

STEWARD OF THE WEST

The life and times of James B. Castles

By John W. Castles

Editor's note: Each year, the OSB Business Law Section bestows an award for professionalism and leadership in the business and the law. The award is named for the James B. Castles, longtime counsel to Tektronix. This memoir was prepared by Castles' son in preparation for this year's award, which was presented to Portland attorney Neva Campbell.

My father was born in Missoula, Mont., on Sept. 22, 1915. He passed away in Portland, Oregon on June 4, 1995, at the age of 79. His parents were immigrant Irish parents who left "the old country" to settle and raise



a family in America, the land of opportunity.

My grandfather, William Castles, was an early entrepreneur, moving the family from Northern Ireland to Superior, Montana where he opened a butcher shop. The butcher shop grew into a grocery and general store. Among the many values that my father learned from his parents were important ones of faith, family, community involvement, education and philanthropy.

My grandparents believed strongly in the value of a good education. My grandmother was a strong matriarch, insisting that each child have a savings account and requiring that some money be deposited each week in their account for a college education. My

grandfather kept very busy in his store, keeping it open 12 to 14 hours a day six days a week and for several hours on Sundays. He developed standards for customer service even at great cost to himself and family. His early philanthropy was demonstrated by allowing customers to charge their groceries on account during the Depression, knowing that many of them couldn't afford to pay their bills.

My father, Jim Castles, worked his way through the University of Montana School of Law, graduating in 1938. He practiced law with the W.E. Keeley law firm in Deer Lodge, Montana until he volunteered to join the U.S. Coast Guard during World War II. He was stationed in Portland where his legal training came to the attention of his superiors and he was made Captain of Port Security for Portland. While serving in the Coast Guard my father met several fine friends that convinced him to remain in Portland following the war.

My father was invited to join the Portland law practice of Jay Bowerman, former governor of Oregon from 1910 to 1911. His first client was Jack Murdock, a Coast Guard shipmate, who asked my father to incorporate the company Tektronix, Inc., which evolved into the worldwide electronics leader in manufacturing oscilloscopes, electronic measurement instruments, television switching equipment and color printers. Tektronix was the first high technology company in the Pacific Northwest and the largest company in Oregon, with annual sales ex-

ceeding \$2 billion and worldwide employment of 27,000 people at its peak.

My father once wrote that he had a fascinating law practice in Portland. Jay Bowerman had a number of large corporate clients, including Safeway Stores and Multnomah Kennel Club, a company that conducted greyhound racing and pari-mutuel wagering. As Jay Bowerman was advancing in age, my father handled a wide variety of legal matters, including corporate law, adjudication of water rights and litigation matters of all sorts. In 1947, my father represented several ranchers in eastern Oregon whose ranches were being condemned by the U.S. Government through the Department of Army Engineers for the McNary Dam site on the Columbia River. He wrote that he was successful in recovering considerably more money for his clients than what they had initially been offered. In 1952, my father formed his own law practice, establishing the first law firm in Beaverton, then a small town of less than 10,000 people. His law firm was preeminent in the fast-growing Washington County area just west of Portland and served a diverse array of clients. By 1961, Tektronix had grown rapidly and Jack Murdock prevailed

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upon my father to join the company full time as corporate secretary and general counsel, in addition to his director responsibilities. He remained "of counsel" to his old law firm but transitioned into a full-time corporate executive with responsibilities to help grow Tektronix's burgeoning international presence.

One piece of litigation stood out in my father's career with Tektronix. I suspect it had at its roots some of the stubbornness of a young man who was taught by his parents to be wary of big government and to "always do the right thing." Air Force procurement decided it wanted other sources of electronic instrumentation than Tektronix, so it requested bids from other companies to make Tektronix oscilloscopes, model #535. To do so, other companies infringed on basic Tektronix patents and were awarded government contracts.

My father initially pursued administrative remedies for two years, but to no avail. Reluctantly at first, he filed suit against the U.S. Government in the U.S. Court of Claims, Washington, D.C. The case of Tektronix versus the United States of America became a landmark case in patent law resulting in a judgment against the United States, in excess of \$20 million. My father wrote, "But the wheels of justice grind slowly, and Uncle Sam whittled us down to the point where it all ended 18 years later when Tektronix finally received a check from the government for over \$4 million for 17 years of fighting in the courts." The case almost covered my father's entire 20-year career with Tektronix. He retired from Tektronix at the end of 1980 but remained a director of the company until 1988.

My father's third career started tragically in 1971, upon the untimely death of his close friend and Coast Guard shipmate, Jack Murdock. Jack



James B. Castles

died at age 53 in a floatplane accident on the Columbia River. My father had to prove Jack's death by circumstantial evidence to get a judicial determination of death because Jack's body was never recovered. It took my father four years to probate Jack's estate and administer several companies that Jack had started in addition to Tektronix. Jack had never married and had no close family members. In accordance with the terms of his will, he left his estate of approximately \$80 million to form the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust in 1975.

Thus began my father's third career, that of philanthropist. In the 20 years in which he served as one of the original three trustees, the Murdock Trust awarded grants totaling more than \$200 million to nonprofit organizations throughout the Pacific Northwest. In many people's opinion, the Murdock Trust was the preeminent charitable foundation in the region. My father's goal, on behalf of his close friend, was to share Murdock's wealth with nonprofit organizations that would improve the livability and touch the lives of thousands of people throughout the Northwest. My father was fiercely proud of the tremendous accomplishments of the trust whose grants have truly touched and changed the lives of so many people in the Pacific Northwest.

In addition to his trustee responsibilities, my father was very generous with his own money during his lifetime, making numerous and substan-

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tial personal gifts to nonprofits including The High Desert Museum in Bend, Ore. and his alma mater, the University of Montana.

My father could be described by many labels — adviser, counselor, cowboy, investor, lawyer, loyal friend, mentor, philanthropist and pioneer, just to name a few. The one I like best was attributed to him when he received the Aubrey Watzak award from Lewis & Clark College. Recognizing his keen interest in the history of the West, his many years of community service, his unfailing integrity in everything he did and his personal and professional philanthropy, he was recognized as "Steward of the West." ■

John W. Castles is a trustee of the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust, succeeding his late father, founding trustee James B. Castles. Former banker, investment adviser and self-described "recovering venture capitalist," John Castles has served as a founder, director or officer of numerous emerging companies in the Pacific Northwest. Currently a private investor, he is board chair of Good Neighbor Care Centers, LLC, and serves on the board of the Oregon Growth Account and SupplyChange, Inc.

John Castles writes: Thank you for allowing me to share this information about Jim Castles, my father. I have enjoyed writing this brief description of his life. It has brought back many memories and renewed the tremendous sense of joy and pleasure I had in knowing him and learning from him. I am particularly proud that I have had the privilege of succeeding him as a trustee of the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust. I hope that I can continue his outstanding legacy and the everlasting imprint he left on Montana and the Northwest."

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