

Watching the weatherman

At Hills school: Chris Edwards, meteorologist for WJBK-TV (Channel 2) and a Farmington Hills resident, was a big hit when he visited third- and fourth-grade classes at William Grace Elementary School in Farmington Hills. Students Cusye Fetters (left) and Linda Nguyen presented Edwards with a visor and hit the classes prepared to commemorate the visit.



Scholar from page 1A

could inspire others to believe in as well.

After graduating from Detroit Central High School in 1935, Norris began his study of the "dismal science" of economics at the University of Michigan where he earned bachelor's and master's degrees.

With the outbreak of war, Norris served in the U.S. Army in England and France where he worked compiling statistics and met Robert McNamara, who would later run Ford Motor Company and then serve as Secretary of Defense.

The law for him

When he returned to Michigan, Norris and his wife Grace had two young children. They decided that a law practice would provide a good living and looked up friends in Boston and New York with the idea of applying to Harvard and then Columbia, where Norris was accepted.

He practiced law for 13 years before joining the faculty at DCL. Throughout his legal career, Norris has taken on cases and issues where civil rights were involved.

He was a delegate to the Michigan Constitutional Convention in 1961 along with former Secretary of State Richard Austin and former State Sen. Jack Faxon. Norris has been active in the American Civil Liberties Union and has given counsel and advice to many judges and elected officials, including former Detroit Mayor Coleman Young.

Current Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer, who served as a Michigan Supreme Court Justice, was also a student of Norris and recognized him at his retirement dinner last October.

U.S. Senator Carl Levin has written a preface to one of the 15 volumes on the law Norris has written. His writing process has also extended to published poetry, including "An American Mural: The Liberty Bell and Other Selected and New Poetry."

Poem cast in bronze

The poem "The Liberty Bell" from that volume has been cast in bronze at the site of the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia.

Because of his passion for individual rights, Norris has been involved in many cases. And he has inspired many of his famous students.

"He has always fought for the protection of individual rights," says attorney Geoffrey Fieger, a former student who has represented Dr. Jack Kevorkian in his fight for legalizing assisted suicide. "He was a good friend of my father's. He

was active during the McCarthy Era."

Norris made an impression in his own household where his son Victor decided to follow in his father's footsteps. When the younger Norris took his father's criminal procedure class, there was some apprehension about how other students would react, the former professor said.

"I was concerned, but there never was a problem," he said. His son, who also lives in West Bloomfield, practices law as the managing partner for Hertz, Schram and Saretzky of Bloomfield Hills. Like many other students, his father's class was more inspiration and

■ 'The first day I walked out of his class (criminal procedure), I knew I wanted to be a defense attorney.'

Neil Fink
criminal attorney

less drudgery than many other classes.

"Unlike a lot of professors, he didn't make life more difficult," Victor Norris said. "Anyone I've ever met who has taken his class found an enthusiastic classroom. It was spiritual."

Now that he's retired, Norris says he'll try to finish yet another book before taking on any new projects. But, he admits, he'll miss teaching.

"I was most fortunate because I never felt that I was at a job," he said.

Norris will continue to be a source of scholarship, and through his writings and former students, a source of inspiration. He believes in living and encouraging others to live a responsible life and he sees the Constitution as a living document that must be reinterpreted constantly in a changing world.

His poem "The Liberty Bell" explains that the instruments of individual freedoms are not "Silent as monuments," but are rights that must be pursued. An excerpt:

"Your right to in your own way find
Your own inscrutable mind.
Listen in the night
Listen with all your might
With all your common sense
Now and in our future tense
Listen in the light
To your singing Bill of Rights,
In the ring
Of the swing
And the swell
Of the cracked and silent
Liberty Bell."

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