



Martin Fealk

Science



After high school I went straight into the university, Wayne State. I was under the delusion that I was some kind of physicist and pursued that curriculum. Sometime in my junior year, I switched to mathematics and graduated in June, 1963. I spent that summer as a warehouse worker for Hudson's. I was rammed in the back of the foot with a power jack. This led to being off work for a while on workers compensation. My main injury was to the big toe. Because the original trauma was to the back of the foot, the industrial clinic type doctors questioned whether I was malingering.

"Why," I was asked, "if you were struck in the back of the foot is your big toe injured." That was my first clue that a medical degree does not guarantee a grasp of elementary mechanics. I patiently explained to the doctors the basics of wave mechanics and whiplash, a subject I had assumed they understood. Anyway, I recovered, except for an occasional bout of latter day traumatic arthritis in the big toe.

In the fall of 1963 I went on to graduate school and received an M.A. in math in 1965. I stayed in graduate school with the idea of getting a Ph.D.

Mathematics became a bit tedious, but I managed to complete all my doctoral requirements other than dissertation. The problem I had was lack of any serious interest doing a dissertation and an emotionally muddled life. So I went off to California as an assistant professor at Cal State, Stanislaus. I was still pretending I was working on a dissertation. After an academic year in the San Joaquin Valley, I knew for sure I would not write my dissertation, having concluded my interest in doing so had dwindled to a rapidly disappearing quantity. So I quit my job and returned to Detroit.

Some friends with science backgrounds were in law school. We decided to hire out as experts consulting in litigation. This never worked out too well. We were each

too highly individualistic and on the whole lousy business people. We made a corporate decision that my credentials for testifying would be better if J had an engineering degree, rather than just mathematics. Thus J went and got an M.S. in Mechanical Engineering Sciences, awarded in 1973.

By that time the testifying business was over. J had been working for the City of Detroit in its clinical lab at Herman Kiefer Hospital. There J developed the lab protocol for doing hemoglobin electrophoresis to check for sickle cell anemia and sickle cell trait. After getting my engineering degree J moved to the Detroit Water Department as an engineer. It took awhile for the city to decide it could hire me as an engineer. J had achieved the top score on the mechanical engineering civil service exam, but the city wasn't sure it could hire me because J didn't have a bachelor's degree in engineering. After overcoming that problem J worked for the water department about two years.

That job ultimately got boring. It was clear that and any bright high school senior could do it. My supervisor asked me one day to not work the Free Press crossword puzzle at my drafting table. (Yes, we had drafting tables even though J never did any drafting and was completely clueless how to do same.) This was a reasonable request, so J stopped working the puzzle. Instead, J decided to go to law school. So J quit the job.

After three years at the University of Detroit J received a J.D. in 1978. This is the same degree that used to be called LL.B. (Bachelor of Laws) until the lawyers decided that if doctors are going to have a degree with a D in it, then so will lawyers.

During law school J supported myself teaching college math part-time at a variety of local schools. Wayne State, Macomb County CC, Detroit Institute of Technology (now defunct), and Mercy College (now merged into University of Detroit-Mercy).

J have been a lawyer since 1978. J worked for major personal injury firms for about 18 years. Since 1997 J have been solo in a general practice

In 1983 J married for the first time. J was divorced in 1995. J have three children. Daughter Rachel graduated from Michigan State in 2006 in English. She is

now working on a Masters in literature at Portland State (Oregon) and plans to teach high school literature. Daughter Becca just graduated (June 2009) from Kalamazoo College where she majored in Human Development and Social Relations. Next year she will be working for Americorps in Colorado. Son Zack is in his second year at Wayne State where he intends to concentrate in film. He'll be appearing (if he doesn't wind up on the cutting room floor) later this year in the upcoming movie Betty Ann Waters (2009, Tony Goldwyn, director) with Hilary Swank and Minnie Driver. He plays a fellow law student of Betty Ann Waters (Swank).

That's the short story up to now.

Martin Fealk, July 11, 2009.



April 1980



April 1986



July 1997



July 2007, during a full moon.



Feb. 2009