

Remembering 'The Washington Times' Political Correspondent Ralph Hallow

Ralph Z. Hallow, the chief political correspondent and columnist for *The Washington Times* for 30 years, died on Oct. 17, 2020. His funeral was last Monday, Nov. 23, 2020.

His widow, Millie, and son, Ian, asked me to be one of the two people to give a eulogy at his funeral in Washington, D.C.

When Ralph's dad, Zacki, and his mother, Bessema, married in Syria, Bessema was 13 years old. Zacki was seven years older.

Bessema prayed for a child for 23 years and then God gave them a boy—Ralph Zachary Hallow.

I met Ralph sometime in early 2000. In 2006, I remember Ralph sitting on the front row of a Newt Gingrich speech at the American Enterprise Institute, grinning from ear to ear with his great smile, his head turning in slight angles as he listened intently. After having spent 50-plus years studying, thinking and making applications to his trade, Ralph loved people with knowledge and insight like Newt.

When I spoke with Ralph in 2007, he said that Newt Gingrich was running for president in 2008. I replied that he wasn't. Ralph said, "I flew back from New York City last night with Newt, and I can tell you he's running."

"Well, I can tell you that he's not," I said.

"How do you know that?" he asked.

I said, "Because I'm watching the chess pieces move behind the curtain."

Although I could have been wrong, it turned out that I was right.

As the chief political correspondent and columnist for *The Washington Times* for 30 years, Ralph had developed a jaundiced eye from the cons and rip-off artists who pass through this town every political cycle or two.

As Ralph's and my relationship matured, he began to call, and we'd spend time talking, becoming great friends in the process. I knew I had finally entered the inner circle when Ralph began introducing me as his "[Expletive] little Bible-thumping buddy David Lane."

My mom and dad divorced when I was six months old. I was brought up by my grandma, granddad and mother in a town of 1,100 people in rural Oklahoma.

My paternal grandfather was blind. I have been told that my dad, after the divorce, left rural Oklahoma on a bicycle. I saw my dad perhaps once a year and called him by his first name, Gerry, until I was 10 years old or so.

I moved in with my dad and stepmother in the 10th grade in Pascagoula, Mississippi. My dad was a hard-charging man, like Ralph, who had a hard time surrendering. When we talk about hardheadedness, we talk about my dad ... or Ralph Hallow.

Since I was a high school punk, I had some hard times with my dad. He owned a dozen or so car dealerships and was at the office at 7:30 a.m. every morning, with a sales meeting beginning at 8 a.m. If you were late, you were fined. He ran a tight ship.

When my dad died in 2013, "he had made it big." He was the 1995 Louisiana Car Dealer of the Year and a finalist for *Time* magazine Man of the Year.

Just before Dad died, my younger brother called saying the

doctor had given dad less than a week to live. He had cancer. I was, at the time, in Chicago meeting with a potential candidate for governor.

I hopped on a plane to Baton Rouge, where Dad lived. When I walked in, he was sitting in a recliner as if nothing were wrong with him. A doctor friend told me that many “resurrect” for a day or two right before they die because they quit fighting. Up to that point, all their energy and effort is spent on fighting the battle to stay alive.

My wife Cindy’s dad was in the ICU before he died. He “resurrected” a day before his death. Cindy’s brother asked the doctor, “Are you sure we shouldn’t reconsider this?” The doctor said, “You can reconsider, but he is going to die.”

He died the next day.

When I saw my dad sitting in the recliner, we began to talk. He said, “Dave, you’ve done so well.”

I said, “Dad, this is me, I can’t do my multiplication tables ...”

“I know,” he said, “but you’ve done so well.”

I told him the story of his mother right before she died.

After being one of the wildest men who ever lived—drugs, wine, women and song—I came to Christ 40 years ago. I deserved judgment, but I got mercy. I had just become a Christian when I went to see my paternal grandmother the last time in the hospital.

She was discouraged because my dad’s older brother, whom he idolized, had been there saying their blind daddy wouldn’t go to heaven because he hadn’t been baptized.

I replied, “The book says, if the last thing that Daddy Lane said when leaving this earth is ‘Jesus, help me,’ he’s going

to spend eternity with God. That's what the book says."

"That must have really encouraged her," my dad said.

"It did," I said, "and the reason I tell Gerry Lane that story is, if the last thing you say before leaving this earth is 'Jesus, help me,' you'll spend eternity with God. That's what the book says."

Six or seven years ago I told that story to Ralph Hallow, periodically mentioning it again over the years.

Millie texted Cindy and me at 2:52 a.m. on the Saturday of Ralph's death.

"Just got a call from the hospital. He is deteriorating and not going to make it. Going into septic shock. I am going to the hospital now. Only a miracle can save him. He is in God's hands."

The hospital staff offered a chaplain to come by to pray for Ralph, but Millie declined. She texted, "I knew that wouldn't be right. You were the only one that Ralph would have tolerated praying for him."

So at 7:29 a.m. Millie FaceTimed me; Ralph was in the hospital bed with an oxygen mask over his face. They say that the last thing you lose before death is your hearing.

I prayed for Ralph, saying, "Ralph, if the last thing you say before leaving this earth is 'Jesus, help me,' you're going to spend eternity with God. That's what the book says."

Millie texted later that day, "I got to get into the hospital bed with him, and we were nose to nose as he died. The love of my life, and the brightest, most interesting man I know is gone."

Millie called me a day or two later asking, "Do you think Ralph made it?" I read her the note that my pastor, former

Thousand Oaks City Councilman and Mayor, Rob McCoy, sent me the afternoon that Ralph left this earth.

“The most sanctified moment in a man’s life is when he dwells between heaven and earth as his life here reaches the finish line. God takes that moment and pours all memories of His truth to the forefront of his mind and causes the beauty of His majesty to be revealed for one last call to Christ. That memory was rich with the words of David Lane. Ralph was a man who listened to David. I believe we will see him again. I have that peace.”

As a final word, my younger brother texted me the night our dad died: “Dad just whispered, ‘Jesus, help me.’”

O, what a wonderful God. {eoa}