

A TRIBUTE TO CHARLIE CANTRELL

Karen Eby*

I am honored to participate in this tribute to my recently retired colleague and friend, Charlie Cantrell. His biography and his many accomplishments are recorded elsewhere in this issue. I would like to focus on how Charlie helped make the faculty of OCU Law the welcoming and collegial group that it is.

Charlie is not only my friend—he may have been my first friend on the faculty. Shortly after I joined OCU Law in 1997, Charlie learned that I was a rock music fan and, in particular, a fan of the Rolling Stones (not nearly as big a fan as Charlie is, but who could be?). And soon after that, the Rolling Stones came to Norman on their “Bridges to Babylon” tour. Charlie generously invited me to accompany him and his wife, Ann, to the concert. Needless to say, since Charlie was the one arranging the festivities, we had outstanding seats. It was the most spectacular concert I’ve ever seen. Within the confines of Owen Field, the Stones set up a stage straight out of D.W. Griffith’s *Intolerance* and put on a spectacular show that I will always remember.¹

Charlie’s generosity continued throughout the time we were both on the faculty. Others have written about how he shared his love for good music and television with them. I was another of the lucky ones who benefitted from Charlie’s endless pop culture resources. In my case, the show was *Deadwood*. Not all of Charlie’s efforts to steer me toward quality shows have borne fruit just yet—*Castle* and *Buffy* come to mind—but I’m keeping a spot in the queue open for each of them.

I’d also like to thank Charlie for his guidance in matters of criminal procedure law, which is a subject particularly well suited for beginning law students to research and to write about. Students from all

* Legal Research and Writing Professor.

1. At the time, to express my gratitude, I gave him a promo standee for the Stones album *Some Girls*. Maybe she is now keeping company with his full-sized Buffy standee.

backgrounds have heard about *Miranda* warnings and other procedural matters through movies and television, so students find criminal procedure law familiar and interesting. Further, there's ample case law about every issue in nearly every jurisdiction. Unfortunately, my criminal procedure background consists of a couple of days of bar review and a lifetime of exposure to police procedurals and lawyer dramas on television. Charlie was always glad to answer my questions about the law and to advise me about whether a scenario I had in mind would be within a 1L student's capabilities. His combined expertise in criminal procedure and pop culture came in particularly handy when I sought advice on a memo problem based on the midseason finale of season 5 of *Breaking Bad*.

Charlie also helped me when I briefly served as the prosecutor of alleged honor-code violations. No one enjoys having to deal with accusations of academic misconduct, which can potentially derail a student's legal career. Charlie served in that difficult position for twelve years. I appreciate his good advice, and the entire school owes him a debt of gratitude for his long service in that position.

Finally, I'd like to express my admiration for Charlie's service to the legal profession through his writing. Charlie has stayed in touch with the needs of lawyers and judges throughout his academic career, and his scholarly work has always served those needs. His works concern subjects that are interesting and useful to practitioners and academics alike. His writing about those subjects is always clear and accessible. He also lets his wry sense of humor shine through on occasion. For instance, after listing insults that prosecutors have used to dehumanize defendants, he observed, "Admittedly, it is a close call whether Hitler or a rodent is less human, but this author votes for the latter."²

At the time of this writing, we have come to the end of our first semester after Charlie's retirement. Our new classes of students will not have the benefit of his wise teaching, and his colleagues will no longer find recorded entertainments in their faculty mailboxes. But after his long and accomplished career, Charlie deserves to kick back and enjoy his life with Ann, his family, and his dogs. Charlie, we miss you, but we wish you a very happy retirement.

2. Charles L. Cantrell, *Prosecutorial Misconduct: Recognizing Errors in Closing Argument*, 26 AM. J. TRIAL ADVOC. 535, 559 (2003).