

ALUMNI



LITERARY

Lawyers

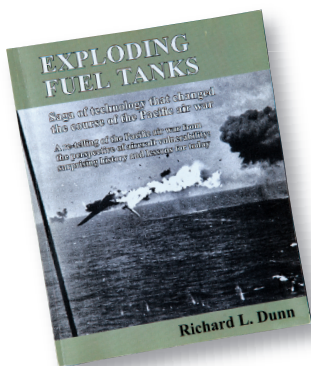
By Mary K. Zajac



It doesn't matter if it's the *New York Times*, Amazon.com, or *Publisher's Weekly*. Check the top of any bestsellers' list and you're apt to find an author who is, or was once, a lawyer. A contemporary list of lawyers-turned-mystery-writers staggers: witness John Grisham, Scott Turow, Lisa Scottoline, Linda Fairstein, David Baldacci, Alexander McCall Smith, to scratch only the surface. But the history of great lawyers being great writers runs deep. Think John Knox and Robert Louis Stevenson, Gandhi, Clarence Darrow, and our current (and many former) president(s).

Alumni of the University of Maryland Carey School of Law are no exception to the lawyerly writing tradition. The following alumni have engaged in explorations ranging from poetry to military history and the deeply personal to the historical and political. They are motivated, they say, by a need to understand the past and a desire to affect future generations.





A personal mission to set history straight prompted **Richard L. Dunn '69** to undertake the investigation that forms the core of his book, *Exploding Fuel Tanks: The Saga of Technology That Changed the Course of the Pacific Air War* (2011). “It’s not hard to find books asserting that most Japanese aircraft in the Pacific war were of flimsy construction,” asserts Dunn, an independent consultant and former General Counsel of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), in the book’s introduction. But was this really

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—Richard L. Dunn '69

the case? Could the Japanese have had more vulnerable aircraft than the Allies, he asks. Eleven chapters of close analysis, detailed diagrams, and abundant photos of aircraft, crashes, and crash sites provide the affirmative answer.

One of the biggest coups in Dunn’s research came early. “Despite my particular interest in the Pacific air war in World War II, I neither speak nor write Japanese,” Dunn explains. “I knew there were radio intercepts, though, and I figured there had to be a repository of these things.” Dunn found a cache of intercepts—some translated, some still in Japanese—at the Naval Service Warfare Center – Crane Division in Indiana. This led to further research via the U.S. Air Force Historical Research Center,

the U.S. Naval Academy’s Nimitz Library, and the U.S. National Archives. “Discovering there were multiple sources was key,” says Dunn. “Some of the insights available in these documents aren’t available elsewhere.”

Dunn likes to joke that the book took 40 years to write because of the decades he spent engaged with what he considered more or less a hobby. But once he decided to follow his late wife’s recommendation and write a book, the process, he says, took a little over a year of both “fits and starts” and writing like “a monk in a cloistered room for days on end.”

Dunn’s next project is an investigation into the disappearance of Brigadier General Kenneth Walker, the highest-ranking military officer still listed as missing in action.

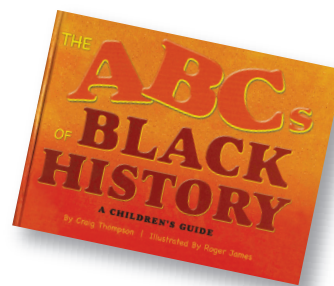
Parenthood was the motivator for attorney **Craig Thompson’s** foray into authorship. The arrival of their first child sent Thompson ’95, a litigator with Venable LLP, and his wife into a frenzy of purchasing, he explains, especially for “items of some cognitive value to stimulate the brain.” What they didn’t find, he says, were books with a cultural sensitivity. So, says Thompson, “with the boldness of being a new parent, I decided ‘I’m going to write [a book].’”

Thompson’s first book, *The ABC’s of Black History* (Thompson Communication Books), was published in 2005, just after the birth of his daughter, Delaney, and featured mostly recognizable African-Americans, with Martin Luther King Jr. for “M,” Stevie Wonder for “S,” and Oprah for “O.” Thompson’s second book, *The ABC’s of Black Inventors*, was prompted not only by the birth of his second daughter, Dana, but by

public response to his first book and Thompson’s desire to spotlight the less well known African-Americans who made contributions to industry and science.

“There’s a lot of black history, and only 26 letters of the alphabet,” jokes Thompson. “I wanted to dig a little deeper to find the unfamiliar.” *Inventors* introduces readers to Thomas Elkins, who invented the quilting frame, and Thomas Jennings, the first African-American to receive a patent (for a way to mass dry-clean clothes); Jennings used the money earned from his patent to buy his freedom. “My hope is that when parents are reading to kids this sparks a desire to learn more about that person,” says Thompson.

Predictably, Thompson’s biggest fans are his two daughters, now 8 and 6, who have attended book signings and read the books themselves to school age groups.



“Some nights, they say, ‘Daddy, can you read my book?’” says Thompson. “They’ve taken ownership of the them.”

Now a father of three, Thompson has yet to decide what sort of literary gift to give his new son—but he knows there are easily 26 more African-American role models that readers could benefit from knowing more about.

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“**L**ook behind,” reads the first line of “Ebbing,” the poem that opens Thomas Janke’s *Sojourner: The Love Songs of Everyman* (Outskirts Press, 2012). It is an

apt beginning for a collection that addresses a full life, from childhood to the Vietnam War, through the birth of children and the vicissitudes of marriages. “Everyman” may be something of a misnomer, however, as Janke ’76, director of the Greater Orlando campuses and Central Florida Regional Director for Webster University, holds graduate degrees in nuclear science and health care administration as well as a JD in law—evidence of the “restless genius” moniker a friend once gave him.

“Most of my ideas for poems come pretty well formed, and I revise along the way,”

Janke explains, noting that poetry “is a very different kind of writing” than the management writing he does in his professional life.

Janke’s poetry is rooted in experience (the poems for “Sojourner” were written over the span of 50 years), and he’s drawn to the sound of words. “I love creating little phrases that provide such pleasure,” he says, like “hammers cocking soft as rats” to describe the way a tank sounds or “the gallow snap of static lines” in parachuting. He also concedes: “a fair amount of my poetry is still, [after many years], about girls.”

Pamela Conley Ulich ’93 has been Deputy Assistant General Counsel for the Screen Actors Guild, an adjunct professor at Pepperdine University, and has served as an eight-year member of the Malibu City Council (including as mayor and mayor pro tem). But it was the birth of her daughter that prompted Conley to write *The Hood* (Harcourt, 2012), her initiation into what she calls “the Motherhood gang.”

In a tone both arch and laced with comedy, Ulich’s first chapter chronicles the laws of being in this gang, from the lingo (“goo goo ga ga”) to the identifying tattoos: a.k.a., stretch marks. “Some Hoods are demarcated either by signs welcoming you or by walls or barbed wire fences warning

“**SOME Hoods are demarcated either by signs welcoming you or by walls or barbed wire fences warning you to keep away, but Motherhood has no boundaries.**”

—Pamela Conley Ulich ’93

you to keep away, but Motherhood has no boundaries,” writes Ulich.

Now the mother of three, Ulich characterizes her book primarily as a love letter to her first child, but also an indictment of the issues facing working mothers. “I worry about choices for her and wanted to highlight the choices or lack thereof when career women decide to have children,” says Ulich. “There’s no safety net.”

Ulich set aside an hour each morning and made writing a routine (“like brushing your teeth,” she says), sometimes getting up at 4:30 a.m. if she got a surge of inspiration. “If it weren’t for that, I wouldn’t be able to do it.”

With her City Council tenure now over, Ulich is concentrating on her next book. The tentative title? *Mommy Mayor*.

Kerry T. Cooperman’s foray into authorship came at the request of New York University law professor James B. Jacobs.

Prior to accepting a position as an associate in the Litigation Department of Stroock Stroock & Lavan LLP, Cooperman ’09 spent a year as a Fellow at the NYU School of Law’s Center for Research in Crime and Justice and was invited by Jacobs, the Center’s director, to collaborate on *Breaking the Devil’s Pact: The Battle to Free the Teamsters from the Mob* (NYU Press, 2011). The book, which spans the intersections of criminal law, labor studies, union democracy studies, and urban studies, focuses on what Cooperman characterizes as “the most important labor case in the last

half century”—when Rudy Giuliani, then a U.S. Attorney, brought a civil racketeering lawsuit against the International Brotherhood of Teamsters’ leadership and the leaders of Cosa Nostra.

Cooperman was the primary researcher for the book. He sifted through court documents, pleadings, and old news articles and traveled to the Teamster’s Democratic Union headquarters in Detroit to examine Teamsters documents and conduct interviews. Cooperman and Jacobs worked closely to draft and revise chapters. “We wrote 10 to 20 drafts of each chapter, and the chapters we ended up with were unrecognizable from where we started out,” says Cooperman, who



concedes that writing is “a challenge when you have a full-time law firm job, but you have to make time and have to be motivated. I’m always trying to write about something that interests me,” he says. ■