

"RETIREMENT AS I HAVE EXPERIENCED IT
and seen it Among Fellow Employees"

By

MARTIN STANDARD

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GENTLEMEN:

I have a small PROBLEM, of 'Gigantic' proportions. My good Doctor Bill Rowlett here, tells me that I have glaucoma and a growing cataract.

But be that as it may, the net result is that the blurring of my eyes will not permit me to research 6 or 8 books in the Library as some members do in preparing their Papers. Therefore, I must resort to things which I have observed or experienced in my own life, as Judge Peter McDonald did so nicely in his January Paper on the closing of the DRIVE-IN Theaters.

I think it will help the newer members understand my paper better if I give them a 'brief' sketch of my background.

I was raised on a farm just south of the great city of Elkton, Kentucky, and it was a BIG FARM. The reason I know it was BIG is that there could not possibly have been so much work on a SMALL farm. However, we had adequate labor because we were a large family---I had six brothers and each of them had six brothers. I told that to my maid one time and she said "Sure enough where did all those people sleep"?

ALTHOUGH my Father was a Farmer, he was an astute 'Economist' --and at an 'early age' he informed us that "EVERYTHING that ate on his farm had to 'work, lay eggs or give milk'.

I considered the matter carefully and finally concluded that I was best fitted for WORK, so I 'got with it' and have been working ever since.

My father was also a noted 'Stock Analyst' and I think he would have gotten filthy rich on Wall Street because he would have had no difficulty in telling a BULL MARKET from a BEAR MARKET, or when a BULL became a STEER. For you city raised boys I will explain that a 'Steer' is a 'Bull' which has been castrated, and that is just exactly what happened to the Bull Market on October 19th---it got 'castrated' and changed its personality!!!!

I am sure each of you had a 'PLAY PEN' as a child, and so did I. The 'fenced-in' PLAY PEN for 'me and my dog', and for my twin brother (yes, there were two of us and we were frequently referred to as the 'Double Standard'), and my 1-year younger sister who liked to tag along, extended 1/2 mile each side of our house, 1/4 mile in front of our house and 2 miles back of it, encompassing over a thousand acres of fine farming land like you see around Fort Campbell or South Christian.

Each warm pretty day we three and the dog would strike out to explore a new section of our 'play pen'. This was at the turn of the Century and there were still several remnants of Virgin White Oak and Poplar Forest, with 4" diameter wild grape vines running to the top of the trees. We would shinny up these to the 1st tree limb to see how far we could see. There were hickorynuts, walnuts, hazelnuts and all sorts of

berries. There were birds of all kinds and plenty of game which as we grew older we loved to hunt and to trap for fur.

When it was time to eat, someone at the house would blow the 'Fox Horn' and my dog Jack was trained to answer by barking so that the cook would know that we had heard. Jack then made it his business to see that the three of us turned around and headed for the house. On the way we gathered large bouquets of wild flowers for our Mother, and after eating she would lie on the bed and listen to all 3 of us talking at the same time, telling her of our new discoveries--birds, beetles, frogs or trees, until we were all fast asleep in our 'dream world'.

Those jaunts were a marvelous study in NATURE and I believe that my entire adult life was enriched by those experiences.

Having finished the 'Preamble', lets start on the Paper. My subject is:- "RETIREMENT AS I HAVE EXPERIENCED IT". I gave much of this same paper 15 years ago, but at least half of you have come into the Society since then and there is so much in it that will help you in retirement that I want to give it again.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: (pause) No, that was not a mistake. I intended to say it that way because tonight I am talking to your wives in absentia just as much as I am talking to you men directly.

WHY? ---- because my subject is "RETIREMENT" and Gentlemen, 'Retirement' is like LIFE itself --- a sorry event without a good woman to share it with.

So, I hope that each of you will make some mental or

written notes on what I have to say and go home and talk them over with your wife.

I do a lot of teasing and get kidded a lot about my 'widow women', BUT LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING:- In the Algebraic 'Equation of Life', 1 good wife is equal to a dozen widows of unknown quality.

NOW, you and I realize that once in a while nearly every wife's head comes unscrewed, but don't let it disturb you--- just set her down and screw it back on correctly. She will love you for it, even if she doesn't admit it at the moment!

That is far better than trying to trade her in for a new model, BECAUSE virtually all of the new models come with their heads 'welded' on backwards and they don't have an adjustment screw.

If by retirement time you have not made a good wife out of the one you married, it is your fault and you will just have to live with what you have.

"RETIREMENT" --- What it IS and what you EXPECT may be two entirely different things. However, most of you have been successful in your work-life, with your success being a result of your above average basic intelligence, a disciplined mind, a good attitude toward life and your associates, and your ability to find an interest in almost everything you came in contact with.

These are the same INGREDIENTS that spell success in retirement, and therefore the chances are very great that each of you will find RETIREMENT a surprisingly pleasant experience.

RETIREMENT means different things to different people. To some it means "going to bed" and sleeping life away, getting fatter and fatter by the day. To some it means getting out of a job you did not like and getting into another you think you will like --- this is a bad mistake. To some it means freedom, freedom to get in a car and travel 500 miles a day; freedom to catch all of the fish in the sea; or to do the thousand and one things you have dreamed of doing.

I have enjoyed my 19 years of retirement tremendously and have said many times that the early days of RETIREMENT remind me of the early days of fall when you are harvesting the rewards of a long, hot summer of work. What you have made of your life you will have to live with because the mere process of retiring will not change you one bit.

In general you will be exactly the same kind of person in retirement that you were before retirement, happy and contented or unhappy and miserable.

LIFE can be full of interests if you will school yourself to look for them. Being a member of the ATHENEUM SOCIETY has meant much to me. I have found interest in every paper that has been given. I enjoyed George Boone's and Wendell Rorie's travelogs; Gladstone Major & Norman Lazarre's poetry; William Turner's history; Tom Westerfield's Science; Frank Yost's economy, Sam Traugher's history of medicine and Scubba Diving;

and the many, many biographical, philosophical and literary reviews. Some of you 'new members' have given some real jewels, and some of you have as fine a delivery as I have ever heard---"HAL KING" just has to be the best on delivery I have ever heard.

My enjoyment has no doubt been enhanced by the fact that I always came to the meetings expecting great things. AND SO IT WILL BE IN YOUR RETIREMENT --- your ATTITUDE will be the most determining factor in your happiness and YOU are the only one who can do anything about your attitude.

You will be about as happy as you want to be. If by nature you found excitement and joy in your work-life---if you loved your parents, your school teachers and your work supervisors, chances are very great that you will find RETIREMENT a wonderful experience, with pleasures on every hand. This is because HAPPINESS is a state of mind.

Some people enjoy being unhappy more than they enjoy being happy --- I had an engineer like this and I did all I could to keep him unhappy, and he really appreciated it!

When Robert Browning said "Grow old along with me, the best is yet to be", he was only writing pretty poetry, or else he had completely missed the boat. He may have been like a psychologist friend at U. K. who was getting his Ph.D. degree. He told me that he had been in college 7 years and had made nearly all "A" grades, BUT that he had never had a date in the

7 years. He said that if he had it to do over, he would not want a single grade above a "C" and would have a date every night. DON'T LET LIFE PASS YOU BY --- live it as you go, each age for itself. Then your RETIREMENT will be enriched by loads of good memories.

One of the very great questions you will have to answer is WHEN should I retire, at what age?

Personally I think 65 is the ideal age to retire. Retiring before 65 gives you too much time to become bored with life. costs you too much financially, and relegates you to the shelf of SOCIAL INACTIVITY too early.

With too much time on your hands you have a tendency to deteriorate. You may become an alcoholic, a bum or just fade away. I am not so sure that your length of life after retirement isn't about the same whether you retire at 55 or 65, because the length of life is to some extent a result of your enthusiasm and happiness.

PREPARATION AND PLANNING:

Planning what you will do will be great fun during the years of approaching retirement, but be realistic and keep in mind that ANTICIPATION is often more fun than REALIZATION. (I think it was King Soloman who said that THAT was the reason Grandmothers made 7' gowns for 5' brides!!!!).

Actually, there is very little/^{planning}that you can do of value more than a year in advance of retirement, EXCEPT to save every dollar you can. This is because you cannot tell what conditions will be at the time of your retirement, nor what the state of your HEALTH will be. No matter how bad inflation becomes your savings will have some value.

MONEY:

"A FOOL AND HIS MONEY SOON PART". I have seen so many sad examples of this among my fellow retirees. Some bought yachts before realizing that they should have bought a 16 foot hull with an outboard motor.

"MONEY TALKS" and if you do not believe it, just lose your money and you will find that you have also lost your voice.

So, if you want to be heard in old age you had better save some of your money.

On SAVINGS:- If you go to a 50% sale the most you can save is 50%. If you stay at home you save 100%.

Just hope that YOUR MONEY OUTLASTS YOUR BODY and the best way to make it do so is not to make too many irrevocable decisions ahead of time, especially if they take a big slice out of your life savings.

BE YOUR OWN JUDGE in regard to money. Pay no attention to so-called "financial advisers" --- if their judgment was any better than yours they would already own the world. Take the position that if you had sense enough to make it you should be the best judge on how to keep it.

NOW, I want to EMPHASIZE this point and I suggest that you never forget it:- "Do not start giving chunks of your savings to your children to save taxes. If at 65 you have not given them something of MUCH greater value than MONEY, don't try to salve your conscience by giving them money now. It will only raise their standard of living to more than they can sustain on their own power, and THAT is BAD, BAD.

HOME, WIFE AND FRIENDS:

This is the category that can spell SUCCESS or complete DISASTER for your retirement. It is the category in which you will have to make the greatest adjustments because from the minute you retire, HOME is going to be the dearest place on earth to you, and your WIFE is going to be the most important person in your life. You will learn the truth of "There is no place like home" and with the passing of each year this will become more true.

You may not have considered yourself an EXPLORER but gentlemen, after retirement you are going to make some real "Discoveries"! The first thing you will have to do is to become "House Broke".

Most of you in work-life will have been owner, boss or a high ranking supervisor in your business. At HOME you will soon discover that you are none of these things, and the sooner you admit it to yourself the happier you will be. Remember, you are entering what has been your wife's "private domain" for

many, many years and she too will be going through a lot of adjustments trying to help you adjust. Your being at home will completely disrupt her daily routine of personal and social life, and if you do not want to become a "persona non grata" you had better do some serious thinking on how you can make this adjustment together. You either succeed together or you fail miserably.

Naturally, having been a "big shot" all of your work-life, you will know better than she how to place the furniture, prepare the meals and to do most things, but don't be fool enough to let her know that you think so.

Do not make fun of her interests. CONDONE, even if you cannot PRAISE, her hobbies and interests. Her bridge, antique sales and idle shopping just to see what is being sold, are just as honorable and sensible as poker, golf, fishing or my plant breeding.

Make your wife as INDEPENDENT as possible, well versed in your financial and business affairs, and completely able to carry on should your health fail. By all means teach her to drive a car and force her to do so until she can do it with safety and confidence.

FRIENDS:

Who will be your friends in Retirement? 'Fewer than you thought' --- many you thought were friends were only

'acquaintances' seeking something you could give them in your work life.

The FIRST and most important FRIEND you should have should be YOURSELF. Yet, many people cannot stand themselves nor to be alone. They just have to have a bunch of cronies to jabber with.

ACCEPT yourself as you are because there is nothing but unhappiness in trying to be like someone else. Do not worry about your 'short-comings'. Most people have more than you do. EVERY ONE OF YOU has some fine quality that I wish I had, but when 'the chips are down' there is not A SINGLE ONE OF YOU that I would rather be than myself. That is because I know my faults and have learned to live with them---whereas I might not be able to handle your hidden faults.

HOBBIES:

Now, THIS can be the fun side of Retirement, and the thing that will keep you alive and vigorous for at least five additional years. (Story of Mr. Hall and peony seeds)

(CMS comments on so many dying 1st year)

(My interests have kept me going 19 years)

Therefore, DEVELOP your interests. These must be your own interest. If you have been too busy to have any interest other than work, that is a sign you have been just plain stupid and without some interest you can count on being "clinically" dead before the 1st year is out.

JUST DO WHAT YOU WANT TO DO, not for any profit or reason but simply because you want to do it. and feel no need to explain to anyone else why you like it.

TRAVEL is nice but you will soon learn how little people are interested in where you go or what you do. No matter where you go they will have been some place better. And as for hearing about your travels, if you had gone to HEAVEN there would not be 20 people who would want to hear about it or to see your costly movies you brought back of the Angels flying around.

READ the books YOU like, not the ones that someone else likes or those that are on the "BEST SELLER LIST". The fact that they are on the Best Seller List is a strong indication that they are worthless compositions of four-letter words or beneath your intellectual dignity.

Do not be afraid to give up one hobby and get another. I have been through dozens --- I even used to "hunt" until I found what I was looking for.

All hobbies are expensive but they are as essential as pills for your health. So, "budget" them under your HEALTH budget and forget what they cost.

HEALTH:

Do not worry about a few aches and pains --- just keep in mind that they are going to get worse, not better. Finally

you will say to yourself "I used to feel better when I was sick than I do now when I am well". As to pain, take the optimistic view --- the fact that you can feel it means you are still alive.

Recently I went to my Family doctor feeling bad. The first thing he said "Well, what is your problem". I started to tell him that that was what I came to him to find out, BUT I thought that would sound too sassy so I said:- "I have a bad case of the "NHH Syndrome" --- he ask:- "What is that"? and I responded "Neither HUNGRY nor HORNY".

On AGING, there is nothing we can do to keep from getting OLD, but there is a lot we can do about HOW WE GET OLD. We can become a 'dried-up Peach' that everyone loves, or we can become a 'spoiled crab' that stinks to high heaven. The choice is yours.

Get a good doctor and do what he tells you to do. Trying to be your own doctor is worse than trying to be your own lawyer.

Don't worry about dying --- it will come when your time is up. The best way to postpone it is to have many interests.

Most retired people complain about their "loss of memory" . Well, let me tell you something --- a good "FORGETTERY" is better than a good memory. Nature so programmed us that we tend to forget the bad and to remember the good. Just think

how miserable we would be if it were the other way around.

Once BEN SELF told us about having had a bad dream but he forgot it before he waked up. WELL, many things in life are a "bad dream" and it is good to forget them.

WHERE TO RETIRE:

Stay close to known surroundings. They have much meaning in happiness and also provide many friends that you would lose if you moved.

THE FUTURE:

No matter what it turns out to be, IF you will apply the wisdom to your retirement that you have to your work-life, there is no reason that you cannot have many years of rewarding life after retirement, with much happiness for you and your family.

(Closing): If it seems that I have dwelt on the dreary side of retirement in this paper, it was intentional, BECAUSE, it would have been impossible to give you both the good and the bad. I chose the BAD because I felt that if I pointed out to you the pitfalls to be dodged, your own good judgment would lead you to the good and exciting things of RETIREMENT. Furthermore, it took only 14 pages to list the bad---it would have taken hundreds to list the GOOD.

HAPPINESS TO YOU ALL. Goodnight,

Martin Standard