

**Distinguished Alumni Award  
Westlake High School, 1994**

***On an Occasion to Honor my Father,  
Judge Leland Rutherford***

Winston Churchill said that courage is the greatest of the virtues because it is what makes all of the other virtues possible. This was not a new thought. Aristotle also considered courage to be the primary virtue. What I have learned from my father, however, is that it is love that makes courage possible.

Woody Hayes, the Ohio State football coach, borrowed from the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson when he used to say that we don't so much pay back in our lives as we pay forward. I have always, in this manner, attributed the love of my father for his family and his character to be a tribute to his parents, and especially his father whom I never knew. My father has paid forward.

In addition to a love of his family, my father had a love for his work as a judge for forty-two years. I always perceived his love of justice and the law to be a moral passion. I understood it to be based on at least an ideal similar to what Atticus Finch described in a closing argument in *To Kill a Mockingbird*:

But there is one way in this country in which all men are created equal—there is one human institution that makes a pauper the equal of a Rockefeller, the stupid man the equal of an Einstein, and the ignorant man the equal of any college president. That institution, gentlemen, is a court. It can be the Supreme Court of the United States or the humblest J. P. court in the land, or this honorable court which you serve. Our courts have their faults, as does any human institution, but in this country our courts are the great levelers, and in our courts all men are created equal.

My father would probably not see himself as a courageous man. He would perhaps see himself as a religious man. I have observed my father in times of both disappointment and success, however, and what I have learned is that it is love that makes courage possible.

