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## In Memory of Dennis Belcher

C. Ware Palmer

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## In Memory of Dennis Belcher

*C. Ware Palmer\**

When I was 15 years old or so, my father had his estate plan created by a young McGuireWoods attorney named Dennis Belcher. That was the first time I had heard of an estate plan or Dennis Belcher though I knew from my father (a patent attorney) the reputation of McGuireWoods.

There was something about the way my father referred to Dennis. . . a smile on his face. . . a positive tone in his speech. Of course we got to meet Dennis and became friends right away.

Over the years we would hear our father speak of Dennis: they had seen each other at a Bar meeting, or St. Christopher's School. Dennis became the "go to" person for our family – at once comfortable with my Brooklyn born Yale, Virginia and GW Law educated father and my Essex County, Virginia farm born Lynchburg College educated mother. Dennis is one of the few people who could relate to country folk and city folk equally well.

Then, my father got sick. And, Dennis was a there to handle the estate. Now I really learned why we all need an estate plan. With all my mother went through while my father fought an incredible fight, there was Dennis to make sure she didn't need to worry about being okay financially. And, when her brother filed a partition suit, Dennis was there to provide good counsel.

But, one recent event might show just how important Dennis became to our family. First, let me say that I consider our family to be close. We have each other's back. I call my mother almost every day.

So a couple months back, my mother went to the cardiologist and was prescribed a new medicine. She will be 90 years old this year, so nothing really all that unusual. But, when it is you, and your heart, it's a serious matter. Though living at Westminster Canterbury which has its own pharmacy, Mom stubbornly clung to the familiarity of Westbury Pharmacy in the West End of Richmond that she had always used. Apparently, when she tried to get the prescription filled there was a prob-

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lem. Maybe she hadn't updated her credit card information, I'm not sure, but they would not fill the prescription. This upset my mother; panic set in as she started off to try and straighten things out. Well, unfortunately, the more she tried to fix the issue, the worse things became . . . another pharmacy, a check and an envelope with various instructions . . . a mess. What had started early in the afternoon finally got to me at about 6:30PM when she called noticeably upset.

Of course, she confessed, who had she called before me? My brother? No. . .she had called Dennis!

I called Westbury, took care of things and called and left Dennis a message that all was fine and there was no need to call my mother back.

As you would predict, Dennis called me anyway. I told him I was a little offended that I was not the recipient of my mother's first call. Dennis laughed that laugh and said, "my mother used to call the accountant!" We had a good chuckle and got caught up. Then Dennis said something that really showed how amazing he was: "You know, Ware, if you don't mind, I'd like to call your mother back. I don't want her to think I am ignoring her . . ."

I am trying to follow Richard Cullen's words of wisdom. I can be more positive, smile a little more and laugh a little more. . .and do it in honor of Dennis.