

M O D E R A T O R

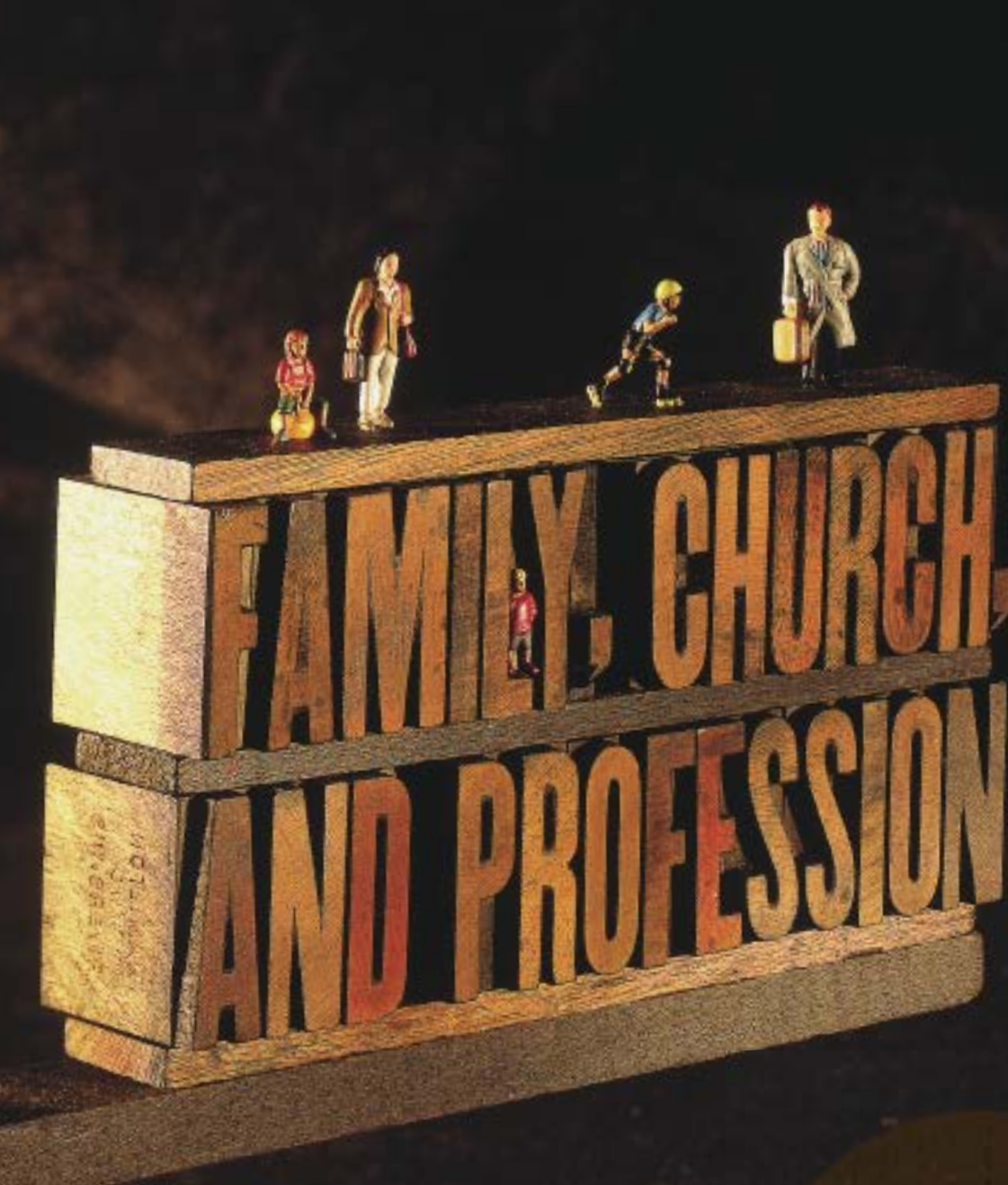
Annette W. Jarvis is a shareholder in the firm of Ray Quinney & Nebeker. She graduated with a JD from the J. Reuben Clark Law School in 1979. She has 27 years of experience practicing business bankruptcies and is a fellow in the American College of Bankruptcy and is included in the list of the Best Lawyers in America in Bankruptcy and Creditor-Debtor Rights Law. A member of the J. Reuben Clark Law Society International Board, she is an advocate for more family-friendly policies in law firms. She and her husband have five children.



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Brent J. Belnap is senior vice president and counsel with Citigroup Inc. He received a BA in political science from Brigham Young University and a JD from Columbia University. Chair-elect of the International Board of the J. Reuben Clark Law Society, he also serves on the advisory board of the New York LDS Professional Association. He is currently president of the New York New York Stake. He and his wife have five children and are expecting their sixth.





#### PANELIST

Elder Keith K. Hilbig was sustained a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy in April 2006. He has served in the Second Quorum of the Seventy, as an Area Seventy, and as president of the Switzerland Zurich Mission (1989–1992). He earned a bachelor's degree from Princeton University and a JD from Duke University.

He practiced as a trial attorney in Los Angeles, eventually forming his own firm. Elder Hilbig and his wife have six children and 24 grandchildren.

#### PANELIST

Elder Marcus B. Nash was sustained a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy in April 2006. Previously he was an Area Seventy in the North American Northwest Area. He earned a bachelor's degree from Brigham Young University, followed by a JD from the J. Reuben Clark Law School in 1984. He was a partner in a major Seattle law firm at the time of his calling to the Seventy. He and his wife are the parents of five children.

#### PANELIST

Elder Steven E. Snow was sustained a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy in March 2001.

Prior to his call he was a senior partner in the Utah law firm of Snow Nuffer. He received a bachelor's degree from Utah State University and a JD from the J. Reuben Clark Law School. He has served the Church as an Area Authority in the Fifth Quorum of the Seventy, a bishop, a stake president, and a mission president. He and his wife are the parents of four sons and have six grandchildren.

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*This panel  
discussion  
was pre-  
sented at a  
J. Reuben  
Clark Law  
Society  
fireside on  
January  
19, 2007.*

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**Belnap** Elder L. Tom Perry, of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has said, “It is imperative that we not neglect our families. Nothing we have is more precious. Our wives and husbands and our children are deserving of the attention of their spouses and parents. When all is said and done, it is this family relationship that we will take into the life beyond. To paraphrase the words of scripture,” said Elder Perry, “What shall it profit a man, though he serve the Church or his career faithfully, if he shall lose his own family?”

**Jarvis** Elder Hilbig, maybe we could start with you. You worked at a large firm in a large city and then started your own law firm. In a large city with a very busy lifestyle, probably a long commute, how did you balance your professional life with your personal life?

**Elder Hilbig** First of all, I’m struck by the fact that there are three elements of this discussion: the role of our family, then of our Church responsibilities, and so also our professional obligations. I don’t think there is a single answer or solution to that problem of balance. It will probably vary among the three of us significantly. But I can tell you of one incident that really had an impact on me. Some 35 years ago I was a brand new bishop of a ward of 700 in Pasadena, California, working in LA and commuting everyday, and going right to the chapel following a day’s work. One Saturday morning, one rare Saturday morning, I was wrestling with our then four-year-old son, who, by the way, is here tonight and is a lawyer, so I couldn’t have damaged him too much in the process. But that Saturday morning we were wrestling together on the living room floor, and at the end of that wonderful experience, he said to me, “Dad, this is so much fun. When are you going to move in with us?” Then I realized that I left the house on the way to Los Angeles before he got up, and I came home from the chapel after he had gone to bed. I must say as a result of that, when I was released as a bishop, we moved closer to where I would work and actually changed our locale in order to provide more time for family without compromising Church responsibilities or employment.

**Belnap** Elder Snow, you decided to practice law in St. George, which I understand is your hometown. The question that I have for

you is this: How does that choice relate to your views on tonight’s topic of balancing life’s priorities? What was it in that decision, among the myriad of opportunities that were presented to you, that was actually at the core of your decision? What caused you to choose a smaller-town practice rather than some other opportunity?

**Elder Snow** When we’re in school, many of our decisions regarding our career are driven by money; we chase the dollars. I just worry that that’s not, in the long term, the best way to look at our careers. We need to really look at where we can be that will best serve our family needs, where we can serve, and what specialty we will be working in. I think too often the decision is driven by chasing the dollars, when we really ought to look into the future and have a vision of how things will look five and 10 years from now. The dollars generally will take care of themselves, but too often that seems to be the only thing we consider. I remember how that was—and it was important, obviously, to finally be able to have some income; but from our perspective a small town worked out very well for our family and for our needs.

**Jarvis** Elder Nash, there are times when our client’s needs are so strong that we can have no balance in our life. How do you deal with crunch times like that?

**Elder Nash** Well, I think there are two things you have to do. One is you have to do what you have to do as a professional. For example, I’m a trial lawyer and, as many of us know, when you’re in trial, those are long days, long nights, and early mornings. You have to plow through it and do it. But the other thing you have to do is not neglect your family. The way you do that is to pick up the phone one evening and join the family in family prayer; if you are off on a business trip and it is family home evening, you arrange your schedule so you can join them by phone for family home evening. If I could just say one thing, too, to the young lawyers out there: I think if you start young setting those parameters, then you’ve set your course and you don’t have to cross some difficult bridges later on in your life. I recall my first trip to New York City with a senior partner at our firm. I was a brand-new lawyer. To my dismay, I dis-



covered that he had scheduled an important witness interview on the Sabbath. When I found out, he and I sat down and I just explained to him how I kept the Sabbath. Never again in my 22 years of practice did I ever have an invitation to work on a Sunday.

**Elder Hilbig** There are times when one stands up and says I cannot, or I will not, do that, whatever the consequences. Most senior partners, when they finally understand, will come back with increased respect for you. They appreciate your having a position and holding to it. A critical element is the attitude. Another is your spouse's participation. Most of us are better lawyers because of the spouse we have, a spouse who will at least remind us of the balance that may have slipped our minds in the heat of the battle and

who can give insights that we might miss. So, I think it's important that a lawyer and his or her spouse be "equally yoked," as Paul said to the Corinthians, in objectives and ultimate purposes, in portioning time and resources. If that unity is there, it is much easier for a husband and wife to move through the levels and seasons of life as a lawyer or one married to a lawyer. It isn't the same in the beginning as it is in the middle, and it isn't the same at all at the end as it was at the beginning. But that equal yoking—those common objectives, expectations, and standards accepted by both—really eases the problem of balance.

**Elder Snow** One advantage of our profession is that once you get through the beginning years, we really do have more flexibility. Those first years are difficult, but one thing I

enjoyed about the law was the level of flexibility we have later on in the profession.

**Elder Nash** I was a brand-new lawyer, and I remember I was sitting in a priesthood leadership meeting at the stake center and the stake president asked one of the bishops how many hours he spent in his calling. I was just stunned at that number. I thought I could never be a bishop. Then just a few months later, I was invited to the stake president's office and asked to serve as a bishop. The first words out of my mouth were, "President, I don't want to be a bishop." (I can't believe I said that.) He said, "Well, no one in their right mind wants to be a bishop." And then he said, "But will you accept the calling from the Lord?" I said, "Of course."

I found that you could do it with the Lord's help. Now the thing that kind of triggered this is Sister Nash. We had this understanding that was almost unspoken but real. She had a veto power. That can sound funny, but it's true. When the pendulum had swung too far one way or the other, she had the right and the duty to stand in front of me and let me know that a time-out was needed.

**Jarvis** Let me turn to the topic of women in the law. Elder Snow, maybe I can ask you. The percentage of LDS women attorneys is increasing. What advice about balancing careers and families do you have for new women lawyers, women law students, or women thinking about going into the law?

**Elder Snow** Well, I personally think it's a great career choice for women. I think it gives them a lot of options, as it does men. It's a career where you can phase back how much you are doing. You can be part-time if you choose. You can take a sabbatical for a time, do your CLE, and come back into practice. I think with technology the way it is now, more women can work at home—more men can work at home. And I think that's all part of the balance that couples who are both employed need to reach. The reality, even in the Church, is both men and women are employed. I happen to personally believe that the choice of a law profession is a good one and gives a lot of flexibility, always keeping in mind that the family really is the most important thing. Whether it is mom or dad or a combination thereof, somebody's got to take



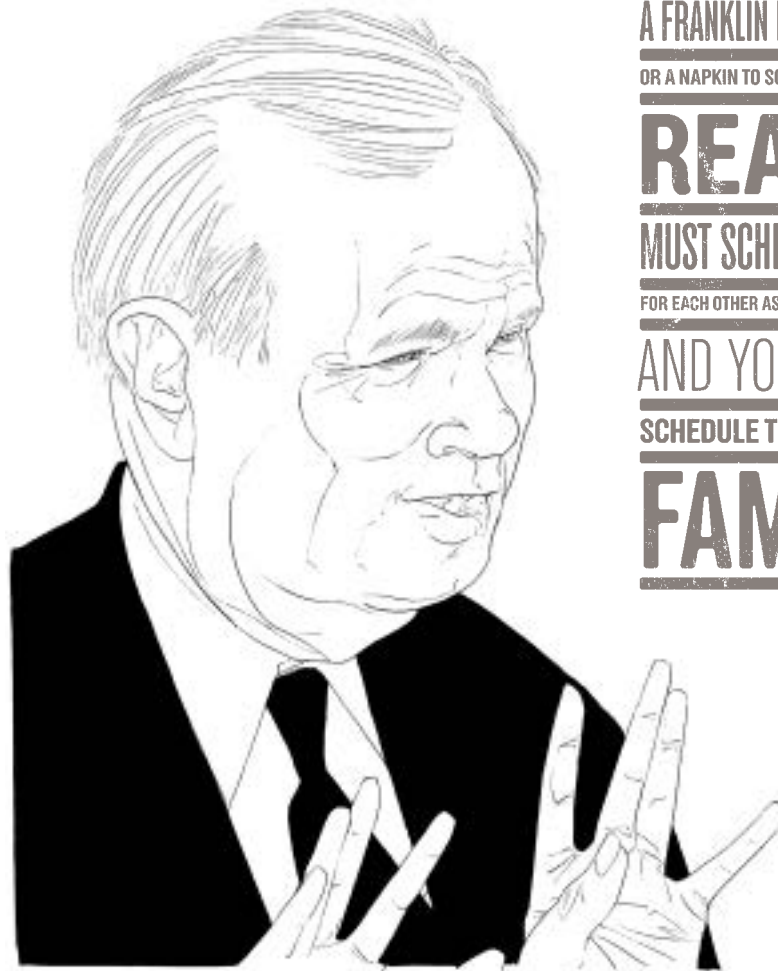
care of this great treasure that's given us in the next generation. This must be our first priority. I think for that to really happen husbands and wives have to have a good strong relationship so they can be good moms and dads to the kids. Everybody works it out a little differently. I think law is a great profession for parents.

**Elder Nash** I just happen to have a copy of "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" in my pocket. Can I read just a couple of lines from that? Then I'll tell just a short story. It says here,  
*The family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children. . . .*

*Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. . . .*

*. . . Fathers are to preside over the families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation.*

I had a paralegal who worked for me whom I felt was heaven-sent. She was not LDS; she was a strong Catholic. She was very bright and capable and was a tremendous asset to my practice. After working for me for about a year, she got married and then had a child. She approached me and said, "Mark, I'm now trying to balance things here, and I'm trying to be a mom. Would you mind if I scaled back some of my time?" I said, "You are such an asset. You just tell me what you want, and you've got it. So, she cut back to about two-thirds/one-third: two-thirds working as a paralegal and one-third at home. Well, she did that for a couple of years, and it was a little inconvenient for me, too, but it worked out just fine. Then she had a second child. Just a few months after that baby was born, she came into my office and said, "I've tried to balance this and I can't. I feel like I need to be at home." I said, "The priority of working for me is in a different universe from the priority of your family and your children. The Lord bless you." She was religious. I could say things like that to her and she knew where I was coming from. So I lost her from my practice but with my blessing. That's the



way she struck the balance. She found the flexibility as long as she could stretch that way, and then she found she needed to be home. She'll probably be back when those childbearing years are over.

**Jarvis** So, do you think, Elder Nash, that the profession has advanced—I guess I would use the term *advanced*—to the point where there are possibilities for women who want or are expected to care for their children at home to have opportunities to work, to balance both family and career?

**Elder Nash** Yes, I think the profession is very open to that. In fact, as those of us who practiced in larger firms understand, my word to her was not sufficient. I told her I'd go to bat for her, but it required the assent of at least

the majority of the partners to make those adjustments. And each time she requested it, it was given to her.

**Elder Snow** I think smart law firms are figuring that out very quickly. I mean, women are too great a resource. A lot of women will practice law for a time, spend time with their children until they are well into their school years, then come back. We've hired women in that season of life who have been just wonderful.

**Jarvis** Do you think, perhaps, that women bring into the profession a reminder to us all about the balance that's needed between families and careers because they often are more focused on that issue? Would you agree with that?

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**BLACKBERRY,**  
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 FOR EACH OTHER AS HUSBAND AND WIFE,  
 AND YOU MUST  
**SCHEDULE TIME FOR THE**  
**FAMILY.**

MONS



**Elder Hilbig** Definitely.

**Elder Nash** When I was a young lawyer, one of the partners in my firm was known as the Iron Lady. She was a tremendous trial lawyer; you didn't want to go against her. I was in her office one time and saw the pictures of her children, and I made a comment. She stopped what we were doing and looked at me, and she said, "Mark, you and I both understand, don't we? We will never do anything more significant than raising our children."

**Belnap** You know, it seems there aren't enough people out there who do understand that, but it is changing, as you say, Elder Snow. At Snow Nuffer you were able to hire

women and give them opportunity and allow that flexibility, and you also, Elder Nash. Is there something, do you think, that perhaps women who are Latter-day Saint lawyers could do to help promote a more family-favorable environment?

**Elder Hilbig** Well, they could be good lawyers in the first place so that they are contributing and making an impression upon their peers, be it in the firm or in the community. There is the burden of being competent, but as you display that competence you win the respect, the admiration, and ultimately the support of those with whom you work who will rally to your cause. So I think being a good example and an effective attorney is ultimately going to result in that reaction by the larger society.

I would also like to add something about deciding our employment. As we were finishing our third year of law school and looking for employment opportunities, Susan and I fasted and prayed to determine what we should do. Finally, we thought we had reached a conclusion: to return to Milwaukee and work for the largest firm in Wisconsin, which, by the way, offered automatic membership in the country club and the down payment on your first house. Both of those were elements in our consideration, and so we decided after prayer and fasting that we would go back to Milwaukee. I called the senior partner and told him that I accepted the offer, and after two more minutes the conversation ended and I hung up.

After hanging up, and I do not say this lightly, such a dark feeling came over me that I realized I had made the wrong decision, despite our efforts. I picked up the phone and called the partner back—this was well within a 120-second period—and said, "You'll never understand, but I want to withdraw my acceptance." He said, "You're right. I don't understand." I left the bedroom where the phone was, and Susan greeted me saying, "At last we've decided! Our lives are unfolding in front of us, and we'll get a sailboat on Lake Michigan!" When I said I had retracted the acceptance, she asked, "What are we going to do now?"

We fasted and prayed again, and ultimately the decision, prompted by the Spirit, brought us to Los Angeles. As Robert Frost said, that decision has made "all the difference" in our lives. How we practice law, where we do it, and for what motives are as relevant to religion as is the mere participation in Church leadership responsibilities. I would hope that those who are anticipating what the next year brings in terms of graduation and employment would seek the promptings of the Spirit.

**Elder Snow** Looking back, I wish I hadn't worried quite as much about economic decisions. I wish I'd just had faith and listened to the promptings. They came, but there were a lot of stupors of thought before they seemed apparent. If we keep our lives pointed in the right direction, the Lord really will take care of us. It sounds trite to say it now, but I don't think I would have worried quite as much had I understood that

the Lord's hand really is in many things that occur and that it's not necessary to get too stressed over what happens.

**Elder Nash** I would just say amen to what they both said. I did not have the kind of grades that Elder Hilbig did; no one offered to pay a mortgage for me. Nonetheless, we had the sense and the feeling about where to go, and as we pursued that sense and feeling prayerfully, doors were opened and opportunities were given us. And as we walked forward, following those feelings, it became evident where the Lord wanted us to be. We are confident we were where he wanted us to be.

**Belnap** Families are said to be our first priority, but then we give them little of our time. As a result, lawyers can and often do experience what I would call a balance crisis. What advice would you give to someone who might be experiencing such a balance crisis and perhaps might not even be aware of it?

**Elder Nash** President Hinckley said something that relates directly to your question. He said it so well: "It is imperative that you not neglect your families. Nothing you have is more precious." He was speaking to priesthood brethren, so he said "your wives and your children," but obviously your husbands and your children are deserving of the same attention. He said, "When all is said and done, it is this family relationship which we will take with us into the life beyond." Then he said—and here's the practical suggestion he makes in answer to your question: "Together with them determine how much time you will spend with them and when, and then stick to it. Try not to let anything interfere. Consider it sacred. Consider it binding. Consider it an earned time of enjoyment. Keep Monday nights sacred for family home evening. Have an evening alone with your wife. Arrange some vacation time with the entire family." That was his practical suggestion. You set the time. The family understands that you're going to have that time. Then you hold to it.

**Elder Snow** I think I'd add to that, I don't care if you use a BlackBerry, a Franklin Day Planner, or a napkin to schedule with, you really must schedule time for each other as hus-



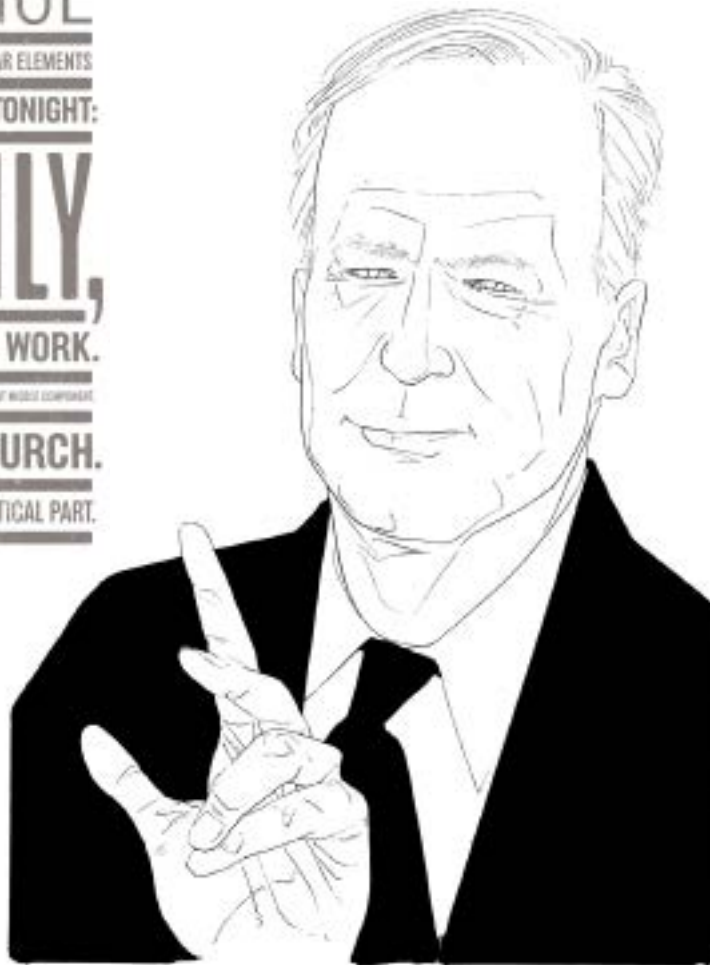
band and wife, and you must schedule time for the family. One of the greatest things I did when my sons were young was to spend time with them one-on-one each Wednesday night. I found when four of them were together, the older ones tended to dominate. When I would get with these younger ones one-on-one, I'd learn a lot about what was happening in their lives. Sometimes it was going to a fast-food drive-in or bowling or to a movie, but just that time, that hour or two on a Wednesday evening, I found very significant. I had to put it on the calendar. It sounds crass, but that's really what you have to do; otherwise, there's just too much that will come up to interfere with quality family time.

**Elder Hilbig** Having served as a stake president with a still very young family, and a

bishop before that, I learned quickly one person couldn't do it. The art of delegation is critical. I told my counselors that each one of us had the same privilege of staying home from a meeting if there was a child's piano recital, and so on. None of us would blame the other for shirking, and none of us who took advantage of it should feel guilty. If you have an opportunity, be it an elders quorum or Relief Society presidency meeting or whatever the case, establish the principle that you can set a limit without disappointing the others or failing to magnify your calling or whatever the negative downside might be. There's nothing wrong with saying, "President, I'm not coming to the PPI tonight. I'll meet you next month." The wise stake president will say, "That's fine. You made the right decision." It may take a while to have the courage

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HILBIG



to say this to a senior partner and even sometimes a bishop or a stake president, but ultimately that principle of family time somehow has to be observed, and no guilt should trail along to diminish the happiness.

**Belnap** Elder Nash, would you tell us about a potential professional setback you were confronted with precisely because of your religion and what lessons you learned from that experience?

**Elder Nash** Our firm had merged with another firm, and the senior partner of the firm that came in was a very powerful man in terms of originating money, which is a big thing in a law firm. He bore sway in our firm. I was up for partner, and the year before he had given us a lecture that the law should be

our life and everything should fall behind it. I disagreed with him, and he understood that and took great umbrage with me. He saw that I just conducted my life the way I had always done and didn't do the things he was telling us we needed to do. He took it upon himself to try to convince the other partners that I didn't deserve to become a partner, because my priorities were out of whack. So they delayed my making partner for six months while the discussion went on. Then, lo and behold, the partners voted to break up the merger, to divorce the two firms as they were, and to send the other group packing—and they made me partner. As I reflected on that experience, I learned that when you try in your imperfect way to follow the Lord's priorities, what He wants to happen will happen. If He had wanted me to be part-

ner there, I wouldn't have been partner and, walking in faith, I would have gone somewhere else. But He wanted me to, and therefore He sent the senior partner packing. He has that kind of a power.

**Jarvis** Elder Hilbig, would you conclude for us?

**Elder Hilbig** I think, as has been said, ultimately we cannot do it alone. I can't remember the last time I played golf or swung a tennis racquet. In this process of balance, I neglected personal things that others might do. I think you have to accept that, but from this sacrifice come great benefits.

How we do it at all, I think, brings us back to what we started with. We're talking about balance and the three particular elements we discussed tonight: family, church, and work. Most of the world doesn't worry about that middle component, namely church. But for us it's a critical part, and I submit that it is the part that makes happiness in the other two things possible. Imagine not knowing the fullness of the restored gospel. Most people live their lives in a box: they're born and they die, and it's only what happens in between that they are aware of. We have the blessing of an eternal perspective, a prism that can look back and look ahead, and with that level of understanding we treat what happens in the box a lot differently.

So, how can we achieve balance? Because we understand the principles of the gospel and know the purpose of being here, we can apportion our time more wisely. It's a blessing to have the responsibility of knowing about the Restoration, of understanding these principles, and as we apply them, I believe, we are empowered to carry out the balance of family, church, and work as effectively as the Lord could expect from us. We know why family is important, and that dictates our decisions. We know why Church service is critical, and that influences our decisions. We know how important it is to provide for our family and to be honest with those who have hired us. It's the best way to live, and it's certainly not a burden. It is a blessing.

#### ART NOTES

*Photograph on pages 14–15 by Bradley Slade. Illustrations on pages 17–21 by David Johnson.*