

Tribute to Louis M. Brown (1909 -1996)

by Forrest S. Mosten

THE Beverly Hills Bar Association was Lou Brown's home...and our members were his family. Yet our own grief over his passing is joined by his friends and colleagues all over the world. Many of you may not know that at 87, Lou was fully computer literate—in fact he was the National Moderator for Lexus Counsel Connect's Preventive Law Forum—engaging in daily E-mail with disciples who knew him as **THE FATHER OF PREVENTIVE LAW.**

Just to give you an idea of how his Internet friends loved him, here is just a sample of condolences that followed when Lou's son Harold posted news of Lou's death On-LINE:

From Professor Steven Gillers at NYU Law School:

"Any practicing lawyer will see too many cases in which cheap preventive efforts could have been used to avoid great expense and anxiety later on. Few strive to do something about it. Among those few, no one strived more mightily and persistently than Louis Brown. I first learned of Louis Brown, and once met him, when I clerked with a friend of his, Gus Solomon, who was Chief Judge of the District Court in Oregon and the same age as Lou. Lou's vision of preventive law is part of the lexicon for all of us who think about how the profession can better serve the public."

From Jeff Krivis in Encino:

"Lou saw some of my comments in the ADR Forum and started sending me private e-mails encouraging me to move in directions I had never thought of. I became intrigued by his ideas and asked Woody about him. Woody said he was always willing to meet with others and was generous with his time. I then called him and set up a meeting at his office. My first thought when we got together was how incredible a human being this person was—totally surrounded by intellectual challenges, busy on-line and at meetings, involved in living for now and the future. His office reflected his persona. There were notebooks and more notebooks of projects he was working on and some modest awards on the walls. I asked him what his goals were at the age of 86. "Funny you should ask," he said. He then pulled out a sheet of paper sitting next to his computer with a list of about 15 projects he was working on and asked what I could do to help. We went through the list and I came to realize that even in my lifetime (I'm 40) there was no way all of these things could be accomplished, yet, the work needed to be done. I started my own list and in my own little way hope to carry on some of his work."

From Parry Aftab in Paramus, New Jersey:

"I met him only online. I called him, just to hear his voice once. Only then did I realize how senior he was. I usually look forward to announcements here on CC. This one, however, made me cry. I first learned about preventive



Louis M. Brown

law here, from him. He took pity on someone who couldn't even spell the word correctly, and helped inspire our preventive law audit and retainer program. I would go to him for help and ideas, and he was always there. Unlimited kindness and energy."

Lou Brown loved these installation dinners. For nearly 50 years he attended these events with a light step and a sparkle in his eyes.

A rising star as the third partner in Irell and Manella, Lou came to these dinners with anticipation as he worked his way up the chairs of leadership. On January 5, 1961 (when I was 13 years old) Lou was installed as the President of this Bar Association. On that occasion, he spoke some of the following words as related in his autobiography, *Lawyering through Life*:

"About thirty years ago in a jurisprudence class, Dean Roscoe Pound expressed one of his rarely-made impromptu remarks. I do not remember his exact words, but as nearly as I can quote him, he said, "If you are interested in helping to improve society, if you want to try to make a better world, you should do so through your profession. After all, you will know more about the legal profession than any other, and you need not look elsewhere for a socially useful group. It is a socially useful profession and you can work within it for society's betterment." The legal profession indeed offers great and varied opportunity for service. The bar helps furnish the climate in which individual lawyers perform their tasks.

"I believe that it is significant for associations of lawyers to explore and to research into the causes of the "disease" of litigation, on which most of the public assert that we thrive. For litigation is not our purpose, but rather our purpose is the protection of legal rights. The role that lawyers and their associations play in the prevention of the litigation disease could yet be one of the socially useful stories in the current history of our profession.

"I hope that this association, and others, will foster the efforts to succeed in creating a legally healthier society, whether by making it continually possible to find ways to protect one's rights without litigation."

For the next 36 years until his death on September 19, Lou and Hermione continued to come to this dinner year after year—and for the last several years I sat with them. I recall how he beamed when his name was called and he proudly stood up as a Past President of the Association. But Lou got the most satisfaction when the new Officers and Board were installed. He saw himself in our Bar leaders—and Lou saw these leaders as torch bearers of his many ideas and projects.

And Lou was rarely disappointed. He heard how his Blue Car Project teaching high schoolers about the law was touted year after year as the pride of the Association. He heard raves about the Newlywed Counseling Project.

He heard about the success of our ADR Pledge which encourages our members to talk about mediation with our clients and opposing counsel. All of these nationally recognized programs were Lou's brainchildren.

Most importantly, Lou waited to hear each President reaffirm a commitment to utilize the reputation and resources of the Beverly Hills Bar Association to increase access of justice for the poor and middle class, to work for solutions rather than dwell on problems, and to pay attention to the legal health of the public.

Lou's passing has left a huge legacy and a massive agenda of work for all of us. We'll miss his gentle voice and constant flow of ideas. In the past few years, although he still drove his shiny black Lexis, with a baseball cap on his full head of hair, Lou was bent over as he shuffled into Board meetings. But once in his seat, Lou was never shy about reminding us all that service to the public is our first and most sacred priority.

We'll miss his generosity in so many ways, including anonymously buying a table for law students at each year's Supreme Court Luncheon. So many of us will miss his friendship and guidance that never wavered. He took on our problems as his problems...and our dreams as his dreams.

He was a one man clipping service, sending volumes of articles and citations to many of us on a constant basis. I don't know anyone who could keep up with him.

And while now there will always be an empty chair at these installation dinners, Lou's spirit will always be inspiration for this Bar Association.

I know he would have been proud to hear the goals and quell in the accomplishments of Dan McIntosh, Barry Shanley, John Patton, Linda Mazur, Nick Allis, Emily Edelman... and every President who will take up his legacy and commitment and love for the public that we are privileged to serve.