me to follow. I followed. We entered the office of dark wood and leather of the senior partner of a Washington law firm. His desk-side stenographer was in position waiting to resume her shorthand. The office was also the office of a Major General of the Active Marine Corps Reserve. Momentos of General Hanson's Marine Corps career were displayed. Various cam-

paign awards and the Bronze Star, awarded General Hanson for valor in battle, were framed and displayed recalling the General's World War II participation in the battles of Roi-Namur, Tinian, Saipan, and Iwo Jima. At present, General Hanson is Chairman of the Board of the Marine Corps Reserve Officers Association and President of the Marine Corps War Memorial Foundation. He has served on the Marine Corps Reserve Policy Board appointed by the Secretary of the Navy several times and is presently its President. General Hanson was appointed to the Reserve Forces Policy Board in the Defense Department by Secretary Laird for a term of three years beginning in October 1971.

The subject of my interview resumed his dictation in an effort to clear up the last of Monday morning's correspondence. I nervously fingered for my pen and jotted down a few notes, now and then, as Mr. Hanson fired bits of correspondence my way for a reading that would acquaint me with the scope of his law



practice. He is General Counsel for such organizations as: The American Newspaper Publishers Association, the American Chemical Society, the American Pharmaceutical Association, the National Geographic Society, and the United States Capitol Historical Society.

From doing my homework in preparation for my interview, I discovered that Mr. Hanson had authored various articles as well as a treatise on Libel and related torts. I nervously mentioned that we were studying defamation in Torts class. I was directed to read Hanson on *Libel and Related Torts*.

With the dismissal of the stenographer, I changed chairs to be closer to my subject and we changed topics from libel suits to our law school in Colonial Williamsburg. I began to relax. Mr. Hanson is a William and Mary graduate of 1939, and a Marshall-Wythe alumnus, receiving his B.C.L. degree with a class of twelve in 1940.

As a student at Marshall-Wythe, Mr. Hanson distinguished himself by serving as Aide to the President of the College from 1938-1940. He was instrumental in organizing student opposition to a Board of Visitors resolution to abolish the granting of law degrees in 1939. As a graduate, Mr. Hanson has become further distinguished. He is a former member of the Board of the William and Mary Law School Association and a past President of the Association. He was a recipient of the school's Alumni Medallion for Distinguished Service and Loyalty in October 1955. He was elected to the College's Endowment Board in 1970. Mr. Hanson has served as a member of the Alumni Board of the College of William and Mary. He has faithfully served other institutions as a member of the Board of the Old Boys Association of the Episcopal High School, Alexandria, Virginia, President of that Association, and a Trustee of the High School. Mr. Hanson has served as Chairman of the Board of Governors of the National Cathedral School, Washington, D. C.

I entered Mr. Hanson's office to interview and seek the opinion of a dynamic Marshall-Wythe alumnus on the current struggle to increase alumni interest and overall support for our law school through a coordinated program. Mr. Hanson's insights were most thought provoking for he immediately shifted the burden of developing alumni programs onto the shoulders of the student.

Most of our law school alumni, reasoned Mr. Hanson, maintain an overall attitude of good will toward the law school that can be channelled into one of active participation provided an innovative, professional effort is expended by the law student-law faculty base. Such an effort, if it is to develop into strong alumni support through a thoroughly active alumni program, must rest primarily on the shoulders of Marshall-Wythe students. The practicing alumnus, reasoned Mr. Hanson, is a man in demand in the community; nevertheless, the alumnus is available to respond to the efforts of an interested and dedicated law school student body that is willing to seek an expansion of innovative effort to increase alumni support.

Mr. Hanson, further expanded his belief that the burden must be sustained by the law school student by expressing a belief that such an effort to increase alumni support, if exercised by the student body, will serve a dual purpose of manifesting itself in a degree of cohesiveness within the student body that would counterbalance the school's increased enrollment and diversification. Cohesiveness would, thus, also serve as a base upon which to support active alumni programs, thereby, serving to provide a circuitry of result and a finer law school as a consequence.

Further observations of Marshall-Wythe by Mr. Hanson were focused on the requirement that the law school develop a sense of professional responsibility within the law student. Professional responsibility would manifest itself in fostering a supportive attitude for all law school programs and develop a similar supportive attitude for the law school faculty. Professionalism, according to Mr. Hanson, along with cohesiveness and active internal support and effort to increase alumni participation, is likewise bearing heavily on the shoulders of the law student as he progresses toward a professional career. A professional sense of responsibility at the student level must likewise come from the student, and if properly focused, will bind student, faculty, and alumnus into a coordinated effort for a better Marshall-Wythe.

Bearing the burden, as a Marshall-Wythe student, to increase alumni support, to develop cohesiveness within the student body, and to develop a sense of professionalism, I departed the law offices of Hanson, O'Brien, Birney, Stickle and Butler, for Seventeenth Street five hours later, my forty-five minute interview and my list of prepared questions being merely foolish ideas of a person who had never met "The General". I was not quite sure of how I was going to accomplish and sustain the burdens placed on my shoulders. However, I was certainly inspired to bear the burden rather than shift it.

Mr. Hanson supported his belief that the law student of Marshall-Wythe must sustain the burden of providing an innovative alumni program by referring to the relatively few Marshall-Wythe alumni until the recent law school expansion and effort at diversification of the student body. The relatively few alumni, many of whom have distinguished themselves outside the legal profession, stated Mr. Hanson, have made external alumni organization a difficult chore. The increasing number of law students has shifted the burden of providing alumni programs aimed at increasing alumni support to within the law school, specifically, to the shoulders of the student body. ■