

What We Know

ARTICLES & INSIGHTS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Kristin Ruth is a long-time family law attorney and former 10th District Court Wake County Judge. She represents clients in all aspects of family law, including divorce, child custody, child support, and equitable property distribution. She brings more than 29 years of courtroom and mediation experience to her practice. She is an avid writer and frequent guest speaker at national and international events on issues covering child support and ethics.

Table Talk...for the Rest of the Story

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[Paul Harvey](#) was an American broadcaster and commentator. He died in 2009 at the age of 90. I remember listening to his radio show as a young girl – his “Rest of the Story” segments never failed to entertain and enlighten my young mind. I fondly remember sitting around the kitchen table, my dad turning on the radio to hear the familiar voice of Paul Harvey just minutes before we blessed our food. There we were, together as a family, listening to a short, thought-provoking story from Paul Harvey on [KSAL](#), our local AM radio station. There were no electronic devices or iPads, just the sound of our own voices, the clanging of the knives and forks, and the wonderful smell of my mother’s cooking.

His radio show became a regular fixture of my family’s daily lunchtime routine on the farm. Now, decades later, I still remember one of his stories in particular titled *Dirt Roads*. The focus of the segment was on how simpler life was back when dirt roads were commonplace. It was a time when neighbors knew their neighbors, people left their doors unlocked, and families still gathered around the dinner table at the end of each day. There were meaningful conversations with family and neighbors, and people looked out for each other. When it rained and the roads were too muddy, people just stayed home and turned the day into family time.

Recently, I represented a young man at the center of a high conflict custody case that has made me think a lot about Paul Harvey and his *Dirt Roads* segment. I became acquainted with my client’s parents during my representation and soon realized why this family shared such a special bond. It was not because they lived on a real dirt road, but because they refused to let the conflicts surrounding the custody battle derail the significance of family and community. This family strived to maintain real connections with the people in their lives by opening up their home every Sunday afternoon to their children, friends, family, and neighbors for a hearty meal and meaningful conversation. They gathered not only to eat but to maintain the family connection as their children grew, married and had children of their own. Lives were changing and going different directions, but Sunday afternoon dinners were a time to share stories, talk about what was going on in each other’s lives, and just have fun together. It became a tradition of incredible food, games, sports, and conversation. Everyone in their community was welcome and no one was ever a stranger at this family home. According to my client, his friends would stop by on Sundays to be with his family, even if he wasn’t there – what a

testament to the strength of the connections this family had built!

When I hear stories about how infrequent family sit-down dinners have become or when I see children (and sometimes parents, too) in restaurants glued to their phone or electronic device, I can't help but think about dirt roads and Paul Harvey's prescient wisdom.

While times have changed and paved roads enable life to move at a much faster pace, sometimes I wonder what we've really gained, and at what price? Sure, we can get from point A to point B faster. We can *Alexa* and *Siri* our every whim. But ultimately, with all our technology and ability to instantly connect, are we failing to cultivate lasting connections with the people around us?

So, in 2018, may we all take time to slow down and enjoy some good 'ole family time around the dinner table. Turn off the electronics, resist the urge to text as your primary form of communicating, and remember in life to always tune-in for the "rest of the story."

***DIRT ROADS
— BY PAUL HARVEY***

WHAT'S MAINLY WRONG WITH SOCIETY TODAY IS THAT TOO MANY DIRT ROADS HAVE BEEN PAVED.

THERE'S NOT A PROBLEM IN AMERICA TODAY, CRIME, DRUGS, EDUCATION, DIVORCE, DELINQUENCY THAT WOULDN'T BE REMEDIED, IF WE JUST HAD MORE DIRT ROADS, BECAUSE DIRT ROADS GIVE CHARACTER.

PEOPLE THAT LIVE AT THE END OF DIRT ROADS LEARN EARLYON THAT LIFE IS A BUMPY RIDE.

THAT IT CAN JAR YOU RIGHT DOWN TO YOUR TEETH SOMETIMES, BUT IT'S WORTH IT, IF AT THE END IS HOME...A LOVING SPOUSE, HAPPY KIDS AND A DOG.

WE WOULDN'T HAVE NEAR THE TROUBLE WITH OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IF OUR KIDS GOT THEIR EXERCISE WALKING A DIRT ROAD WITH OTHER KIDS, FROM WHOM THEY LEARN HOW TO GET ALONG.

THERE WAS LESS CRIME IN OUR STREETS BEFORE THEY WERE PAVED.

CRIMINALS DIDN'T WALK TWO DUSTY MILES TO ROB OR RAPE, IF THEY KNEW THEY'D BE WELCOMED BY 5 BARKING DOGS AND A DOUBLE BARREL SHOTGUN.

AND THERE WERE NO DRIVE BY SHOOTINGS.

OUR VALUES WERE BETTER WHEN OUR ROADS WERE WORSE!

PEOPLE DID NOT WORSHIP THEIR CARS MORE THAN THEIR KIDS, AND MOTORISTS WERE MORE COURTEOUS, THEY DIDN'T TAILGATE BY RIDING THE BUMPER OR THE GUY IN FRONT WOULD CHOKE YOU WITH DUST & BUST YOUR WINDSHIELD WITH ROCKS.

DIRT ROADS TAUGHT PATIENCE.

DIRT ROADS WERE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY, YOU DIDN'T HOP IN YOUR CAR FOR A QUART OF MILK YOU WALKED TO THE BARN FOR YOUR MILK.

FOR YOUR MAIL, YOU WALKED TO THE MAIL BOX.

WHAT IF IT RAINED AND THE DIRT ROAD GOT WASHED OUT? THAT WAS THE BEST PART, THEN YOU STAYED HOME AND HAD SOME FAMILY TIME, ROASTED MARSHMALLOWS AND POPPED POPCORN AND PONY RODE ON DADDY'S SHOULDERS AND LEARNED HOW TO MAKE PRETTIER QUILTS THAN ANYBODY.

AT THE END OF DIRT ROADS, YOU SOON LEARNED THAT BAD WORDS TASTED LIKE SOAP.

MOST PAVED ROADS LEAD TO TROUBLE, DIRT ROADS MORE LIKELY LEAD TO A FISHING CREEK OR A SWIMMING HOLE.

AT THE END OF A DIRT ROAD, THE ONLY TIME WE EVEN LOCKED OUR CAR WAS IN AUGUST, BECAUSE IF WE DIDN'T SOME NEIGHBOR WOULD FILL IT WITH TOO MUCH ZUCCHINI.

AT THE END OF A DIRT ROAD, THERE WAS ALWAYS EXTRA SPRINGTIME INCOME, FROM WHEN CITY DUDES WOULD GET STUCK, YOU'D HAVE TO HITCH UP A TEAM AND PULL THEM OUT.

USUALLY YOU GOT A DOLLAR...ALWAYS YOU GOT A NEW FRIEND...AT THE END OF A DIRT ROAD.

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