



Rex Rawlinson,  
president of  
the Fritz B. Burns  
Foundation

## THE FRITZ B. BURNS MEMORIAL LOUNGE

On October 22, 2014, members of the Law School community gathered for the opening of the Fritz B. Burns Memorial Lounge at J. Reuben Clark Law School. After the ceremony, a portrait of Burns was unveiled in the new lobby, where it will hang amid landscapes from Burns's life.



LEFT (2): Rex Rawlinson; Cheryl Robinson, a vice president and director of the Fritz B. Burns Foundation; and Maureen Rawlinson, also a vice president and director of the foundation, with a Law School student and Dean James Rasband before and after the unveiling of Burns's portrait



BELOW: Matthew Richardson, BYU advancement vice president; Curtis Swenson, BYU director of development; and Rex Rawlinson





*Ukrainian artist Marina Lukach used fabric, lace, embroidery, and bits of glass and blown-out tires from the 2014 uprising to create this composition, which represents the people and landscape of Ukraine.*

## THE PRIVILEGE TO SERVE

**David, '91, and Chelom, '91, Leavitt—the Law School's 2014 honored alums—started the Leavitt Institute for International Development in 2005 to teach democracy, advocacy, rule of law, and ethics in law schools throughout Ukraine. Currently the Leavitt Institute teaches about 400 law students in 10 international universities each year. Following are excerpts from the Leavitts' Honored Alumni Lecture, given on October 16, 2014, at J. Reuben Clark Law School.**

**CHELOM** Once when I was a five-year-old I wanted a drink of water. I had all these older sisters, so I asked them to get me a drink of water.

Like older sisters do, they said, "No. Get it yourself."

My response was, "I'm too little." I was begging them to help me, but they didn't. So I got the drink of water on my own.

Sometimes when I have been faced with hard things, I feel like I am "too little," or because I have never done something before, it looks really hard. I think we have all fallen into that trap. In social science we call it "learned helplessness"; we call it "learned incompetence" when it becomes a habit. I have learned that whatever it is I am facing, I can learn. I can change my skills. I can gain a new perspective.

After centuries of oppression, the people in Ukraine have also felt that they are "too little." Different nations have controlled and dominated them,

and changing their governmental system has seemed almost impossible.

**DAVID** In 2004 we had a very busy life. We had a good life. We had six great kids. We had 50 or 60 legal cases that were pressing down on us. And for reasons we couldn't articulate, we felt compelled to drop everything to go to Eastern Europe. We acknowledged that it seemed kind of nuts. Nevertheless, through miraculous ways, in about a three-month period all of our cases resolved themselves. One by one the obstacles to go to Ukraine diminished, and we packed our 42 suitcases and left with six children in tow.

The night we left we were extremely anxious. A solemn sense of foreboding came over us. And we were so busy getting ready that we hadn't looked at a newspaper to see what was going on in Ukraine. Then, in

His own unique way, the Lord spoke peace to us and helped us understand that it would be okay. So we boarded the plane and went to Ukraine.

What we found there shocked us: a country in the grasp of communism and people yearning to break free. We left the United States the day before John Kerry lost to George W. Bush amidst all the color, debate, and fanfare of an American presidential election. We showed up 10 days before Ukraine's election to nothing but blank stares and a sense of utter hopelessness.

We found a system corrupt to its core—in all aspects of society. For example, if you want to go to the university, you have to pay the admissions people to let you in. If you want an A in a class, you have to pay your professor. If you want to register your car, you have to pay a bribe so that the process will be three hours rather than three days. When we arrived, the going

price for a seat on the Ukraine Supreme Court was about \$100,000. The Ukraine Supreme Court salary was around \$700 a month, but judges get the money back during their first year through bribes.

The challenge was to convey to university students that this system wasn't okay. But to convey that message we had to say, "Your responsibility is to sacrifice for your country." We would give this example (not understanding its future relevance): "If Russia was at your border on the east and was coming across, you would expect the army to stand and protect you. You would say to the members of the army, 'If not you, then who?' That's what we also say to you. It takes a stable and ethical legal system for any society to flourish, and if you're going to be the lawyers and if it's not going to be you who stand for that system, then who is it going to be?"

It was a hard method for them to implement both personally and institutionally.

**CHELOM** Our purpose was to motivate the students to understand that they could stand up to this corruption. While they might not alone change the nation, they could alone change themselves. At the beginning of each semester the students were pretty skeptical. They thought it was unlikely that any change could occur in their country. Then, as our volunteer professionals would shuttle through Ukraine in two-week segments, the students would get a personal look at them. And they would ask these professionals, "What's in this for you? Why did you come to teach us here in Ukraine?"

And, without exception, the response would be, "I'm not getting anything out of this. I

came because I want to make a difference in your country. In fact, I have to pay my own expenses to come here." Each semester, we began to see a change in these students as they saw example after example of people willing to make a sacrifice so they could make a difference in Ukraine. Their minds started to open to the possibility of living a life without corruption—a life of privileged service rather than entitlement.

**DAVID** It's that kind of sacrifice that changes these students—it's the example we set, how we act, how kind we are.

**CHELOM** The Leavitt Institute has had 186 professionals volunteer more than 22,000 hours of legal time and has received nearly \$2 million in embassy funding and more than \$500,000 in private donations. If you combine all the in-kind legal work, that adds up to nearly \$4.5 million of private donations. Leavitt Institute professionals have flown nearly three million miles to provide their service. We have had eight LLMS graduate from the McGeorge or BYU law schools and more than 30 Moldovan and Ukrainian interns come to the United States or Canada for three-week internships.

We have often had young people ask us, "What's the most important thing you've done?" Without hesitation I tell them that the most important thing I have ever done is to be a mom. Ukraine has certainly blessed us professionally and personally, but it has also blessed our children. We lived in Ukraine on three different occasions, and they learned about the privilege of service because they were included in the process. Our success would

be pretty meaningless if it had come at the cost of the success in our family.

As an example of our family's growth, when we had been in Ukraine less than a week, I had our twins—they were seven at the time—take the long trip down to the dumpster to take the garbage out. As we passed the dumpster later on our way to church, we saw an old woman digging through the garbage that we had just thrown out, eating the leftovers of our breakfast. My twins cried the whole way to church. On our way home, we talked about what we might do. We certainly could not take care of the whole hunger problem in Ukraine, so we decided that if we had food that was still edible, we would put it in a separate bag, and we would put the bag beside the dumpster so someone didn't have to dig through all the garbage to find it.

**DAVID** Doing what we can do is all that is required of us. Heaven expects us to try. Service expands us; it makes us into people we didn't know we could become.

I remember a walk Chelom and I took in the early morning so we could talk. We saw an old man who looked ancient. He had a neatly-cared-for suit, but the suit was at least 30 years old. He was gently rummaging through the garbage.

It struck both of us how difficult it must be to be reduced to looking for a meal in the garbage when your life had been so much more. He found a partly eaten apple; examined it, looking for a part that was edible; and took a small bite. It wasn't an uncommon scene, but it reminded us of the scripture "I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat."<sup>1</sup> We had already passed him when we

both simultaneously stopped. We took out all the money that we had and gave it to him. It wasn't much, but he looked at us and in a very old voice said, "Thank you, thank you."

How service presents itself will be different for each of us. For the lawyer it may be that the hungered person is a single mother who can't afford a lawyer. For a businessman it may be a single parent who needs some extra time and understanding to get to work. Whatever our circumstances, we face those who represent the Savior. The critical question is not what we give them but that we give when we can.

**CHELOM** Wherever you find yourself, there will be limitless need. We don't have to be in a certain geographical spot. We need to have hearts that are soft, ears that hear, eyes that see the need, and then, more than anything, the desire to be an instrument in God's hands. The Lord can do His own work. It is actually a pleasure—a privilege—that we are included in it. He includes us because our development is also part of His work.

"Be still, and know that I am God."<sup>2</sup> When you start to feel too small, be still and know that you are a part of something bigger, something that will not fail. We live in a contentious world, but we can feel peace. We see the inequities of life, but we don't have to feel overwhelmed. We can know that doing our part is enough, wherever we are and whatever our tasks. Also know that failure is part of success. It builds grit. Failure does not have to define you, but it will refine you. [cm](#)

#### NOTES

1 Matthew 25:35.

2 Psalm 46:10.

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

BYU LAW SCHOOL, BYU LAW ALUMNI, AND J. REUBEN CLARK LAW SOCIETY

## 2015

- April 4**      **General Conference Reception** | Joseph Smith Memorial Building, 10th Floor | Salt Lake City | Noon
- June 12-19**      **Alumni and Friends CLE at Sea Alaska Cruise** | Celebrity Solstice
- July 29-August 1**      **Utah State Bar Convention and BYU Law Reception** | Sun Valley, Idaho
- August 17-21**      **J. Reuben Clark Law Society BYU Education Week Attorney CLE** | BYU
- August 21**      **Alumni Welcome Breakfast** | BYU
- August 26**      **Founders Day Dinner** | Little America Hotel | Salt Lake City | 6:00 p.m.
- August 27**      **BYU Law Alumni Golf Tournament** | Thanksgiving Point | Lehi, Utah | 8:00 a.m.

### REUNION WEEKEND | BYU

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- September 11**      **Alumni and Friends Ethics CLE** | BYU
- BYU Law Alumni Class Reunion Dinners** | 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010
- September 12**      **BYU Law Alumni and Friends Tailgate Party** | BYU Law School West Patio
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- October 1-2**      **J. Reuben Clark Law Society Leadership Conference** | BYU and Aspen Grove
- October 3**      **General Conference Reception** | Joseph Smith Memorial Building, 10th Floor | Salt Lake City | Noon
- October 8**      **Speed Networking Lunch with Students** | Provo

## 2016

- January TBA**      **J. Reuben Clark Law Society Annual Fireside** | Conference Center Little Theater | Salt Lake City | 6:00 p.m.
- February TBA**      **J. Reuben Clark Law Society Annual Conference** | Location TBA
- April 4**      **General Conference Reception** | Joseph Smith Memorial Building, 10th Floor | Salt Lake City | Noon
- May 28-31**      **Washington Weekend** | Supreme Court Swearing In

For more information visit [lawalumni.byu.edu](http://lawalumni.byu.edu) or [jrcls.org](http://jrcls.org).