

John L. “Doc” Lawler (1904-1972) started life as a member of a street gang in the Kerry Patch, St. Louis’ impoverished Irish-Catholic ghetto. He was remembered for becoming one of the most influential union and political leaders the city of St. Louis had ever seen. Jerome T. Y. Shen, M.D. (1918-) was born into great wealth, but had to leave the family fortune behind when he fled, and barely escaped, the Communist takeover in his hometown of Shanghai, China. After arriving in St. Louis, he became a leading practitioner of adolescent medicine, spearheaded much of the city’s pro-life movement, and, after she accepted his personal invitation, helped to host a visit to St. Louis from Mother Teresa. This narrative is about the amazingly different lives of Doc Lawler and Jerome Shen, but it is also about stories: the way we tell them, the way we remember them, the way we pass them down to younger generations. It is a story that includes families, religion, immigration, the FBI, the Supreme Court, Mother Teresa, Lyndon B. Johnson, and a host of other characters. It is a story not yet finished, a story which grows today, not only in the form of eighty-two year old Jerome Shen, but in the lives of the children and grandchildren who trace their roots to these two men. It is a partial, dual biographical narrative. But more simply, it is a story I want to tell to my children someday. It is ...

Doc and the Doctor

The story of
John L. “Doc” Lawler and
Dr. Jerome T. Y. Shen

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PREFACE

It wasn't until Spring 1999, when I took a course called "Writing Biography," that I thought about writing a biography of my grandfathers. I had known "Grandpa" (Dr. Jerome T. Y. Shen) all my life, but it had never occurred to me that I should write something about him. Perhaps because I did know him for so long, I didn't see any reason to write about him. My academic training had taught me that what's interesting to write about are problematic questions and issues that can be debated. Why write about someone I already knew so well? Although my other grandfather, Doc Lawler, died before I was born, I think the same logic held. I had never met Doc, but I had heard stories from my mother and from my grandmother, and I thought that I knew what he was like. Especially after my grandmother Lawler died in 1989, I think Doc wasn't on my mental map. He was as much a stranger as most people on the street, so why write about something that didn't appear to be very interesting? Before the Spring of 1999, the idea of writing about Doc and Jerome was not in my head. But now it's Spring 2000, and I have a narrative here on both men, as well as additional parts of a 120 page rough draft which I hope one day to expand into a book. So what happened?

I think it was a combination of two things. First, and I will offer my formal thanks at the end of this Preface, Tracy Wiener's class, "Writing Biography," introduced me to a style of writing that I had not considered before. Before the class, I had never paid much attention to the subtleties in and the creation of biographical narratives. I just thought biographies told the story of somebody's life, end of story. But as I moved through the class, I realized that biographies involved much more. They were part analytical paper, examining a problem, and they were also part creative writing, describing a person's life in colorful detail. They drew on a variety of disciplines: religion, political science, law, English, and so many more. The first thing that happened, then, was a new awareness of the possibilities of biography.

This new awareness of what biography could do complemented a growing appreciation I was feeling for the blessings in my life. Perhaps it was my twenty-first birthday earlier in the school year, or perhaps the realization that I was soon going to be graduating from college, but in Spring of 1999, I began to more fully appreciate all the wonderful aspects of my life. I thought about the opportunities I had been given and the talents I had been blessed with. Most of all, I thought about the people who I had met in my twenty-some odd years. I also thought a lot about what it means for me to “know” someone, or what it means to have someone “know” me. It was in this line of thinking where the second change, my gratitude for the people in my life, matched up perfectly with my new interest in biography.

It seems to me that biography is about getting to know someone. But what does it mean to know someone? For instance, you might say to me, “You know that group, The Beatles, right?” And I would of course, answer “Yes, I know the Beatles.” But what I really know are some things about The Beatles. I know the names of the group members, some of their songs, and (much to the chagrin of those who must listen to me sing along) some of the lyrics as well. But I don’t really know much else. If you were writing a biography of The Beatles, you wouldn’t come and interview me. You would go and talk to people who really *knew* The Beatles. And you and I would know what you mean by that. You are going to talk to people who lived with them, talked with them regularly, played music with them.

The more I think about this idea and discuss it with friends, the more important I think it is. It’s something that hits close to home. I can ask myself, for instance, a series of introspective questions: Who is the Francis Shen my parents know? Who is the Francis Shen my professors know? Who is the Francis Shen my brother knows? Who is the Francis Shen my high school friends know? Who is the Francis Shen my girlfriend knows? Who is the Francis Shen that God knows? Who is the Francis Shen I want the world to know? The answers to these questions are different, but somewhere in the mess

is the genuine Francis Shen, the person I really am. But that is enough about The Beatles and about Francis Shen. The point I want to make is that knowing someone doesn't mean you *know* them.

With this idea fresh in my mind, I realized that I knew Grandpa and I knew about Doc Lawler, but I didn't *know* them. I also realized that biography was all about getting to know people, uncovering their genuine character, and finding out what is most essentially them. The answer is what you are about to read: a dual biographical narrative of John L. "Doc" Lawler and Jerome T. Y. Shen. My hope is that after reading this, you will know both Doc and the Doctor a little bit better. Maybe you'll even want to know more.

While the idea for undertaking this biography project may have come from my class and the ideas bouncing around in my head, it's still true, as my father likes to say, that "Ideas are a dime a dozen." This idea would not have become a real project if it had not been for the help of many people along the way.

Tracy Weiner, in the University of Chicago's Writing Program, taught "Writing Biography" in Spring 1999. She has been my strongest supporter on the project from the first time I approached her about it a year ago. She has provided fantastic advice and suggestions at every juncture, and it is not an overstatement to say that without her support and guidance, this narrative would not have taken shape. I cannot say enough about the help I have received. From research to rough draft to revisions and to a final form, Tracy has been a guiding light.

Although it took me a while to find her, Neda Ulaby has also provided great feedback on the rough draft and subsequent revisions. Her "reassure mode" reassured me exactly when I needed it. Professor Joshua Scodel and Maria Parks in the Department of English were very understanding and helpful when I showed up late to the BA process. My research would not have been possible if not for a grant from the Richter Grant Foundation. My thanks to them, and to the University of Chicago for the funds. Staff at the University of Missouri St. Louis (UMSL) Mercantile Library were also very friendly

and helpful as I poured through old newspaper articles on Doc Lawler. The Missouri Historical Society also provided a great research environment. Special thanks to John Waide at the St. Louis University Pius V Library for looking up an obscure fact that I needed to find.

Certainly one of the greatest joys of the project have been the interviews I've conducted over the past nine months. Special thanks to Prof. Lana Stein (UMSL), Prof. Robert Salisbury (Washington University in St. Louis), Former Senator Thomas F. Eagleton (D-MO), Former Missouri Governor Warren Hearnes, John Angelides, and Joe Roddy. Everyone I spoke with was very encouraging about the project.

I need to thank also my friends and family who have helped me along the way. My mother, Bridget Brennan, was not only a great primary source of information about her father, Doc Lawler, but also accomplished a lot of leg work for me back in St. Louis. Thanks, Mom, for all the help. Thanks also my father for "being the Perr." My brother has been a constant source of support and encouragement as well. Thanks to all of my friends in Chicago and St. Louis for listening to me moan for an entire year. Thank you to Rory, Jess, Matt, Rhaina, Bill, CB, and my Renegades partner, Mr. Flynn, for listening.

Finally, thank you to my grandparents, Jerome T. Y. and Theresa Shen, for talking with me at length. Their willingness to share their pasts has enriched my life, as well as made this narrative possible. Jerome has always maintained, "Someone should write a book about our lives." As I said before, this is only a partial narrative, and there is a lot of research I hope to complete in order to one day write that book. But until then. Grandpa, here's a start.

INTRODUCTION

John L. “Doc” Lawler (1904-1972) started life as a member of a street gang in the Kerry Patch, St. Louis’ impoverished Irish-Catholic ghetto. Sixty-seven leaders he was remembered for becoming one of the most influential union and political leaders the city of St. Louis had ever seen. Jerome T. Y. Shen, M.D. (1918-) was born into great wealth, but had to leave his family fortune behind when he fled, and barely escaped, the Communist takeover in his hometown of Shanghai, China. After arriving in St. Louis without a license to practice medicine in Missouri, he would become a friend to Mother Theresa and a well-known leader of the Pro-Life movement in St. Louis.

It doesn’t take long to figure out that the lives of Doc Lawler and Jerome Shen are extremely different. It also won’t take long to figure out that the ways in which this narrative talks about the lives of Doc and Jerome are very different. The main source for information about Doc Lawler are hundreds of newspaper articles from the biased *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. The majority of information about Jerome came from a series of interviews with him and his wife, Theresa. Given these very different sources, and given the seeming lack of similarities in their lives, the question can be asked: Why write about them together in a dual narrative? Why not write two different narratives and get to know each man separately?

The quickest answer is to point to December 13, 1976, when Doc’s youngest daughter Bridget married Jerome’s oldest son, Jerry. Though Doc had died in 1972, and was therefore not at the wedding to meet Dr. Shen in person, their lives had been brought together through their children. When Bridget and Jerry’s sons were born, in 1977 and 1979, the biological combination had been made as well. One might agree, then, that a dual narrative is in order because the lives of Doc and Jerome exist together within their mutual grandsons. This is the easiest answer, but it’s not a very compelling one. For if this were the only reason offered, then why not record two separate stories and simply stick them back-to-back in the same book?

The reason that a dual narrative is appropriate is that exploring the lives of Doc Lawler and Jerome Shen is more than a singular search for personal meaning. This is not a narrative guided by me simply asking, “How am I a mix of my grandfathers’ personalities?” This is a narrative about getting to know Doc and Jerome. It’s about their lives, but it’s also about stories: the way we tell them, the way we remember them, the people who tell them, the way we pass them down to younger generations. It is a story that includes families, religion, immigration, the FBI, the Supreme Court, Mother Theresa, and a host of other colorful characters. It is a story not yet finished, a story which grows today, not only in the form of eighty-two year old Jerome Shen, but in the lives of the children and grandchildren who trace their roots to these two men. It is a partial, dual, biographical narrative. But more simply, it is a story I want to tell to my own children someday.

How we tell stories to future generations – and just as importantly, how we remember the stories we’ve been told – are at the heart of this narrative. How stories are told and remembered depends a lot on who tells them. In this narrative, there are several different story tellers. **1.** First, there is Jerome Shen himself. Speaking in a series of interviews with me, Jerome and his wife Theresa, tell their own story. The positive aspect of this kind of story-telling is that Jerome was present for everything that happened to him; the problem with telling your own story is that you have a bias toward making yourself look good. (Just recall the last time you explained a stupid mistake to a friend. You are able to craft the story to make yourself seem like less of an idiot, or to make the whole experience something to laugh at.) **2.** Since Doc Lawler is no longer living, and since many of the people he knew best are also dead or very old, the primary story-teller about Doc is the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. While the *Globe-Democrat* offered great coverage of local politics while Doc was alive, it was also a paper with conservative political motivations. Pat Buchanan wrote for the paper from 1962-65, and they were consistently interested in trashing Doc’s image. This bias will be considered in the narrative. **3.** A

third story-teller will be Doc, through a series of letters he wrote to his daughter Bridget in 1966 and 1967. These letters, together with letters from Doc's wife, offer an intimate view into Doc's life. The way Doc and Babe tell their own stories vary considerably from the stories of the *Globe-Democrat*. **4.** Other story tellers will appear in different places. Stories will come from friends and family of Doc and Jerome, but the narrative will also consider how these two men are parts of larger stories. How did class struggles, immigrant life, and the Catholic Church play a role in each man's life? We will see a number of conflicting stories, and it is the ultimate job of this biographical narrative to sort them out, evaluate them, and offer a conclusion about the character of each man.

The narrative is not structured chronologically, but in an order which is designed to highlight the issues central to Jerome and Doc. This is also a *partial* narrative, meaning that substantial amounts of information about both men are not included. But just because it doesn't detail every election or every volunteer role doesn't mean that the narrative is necessarily incomplete. For getting to know someone is not so much about getting to know everything they've done, but instead learning about their character. Jerome and Doc's personal histories are not ends, but steps we can take to gain a better understanding of who each man was. In this narrative the underlying questions are, "*What* principles were Doc and Jerome negotiating, lobbying, and fighting for? *Who* did they work with and against? *How* did they go about their public and personal lives? *Why* did they make the decisions they did?" Once we explore these questions, we can evaluate the answers. Do Doc and Jerome deserve our criticism or our praise?

This narrative tells a story that both men were a part of, but neither man was aware of. The Lawler-Shen story was realized when their children were married and when their grandsons were born. But the Lawler-Shen story did not start with that marriage in 1976. It started when both men were born. It is precisely because Doc and Jerome lived their lives unaware of the dual Lawler-Shen story that this narrative can serve a special

function. *Doc and the Doctor* is a story we must piece together. It is not only a story Doc or Jerome have told, but a story they have *lived*.

STORY TELLING

Who was Doc Lawler?

John L. (Doc) Lawler [is] a man whose participation in politics and union affairs has rarely been associated with the public good.

– *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* Editorial, June 7, 1962

Is John (Doc) Lawler ... seeking to destroy both his union and the employers in some sort of Wagnerian holocaust?

– *Globe-Democrat* Editorial, February 9, 1963

This crass and shocking unconcern for the comfort, health, and perhaps lives, of patients in the hospital is about what you would expect of Lawler.

– *Globe-Democrat* Editorial, July 1, 1963

Business Agent Lawler ... is utter unconcerned that he may be killing millions of dollar so new projects and thousands of new jobs inside and beyond his own union by his unreasonable strike.

– *Globe-Democrat* Editorial, August 22, 1963

If you believe the editorial page of the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, Doc Lawler was a greedy union boss and politician, eager to get whatever he could for himself at the expense of the public good. This was the story that many St. Louisans, including Jerome Shen, knew about Doc. Over the course of Doc's entire public life, from his first run for Alderman in 1947 to his work in the Democratic party up to his death in 1972, the *Globe-Democrat* ran hundreds of articles criticizing Doc, his associates and Steamfitter Local 562. To understand why Doc and the Steamfitters represented public enemy number one, we have to understand the mission of the *Globe-Democrat*. In his recent book, *Behind the Headlines*, former *Globe-Democrat* publisher G. Duncan Bauman retraces the history of the paper. Started on July 1, 1852 as the *Missouri Democrat*, the paper became the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* in 1875 and remained that way until 1986.

Before the end of the 19th century, the *Globe-Democrat's* second owner, William McKee, "set the editorial philosophy which existed throughout its life: to support

Republican and conservative issues.”ⁱ Given the *Globe-Democrat*’s political philosophy, Doc was a prime target because of his strong Democratic affiliations and because he was a union leader. As Bauman outlines in his book, the *Globe-Democrat* worked hard to get Republican officials elected. Bauman also writes that he “cooperated, personally and by way of the newspaper,” in a few of the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s cases.ⁱⁱ Bauman personally knew FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, and this is very interesting for the Doc Lawler story because Doc was under federal investigation or indictment for much of his life. Interesting and enigmatic, the exact relationship between the *Globe-Democrat* and the FBI is unknown. The story the FBI files would tell about Doc Lawler is also a mystery. When contacted, the FBI responded, “Please be advised that several records on Mr. Lawler and Mr. Callanan that appear to be responsive to your request to your Freedom of Information Act request have been destroyed.” After an appeal to the main Washington D.C. office, the FBI wrote back that, “The Office of Information and Privacy, which has the responsibility of adjudicating such appeals, has a substantial backlog of pending appeals received prior to yours ... your appeal has been assigned number 00-1334.” But even without the specifics of appeal “00-1334,” one can clearly see that the *Globe-Democrat*’s agenda was to ruin the name of Doc Lawler.

The *Globe-Democrat* would mount particularly scathing attacks of Doc when elections were near, and the paper also seemed motivated by class differences. The owners and publishers of the *Globe-Democrat* were generally well-educated members of the business community. The paper was a family-run business up until the middle of the twentieth century; all of the “kinfolk and descendants [of the family] ... became civic leaders as well as newspaper executives.” Duncan Bauman, the publisher who oversaw a

number of the anti-Lawler editorials, served on “Civic Progress,” a group of people who are “all CEOs of major corporations” and who all want to take on “major civic projects.” Bauman believed in a power structure that was completely opposite Doc’s. Bauman felt that even though “a person who does not have the financial means or influence to be an active member might instead offer significant knowledge or special qualifications,” in order to “get things done, there has to be the ability to provide a share of an assessment.”ⁱⁱⁱ In other words, Bauman was suggesting that civic leaders should be wealthy. Bauman was very critical of Jimmy Carter and felt that he “demeaned the presidency because he chose to carry his own bags – he wasn’t upholding the perception of power, which is so important.”^{iv} While Bauman’s stance promoted the wealthy and the powerful, Doc saw his mission as fighting for the working man and never letting himself get too carried away with his own power. In other words, Doc would never be a member of Civic Progress and he would always carry his own bags.

Yet despite the obvious biases of the *Globe-Democrat*, were all of their stories and investigations about Doc Lawler completely wrong? The answer is no. For all their slanted reporting, the *Globe-Democrat* covered local politics thoroughly and often with accuracy. But not everyone would agree with this. If you ask Joe Roddy Sr., a good family and political friend of Doc’s, the *Globe-Democrat’s* investigation of Doc was a “terrible shame” and completely without reason. Many of Doc’s friends, in fact, dismissed the *Globe-Democrat’s* reporting entirely. Those friends tell a different story, and when Doc died in January 1972, they were all gathered in one place.

This is a narrative about stories, and what better place to start than an Irish wake and funeral? Standing around the casket, or sitting on one of the couches, family and friends

will be heard saying, “You know, I remember the time when ...” Funeral parlors are filled with these memories. Some are the kind that are well known: “Oh, everybody knew he always was ...” Other memories are new revelations, “Well, I never knew about *that* ...” The character of these memories will vary considerably amongst the funeral goers. Coworkers will remember times at the office, old neighbors might recall childhood games, spouses will harbor more intimate thoughts. But all these diverse memories, when summed together, tell a single story – a story of the life just completed. It is with this idea in mind that we start our story in February, 1972 at the Math Hermann funeral home in St. Louis, Missouri.

When John L. “Doc” Lawler died of a heart attack at the age of 67 on Sunday, January 30, 1972, he left behind no shortage of stories, nor any shortage of story-tellers. The funeral home was compelled to devote “its entire north wing” to Doc, and the “five-block long funeral procession” required four police officers to direct motorists.^v Even more amazing than the sheer number of mourners was the diversity within the group. Both of St. Louis’ major newspapers, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, ran stories on Doc’s funeral, and emphasized that “representatives from every walk of life – from the highest ranking state officials to men who work with their hands – paid homage to John L. (Doc) Lawler.”^{vi} Put simply in one article’s opening line, “the great and the not so great” paid tribute to Doc.^{vii} The great diversity amongst the mourners highlighted first the fact that despite the political sway that Doc amassed, he didn’t forget for whom he wanted to use that sway. In a rare newspaper interview, Doc once said, “the Democratic party is known as a working man’s party Sometimes people forget that.”^{viii} The hundreds who visited the funeral parlor did not forget Doc’s

commitment to men who “worked with their hands.” But they were, understandably, quick to forget Doc’s conviction for illegal campaign donations and the many federal investigations he was subject to. Doc’s funeral was not the time to consider the many allegations that the *Globe-Democrat* had made throughout Doc’s life. Missouri Governor Warren Hearnes and St. Louis City Mayor Alfonso Cervantes were there to pay tribute to a man whose “word was his bond,” not to recall guilty verdicts.

Reverend Father Klinger, pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, offered the official homily at Doc’s funeral, noting that Doc “went out of his way for other people ... went about his daily routine doing good for his fellow man, ... [and] was a man who always had time to listen to another person’s troubles.”^{ix} Even the *Globe-Democrat* lightened up, acknowledging that “Lawler’s shoes would be hard to fill ... [because] although [he was] a slight, soft-spoken man, he had influence, determination, and loyalty that his friends could count on.” City Treasurer Paul M. Berra, who had taken Doc’s place as Chairman of the Democratic City Central Committee, remembered Doc as “the fairest and most honest politician” he knew. Berra’s backed the statement up by adding that “if you were a candidate and called him, he wouldn’t give you the run-around. He would tell you he was for or against you.” The portrait of Doc painted by Berra, and by all those who mourned him, was a hero of the working man, a loyal fighter, and an honest politician. But was this portrait accurate? This pleasant, appealing image of Doc Lawler couldn’t have differed more than the image of Doc created by the *Globe-Democrat*, which believed that Doc had “rarely been associated with the public good.” Doc’s public life had been filled with criticism from the *Globe*, from political opponents, and from

federal authorities. Could all of it have been unsubstantiated? Was Doc a hero or a villain?

Before we consider that question, however, let us stop at another event ripe with pleasantries. We stay in St. Louis, we remain in a Catholic Church, but we jump sixteen years into the future to October, 10, 1988. It's a Monday night, and we are looking at the Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary of Jerome and Theresa Shen. The guest list reads like a "Who's Who" of St. Louis Catholic priests. Cardinal John Carberry serves as the principal celebrant, and he is joined on the altar by the Archbishop of St. Louis, John May, two auxiliary bishops, and over ten additional priests. Jerome, beaming in a dark black suit, walks up the aisle with Theresa, adorned in a delicate gold-colored dress. They are, as one observer said, "more beautiful than they have ever been."

While the excitement and emotion in the church may have pushed a few to overly favorable conclusions, it was genuinely true that for Jerome and Theresa, *life* had never been beautiful. What that celebration made clear, to the Shens and to everyone in attendance, was the fact that the couple's lives had been filled with grace. Filling the pews were five children, eight grandchildren and over a hundred other relatives and friends. Jerome's oldest son, Jerry, spoke for the entire Shen family in his "Prayer for You in Celebration of 50 Years of Commitment." Written to his parents and printed in the back of the program, it told a beautiful story to everyone attending. For us, an excerpt from the prayer will serve as the first of many stories.

Mom and Dad, through your trust in God and each other, you brought forth Betty and I in China into a world at war. And with that same trust, Dad, you left your native land to come to St. Louis. And your faithfulness to Mom called you home on a moment's notice to bring us out of China. Mom, in your fidelity to Dad, you left the comfort and security of your home with two small children to come to a land where you had no friends and did

not speak the language. I know for years you said to us you would go back to China if Dad died.

Through those first difficult years in St. Louis, you held on to each other and to God. I can remember moments of joy and sorrow: of Dad's near fatal reaction to penicillin, of shopping with Mom with a grocery cart, of vacations in Florida, of visiting friends and relatives at Christmas, of Dad's military service, of your tending to my asthma and Betty's school work, of praying together ... Mom and Dad, you freed us to be us, but you were there to pick up the pieces when we failed.

Dad, much you have accomplished in response to the needs of the Church in your work for youth, for the poor, and for the unborn ... Mom and Dad, many indeed are God's blessings that have come to us through you.

It was true: Jerome and Theresa Shen *had* lived a good and blessed life. That was the story told at their Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary, and it was a simple one. The complete story of Jerome Shen, however, is not so simple. Like Doc Lawler's, Jerome's experience could be summed up with cliches or generalizations. It's easy, for instance, to label Jerome Shen as another hardworking Asian immigrant who started with little, but took advantage of opportunities in the "land of opportunity." But to shrink Jerome's life into one nondescript sentence like this suffocates the genuine Jerome Shen. The real Jerome and the real Doc cannot be packaged in paragraph-long summaries of each man's character and lists of activities. To know Doc and Jerome, we must hear their stories.

Central to both Jerome and Doc's stories is their shared devotion to the Catholic faith. Although Jerome and Doc never met face-to-face, from the day Jerome moved his family to St. Louis, they both called that city home. This meant that every Sunday for over twenty years, Doc and Jerome would listen to the same readings, participate in the same rituals and even hear many of the same announcements from the St. Louis Archdiocese. Yet despite their common faith, Jerome and Doc had different relationships with religion and the Catholic Church. Examining these two relationships with God provides an

important background for understanding how Jerome and Doc related to the people in their lives.

THE STORY OF TWO GOOD CATHOLICS

The first thing anyone who knows Jerome Shen will mention when speaking about Jerome and Catholicism is Jerome's devotion to the pro-life movement. Extensive and award-winning, Jerome's pro-life actions accurately represent a side of Jerome that is deeply committed to the Catholic Church's respect-for-life teachings. But in addition to the dedicated pro-life crusader, there is also a man who is not afraid to question aspects of the Church he finds hard to accept. This theme, of refusing to always accept what is handed down to him is a theme that resonates throughout Jerome's life. It resonates for sure each Sunday during Mass, when the congregation says together the Eucharistic Prayer. While most people attending the Mass push through the lines in routine without paying much attention to the words, one line sticks out for Jerome. The prayer reads, "Before [Jesus] was given up to death, a death he freely accepted, he took bread and gave [God] thanks," and the point of contention is "freely accepted."^x

Jerome argues that Jesus did anything but freely accept his death, that in fact, Jesus tried his hardest to avoid dying. (Taking a look at Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane may help to support his claim,^{xi} but the details of the argument are not of concern here.) What's interesting about Jerome's response is his willingness to challenge the teaching. This refusal to accept Church teaching is similar to what we'll see later: Jerome's refusal to accept life in communist China, to accept not being able to practice medicine in St. Louis and to accept a ruling from the highest Court in the land. This is not to say that

Jerome is always right in refusing to accept something he doesn't agree with. Though he would be stubborn in admitting it, and even less inclined to recall such times, there are a number of moments in which he has drawn strong reaction for being wrong on an issue. But right or wrong, Jerome has never been afraid to raise his voice.

Any discussion of Doc Lawler and religion must start with the idea that Doc was not just a Catholic, but an Irish Catholic. Doc demonstrated a great commitment to regularly attending Masses and Holy Days, but probably the most pervasive and frequent religious events in his life were wakes and funerals. A traditional saying is that, "In Ireland, the sleep that knows no waking is often followed by the wake that knows no sleeping." While the saying is intended to be funny, it matched up well to Doc Lawler's pattern of life. As revealed in a series of letters to his daughter Bridget, wakes were a central part of his and his wife Elizabeth (Babe's) life. In a 1966 letter to Bridget, he wrote, "Mom and I have been pretty busy all week between meetings, wakes, and weddings."^{xii} When Doc and Babe's close friend Sorkis Webbe passed away, they "went to the wake that night and the funeral the next morning."^{xiii} The same was true the next week as well, when Babe wrote that she and Doc "were busy going to the wakes and [she] went to both funerals."^{xiv} Even the next year, Doc wrote that "we've had a week of going to wakes and funerals."^{xv} A month after that, a father of a friend died so Doc and Elizabeth were again at the wake.

If it seems from these letters that Doc and Babe spent most of their time at funeral parlors, the reason is because they did. Doc's son John Jr., commented in a newspaper article that his parents "spent a great deal of their time going to wakes. Sometimes three and four a night."^{xvi} The tradition of honoring departed friends and relatives was one that

Doc held onto closely. It revealed a great sense of loyalty, both to the deceased and to his Catholic belief in the repose of souls. When Doc's good friend Steve Bailey died in November of 1966, Doc wrote to Bridget and described both the funeral and his thoughts on Steve's passing.^{xvii}

We lost a good friend Steve Bailey died last Tuesday. I went up to the wake and funeral. He was buried from Holy Name Ch. It sure was a long funeral. The Mayor and Gov. were pallbearers and I didn't know how many cars there was. The Mass was sure beautiful, I sure did like the guy, but one thing in his favor was his faith in the Catholic Church and his charity work made God have mercy on his soul and also so that he will help his wife on her lonesome road and they sure were close.

No one would mistake Doc's writing as that of a theologian, and yet it contains a theology that is powerful because of its straightforwardness: there is a life-after-death, and God will look favorably upon those who live good lives on Earth. We see here what we will see later, Doc as a person who stands steadfastly to simple principles. Loyalty to family, to friend, and to God was the bedrock of Doc's belief system. For Doc, loyalty to God centered around regular attendance at Mass. This was especially true in March and April, during the forty days of Lent, during which Catholics prepare for the Easter season. During the Lenten Season of 1966, Doc wrote to his daughter about his attempts to try and get to Mass as often as possible, even while on a business trip.^{xviii}

Well how has it been for you this lent season. I hope a good and Holy one as for me the Lord has been very good so far. I been able to get to Mass and Communion every night so far. I did have to go a couple times in day when I knew I was going to meeting most of the time at P & H but I was up in Washington for about 8 day and I went to St. Patricks at 5:30 mass every evening also got to hear Benediction them 8 day.

Though the Catholic faith was always central to Doc's life, we can see in this excerpt that his religion was intertwined with his political and union-related activities. Evening Mass has to be moved to the afternoon on those days when Doc has meetings at Pipefitter Hall

(P & H). It is striking that the only reason Doc would possibly forego Mass is to attend a meeting involving politics or the Steamfitters, and the relationship between Doc's faith life and his work life is an interesting one. It would be wrong to say that Doc favored one or the other. It seems, in fact, that Doc's faith and work lives were more unified than separated. Returning to the excerpt, we see that he actually strikes a careful balance – if he has to skip evening Mass he plans ahead and goes “in day.” When writing in another letter about, Doc thanks God for the good fortune.^{xix}

Well work is still going really good for us at the office and it looks like it will [be] good for the next 2 yrs. And that sure takes a load off our minds, thank God for his help.

At the end of each letter, Doc repeated this belief that God should receive credit for the blessings of life. Doc signed off with the line, “God Blessed you all.” It is also interesting to note the grammar here because it points to a broader understanding of who Doc was. What Doc meant when he finished his letters was “God *Bless* you all,” and such missteps in tense, spelling, and punctuation were frequent in his letters. The broken grammar, combined with the continual references to God, Mass, and Catholic rituals like Baptism and First Communion, suggest that Doc was a man who led a faith life of action in the world. Doc's union and political activities were, in his eyes, intimately related to his faith. Amidst the worries and strife of Doc's hectic public life, Doc came to understand that, “God is good and I know every thing will come out for the best for [my wife] and me.”^{xx} As evidenced in the letter, Doc didn't think he was working alone as he lined up work for his Steamfitters, or campaigned for a Democratic candidate. God was always there to help him. But why was Doc's devotion to the Catholic Church so unwavering, and how could he consistently reconcile his work and faith lives? When we

understand where Doc came from, we will see that Doc's unification of his spiritual and public lives was no accident. It was due in great part to growing up poor, Irish and Catholic in the Kerry Patch.

LIFE IN THE KERRY PATCH

When Doc was born in 1904, St. Louis was on top of the world. It was a hundred years after the Louisiana Purchase, and the United States was celebrating in St. Louis with an Exposition designed to be even greater than Chicago's Columbian Exposition twelve years earlier. On April 30, 1904, the Louisiana Purchase Exposition (also called the 1904 World's Fair) officially opened. In the East Room of the White House, President Theodore Roosevelt spoke enthusiastically about the Fair. William Howard Taft stood in for the President in St. Louis to officially start the event. St. Louis held the world's attention for the next seven months. Forty-three foreign countries boasted displays in the Exhibition, and in the summer the third Olympic Games of the modern era were held at Washington University. St. Louis attracted the brightest and most prominent men and women of all fields. Helen Keller spoke at the Fair in October, and observed that "the Louisiana Purchase Exposition is a great manifestation of all the force of enlightenment and all of man's thousand torches burning together."^{xxi} The World's Fair, the Olympics and a series of new ideas ranging from technology and science to the invention of the ice-cream cone, made St. Louis the place to be. The song "Meet Me in St. Louis" was first performed during the Fair, and would later gain popularity in the 1944 classic Judy Garland movie of the same name. At the heart of the Fair was the "Ivory City." It was as if an entirely new city had been created in St. Louis. Composed of twelve exhibition

palaces which ranged in size from 4.1 to 18.4 acres, each palace hosted a field of interest such as Machinery, Electricity, Education, and Transportation. To many St. Louisans, the Fair epitomized everything St. Louis could have hoped for. It was “the year St. Louis enchanted the world,”^{xxii} and as historian Stephen Raiche wrote, “for seven months in 1904, St. Louis was the most cosmopolitan city on earth.” Henry Adams, in *The Education of Henry Adams*, saw the St. Louis Exposition as mechanical power’s “first creation in the twentieth century, and for that reason, acutely interesting.” Upon arriving, Adams saw this creation firsthand:

The world has never witnessed so marvelous a phantasm: by night Arabia’s crimson sands had never returned a glow half so astonishing, as one wandered among long lines of white palaces, exquisitely lighted by thousands on thousands of electric candles, soft rich shadowy, palpable in their sensuous depths.^{xxiii}

For Doc Lawler, the city of St. Louis was not so marvelous. Unlike Henry Adams, whose St. Louis experience involved wandering through exquisitely lit buildings, Doc’s St. Louis experience started in poverty. On July 16, 1904 Doc was born not into the soft and shadowy Ivory City, but the hard and dirty Kerry Patch. The Kerry Patch seemed to be everything the Ivory City was not.

When Doc was born, the Kerry Patch was what it had always been: very poor, very rough and very Irish. Just eight miles northeast of the World’s Fair grounds, the Kerry Patch sat on the city’s near north side. St. Louis had been home to some Irish immigrants since the early nineteenth century, but it wasn’t until the Potato Famine era in Ireland, from 1840-1860, that the Kerry Patch evolved. From 1840-1860, almost two million Irish immigrants came to the United States. The majority of those who arrived in St. Louis found themselves near poverty, homeless and unwelcomed by the city around them. The neighborhood soon became known as the Kerry Patch. The legend held that “the

immigrants had come from County Kerry in Ireland,^{xxiv} but wherever the new Irish had actually come from, they did not receive a warm welcome in St. Louis. The Irish who settled Kerry Patch in the early 1840's built "irregular and poorly constructed homes" and were derogatorily referred to as "Shanty Irish." Etan Diamond, of the Missouri Historical Society, writes that "few outsiders ventured into the strange land of Kerry Patch and few insiders would have wanted them there."^{xxv} The city of St. Louis wanted nothing to do with them. A city guide book published in 1878 described the residents of Kerry Patch as "poor, but independent" folk whose "chief amusements consist of punching each other's eyes." The Irish in the Kerry Patch, continued the guide, lived a "wretched existence within ... miserable abodes."

Doc's "miserable abode" stood near the corner of 12th and Cass. There, he shared a one bedroom house with his parents and two older sisters. The family all slept in one room, and money was always tight. Doc's father, who worked as a boilermaker, died in 1915 and his absence put pressure on Doc and his mother Nana to provide for the family. Nana worked nights downtown as a scrubwoman in office buildings, and Doc started to take on a variety of odd jobs. One of his earliest positions involved selling fruits and vegetables from his Uncle Jim's produce stand. But before Doc started working, he did what all boys in the Kerry Patch did: join a boys' gang. It was in the gang that Doc first learned the value of being loyal to friends and the importance of defending territory.

Every section of Kerry Patch had its own boys' gang. Gangs such as "Egan's Rats," the "Hogan Gang" and the "Green Ones" roamed the streets, each protecting its own turf. Monsignor Joseph O'Toole, who lived in Kerry Patch at the time, recalled that fights between the gangs "often erupted after enemy gang members trespassed on the sacred

home territory.”^{xxvi} When the gangs fought each other, they used fists and threw bricks. In an atmosphere like this, it wouldn’t have taken Doc long to realize that having friends at your side was necessary for survival.

Violence among older members of the community was also a problem, and the Kerry Patch often had to deal with mob riots. The residents of Kerry Patch earned such a reputation for fighting that the St. Louis Police Department nicknamed the area the “Bloody Third District.” Police and Kerry Patch residents were regularly at odds, and often “a policeman could do nothing to stop a fight, but shed his coat, roll up his sleeves and join the brawl himself.”^{xxvii} For boys like Doc in Kerry Patch, protection was not found from the police, but within the brotherhood of the gang. You didn’t trust the police to settle your differences – you trusted your friends, their fists and your own.

Because of his gang involvement, and because of community perceptions about the Kerry Patch, Doc began to earn a reputation as a potential trouble maker. When he went to weekend dances at Northside Turner Hall, for instance, he was known for being both a good dancer and a shady character. Sometimes Doc and his friends had to leave the dances early in order to avoid the police. One weekend in 1922, on a night when Doc again had to leave early to escape police detection, he met sixteen-year-old Elizabeth Canon and her sister Ann. Doc was attending the dance with his friend Cotton, and the two young men invited the Canon sisters to meet them later. Undeterred by strong advice from friends to avoid these two troublemakers, Elizabeth and Ann agreed to meet the boys after the dance was over. We don’t know for sure what kind of first impression Doc made that night on Elizabeth, but the wiry boy with the derby hat must have said

something right. Within a year, Doc and Elizabeth (known as “Babe) were in love and thinking of marriage.

When Doc and Babe agreed to get married, they had to do so out of the public eye because Doc was still in trouble with the police. Doc was friendly with the Justice of the Peace in a part of St. Louis county called Wellston, and on the night of April 29, 1923, Doc and Elizabeth drove to Wellston to marry. When Doc found the Justice, he was involved in a poker game and uninterested in Doc’s request. But Doc wanted to get the marriage taken care of because he knew the police might step up their search for him. To coax the Justice into performing the marriage, Doc paid for the Justice’s poker hand. This drew the Justice away from the gaming table, and Doc married Elizabeth Canon. In the Kerry Patch, Doc had always fought for or made deals to get what he wanted. It made sense that he would have to negotiate even for his marriage license.

In the next year, 1924, Doc celebrated his twentieth birthday and the city of St. Louis marked the twentieth anniversary of the 1904 World’s Fair. It had been twenty years in Kerry Patch for Doc. For the city of St. Louis, it had been twenty years of major change. St. Louis historian James Neal Primm follows a glowing section on the World’s Fair with a chapter entitled “The Decline of the Inner City.”^{xxviii} While the city didn’t fold completely, St. Louis had lost much of its 1904 glamour. Doc’s future detractors might find it fitting that Doc was born in the golden year of 1904. Doc’s critics longed for the Ivory City and its glorious palaces, and in Doc they saw nothing but the Kerry Patch. In many ways they were right.

Even though the physical space of the Kerry Patch, the blocks of all-Irish homes, began to disappear after World War I ended in 1918, the Kerry Patch mentality lived on

in men like Doc Lawler. Just as he had faced other street gangs as a boy with loyalty and a willingness to fight, so he would later face anyone who wanted to cause trouble in his territory. Much of Doc's public life can be linked to this basic fact: He was a man from the Kerry Patch.

Jerome Shen was not a man from the Kerry Patch. That Jerome could not even have fathomed growing up as Doc did leads to the most obvious observation we can make about Doc and Jerome: though they shared common traits, lived in the same city and practiced the same religion, and had children who would eventually marry each other, they led extremely different lives. The differences between Doc and Jerome are most obvious in each man's early life. We know that Doc Lawler came from the Kerry Patch. After we find out where Jerome Shen came from, it will seem amazing that Doc and Jerome could ever have any connection whatsoever with each other.

LIFE IN SHANGHAI

To unearth Jerome Shen's roots, we have to move over seven thousand miles away and to a different continent. Born on August 5, 1918 in Shanghai, China, Jerome entered a world that felt a lot like the Ivory City. At the time Jerome was born, historian Harriet Sergeant writes that Shanghai "possessed a distinctly medieval feel."^{xxix} Within that system, the Shens lived like royalty.

On twenty-four acres of Shanghai estate, the Shen family held three separate houses. One was for Jerome's parents, John and Agnes; one was for Jerome's uncle; and the third for the parents of Jerome's father. Each house was richly decorated, and in each, servants

were available for nearly any task. Reflecting back on his spoiled childhood, Jerome soon recognized that his father was “loaded.” The Shen complex had ample green space and courtyards, and much like a royal estate, the most important part of the grounds was a great hallway in the main house. This hallway, which could seat up to five hundred people for sit-down dinners, was used not only for hosting parties, but also as a gymnasium and skating rink. When the doors at one end of the hall were opened, the family chapel became visible. That the Shens had their own chapel emphasizes the important role religion played even in Jerome’s early life.

Even though the number of Catholics in China was relatively small at the end of the nineteenth century, Catholicism was central to Shen family life. Although religious freedoms in China would later change, at this time the Shen family was allowed to openly practice Catholicism. Jerome’s parents had taken their Christian names, John and Agnes, at an early age, and by the time Jerome was growing up in the 1920’s, the Catholic faith was well established as the family’s religion. It was virtually impossible for Jerome not to be heavily influenced by Catholicism. Jerome’s father John had actually made a very serious attempt to be a Jesuit priest. He lived as a seminarian for eleven years, through grade school and high school, intent on becoming ordained. He failed the exams required to enter the Jesuits, however, and went on to start his own family. (It is interesting to consider that had the Jesuits only been little more lax in their acceptance standards, John Shen would have become a priest and Jerome Shen would never have been born.) Jerome’s uncle was Pastor at the local Catholic parish, and the Shen family regularly interacted with a large number of Jesuit priests, and nuns from the Society of Helpers and the Little Sisters of the Poor. A first answer to our question, then, is to say that Jerome

came from a wealthy home that was heavily influenced by Catholicism. But to truly find out where Jerome came from we must take a close look at his mother. Today Jerome remarks that the most important event in his life was the encouragement of his mother. If we think about Jerome's situation, we can see why this would be true. For unlike Doc Lawler, whose link to the Kerry Patch remained throughout his life, Jerome would later uproot himself from Shanghai and start from scratch in America. But though Jerome had to leave the Shen estate and wealth behind, he could always hold onto his mother's spirit.

Growing up, Jerome felt his family was "mother dominated." This would come as no surprise to anyone who knew Agnes Shen. Agnes had grown up under the arm of a step-mother who resented her. Her real mother had been diagnosed as mentally disturbed, and was locked away in a place where she could not receive visitors. Agnes was very bright, but as a daughter in a rich Chinese family, was not expected to go outside her home for school. Most girls of her social standing received their education at home. Agnes was lucky, however, in the establishment of a new, nearby missionary school during her youth. She became a part of the school's first-ever class, and was exposed to new possibilities for Chinese women. While Chinese tradition still dominated, new western, liberal ideas were starting to make societal inroads. At school Agnes met a number of strong-minded young women like herself, and she saw some of her classmates start the Women's Commercial and Savings Bank at 392 Nanking Road.^{xxx}

Agnes' exposure to western ideas and her dominance in Shen family life served as the catalyst for Jerome's eventual move to the United States. Had Jerome been guided only by his father, he probably would not have left Shanghai. Jerome's father, a very conservative businessman, was not excited about the possibility of his son leaving to

practice medicine in the United States. Though he had become a part of the western economic market through overseas trading, Jerome's father held on to a number of older Chinese beliefs and many traditional medicinal understandings. When Jerome contracted dyptheria, for instance, his father thought he had swallowed turtle ashes. Despite his reservations about his wife's desire for their son to study and practice medicine in the United States, John Shen didn't prevent Agnes from pushing Jerome in that direction. When asked later about what his dad thought about him becoming a doctor, Jerome answered "he didn't think." It wasn't so much that John Shen didn't think – it was more that he didn't bother to voice his thoughts. He knew that his wife's voice was the one that counted.

Agnes was firm in her belief that Jerome should leave Shanghai and travel to America. She saw a number of opportunities in the United States, and Jerome began to see these too once he entered college in 1939 at St. John's University in Shanghai. Even though the Shen family was wealthy, Agnes was so concerned that Jerome make it to the U.S. that while he was in college, she began to stash away money that would one day pay for Jerome's travel expenses. She wanted to make sure there were no excuses when the time came for him to go. When the time came in 1946, after Jerome had gained his B.A. and M.D. degrees from St. John's, Jerome's father learned about the money Agnes had been saving. On October 24, 1946, John told his wife that she didn't have to worry about the money. On that very same day, Agnes Shen suffered a stroke and passed away. There had been a party scheduled that night in the Shen hall, but instead of coming together to celebrate, relatives and friends gathered to mourn. It was ironic that Agnes died just before Jerome left for the United States. But in another sense, it was also fitting that with

Agnes' death came Jerome's new life in the United States. When Jerome arrived in St. Louis in January 1947, he came from a wealthy Catholic home in Shanghai China. But more importantly, he came from the home of Agnes Shen.

Is it possible that Jerome, growing up in extraordinary wealth, and Doc, spending his youth in poverty, could share anything other than their Catholic faith in common? Surprisingly, the answer is not only yes, but yes in a very substantial way. Despite their radically different backgrounds, both Doc and Jerome learned the importance of loyal friendships. In Mother Teresa, Jerome Shen would find a woman whose strength and conviction was similar to that of his own mother Agnes. With Larry Callanan, Doc formed a relationship that started in the Kerry Patch, and, though tested, could not be broken.

DOC AND LARRY CALLANAN

Defining the relationship between Doc and Larry Callanan is not easy. Though they grew up together, played in the same kids' gangs, and shared similar goals for the Steamfitters union, they operated in very different fashions. Some considered Doc to be an extension of Callanan's power, while others would talk only with Doc and refused to see Callanan. Friends talked of Lawler and Callanan as "inseparable," but they were also quick to point out that the two men "were a contrast in personalities." While Callanan was described as "volatile, dogmatic and was nicknamed 'The Bully,' Doc was quiet, humble, [and] never flaunted his power."^{xxxix} Because many of their activities were kept secret, and doubly so because Doc was working quietly while Callanan did the bullying that drew attention, it is sometimes difficult to know the exact nature of Doc's actions.

Doc later recorded, in a letter to his daughter, his sense that his son John Jr. possessed “some of the con that I have.” Doc would use that “con” when he and Callanan seized power in the Steamfitter union. In a comment on con artistry, Doc would also later write, “What’s the old saying, you can catch more flies with honey than you can with your fist.” Callanan looked first to his fists, while Doc brought out the honey. Working together, they were able to gain power in St. Louis’ Steamfitter Union Local 562.

When Doc joined the Steamfitters in the early 1940’s, he did so without fanfare. He was a union member with no special distinctions. Before joining the union, he had worked a number of odd jobs including bell hop, taxi driver, and delivery boy for the *St. Louis Star Times* newspaper. Even as a Steamfitter, Doc had to continue working other jobs because there was only enough construction work to employ him for six or seven months. Callanan, born in 1909 and five years younger than Doc, joined the Steamfitters after a volatile childhood. After a series of run-ins with the police, Callanan had been sent to Bellefontaine Farms, St. Louis city’s youth correctional facility. When he turned eighteen, he served five years in the Missouri Penitentiary for robbery. After his release from prison, Callanan began working with the Steamfitters, where Lawler and several other friends were already employed.

It wasn’t until World War II that the union leadership was shaken up by Doc, Callanan and what the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* described as “hoodlum elements.”^{xxxii} Before the war, Local 562 was run by business manager Edward G. Flynn. But when Flynn left to serve as a Seabee in 1944, Doc, Callanan and their allies saw an opportunity to take control. Because the war created a boom in defense construction, there was a corresponding demand for Steamfitter workers. Taking advantage of this high demand,

the Steamfitters began issuing work permit cards – fitters who weren't union members could come and work on the projects, but they would have to pay more for the opportunity to do so. During the first two years of the war, revenue from work permits and other dues totaled almost \$500,000 (which today would be over \$4 million.) Using this and other opportunities created by the wartime construction boom, Doc and Callanan established themselves as union leaders. When former boss Flynn returned from Seabee duty in 1945, he found himself out of a job.

Elections for business manager were held in 1946, but they were a formality which gave Doc and Callanan their official titles. Callanan was named business manager and Doc became one of his chief lieutenants. Callanan liked his role as the front-man who wielded power with strong-arm tactics. Doc enjoyed working behind the scenes, where his gentler approach was most effective. In various forms, Doc and Callanan stuck with these roles for the rest of their lives. Callanan's style was more intimidating, but not always more effective. Doc's relationship with Missouri Governor Warren Hearnes emphasized this point.

Using a massive political war chest which will be examined later in this narrative, Doc and Local 562 were able to help Hearnes win his bid for governor in 1964 and again in 1968. He was the first person to serve two successive terms, but he would not have served at all had it not been for Steamfitter support. The Steamfitters were able to deliver a large portion of St. Louis to Hearnes, as well as influence other areas of the state. The fear voiced by Ethan Shepley, Hearnes' Republican opponent in 1964, was that Hearnes' tie to the Steamfitters would make him an extension of Larry Callanan's power. With obligations "expected to be fulfilled, and pressures [to] be exerted" on Hearnes, Shepley

felt the Steamfitters would gain too much control of state government because Callanan would have his way with Hearnese. After winning the election in November, however, Hearnese wanted no part of Callanan. In an interview on the subject while serving as Governor, Hearnese commented that “Callanan and I never got along. Doc Lawler was a good friend and that was why the fitters took me. Whenever I got around Lawrence, we got into an argument.” They argued because Callanan only operated with demands and threats. With Hearnese in place, it would not be through Callanan’s power moves, but through Doc’s loyal friendship, that the Steamfitters could assure themselves another pipeline to the Missouri State Capital.

During Hearnese’s second run for governor in 1968, Callanan was particularly aggressive, threatening to sponsor another candidate if Hearnese would not promise political favors. Callanan’s threats, however, proved fruitless, and Hearnese told him and the Steamfitter union, “If you want something from me, send the Doctor.” While Hearnese was in office, the Doctor would pay regular visits to Jefferson City, following a regular routine each time. When Doc wanted to meet with Hearnese, he would first talk with Tommy Walsh in St. Louis. Once Walsh contacted Hearnese’s personal assistant in the state capitol, the meeting would be set. Always with his little derby hat placed neatly on his head, Doc would stroll in to Hearnese’s office and the two men would talk. Though Doc had an agenda, he recognized that Callanan-style threats would get him nowhere. Warren Hearnese recalled that he “never heard Doc raise his voice.” Although Doc’s subtle style lacked Callanan’s attention-grabbing tactics, Republican opponents recognized Doc as a very effective politician. In September 1964, Republican Jean Paul Bradshaw voiced the concern that, it “is generally known that the better elements of organized labor fear the

growing influence of Lawler and his associates, since it's an open secret that the Lawler forces are trying to gain control of the labor movement in this state, as well as control of the Democratic party."^{xxxiii} No one was ever exactly sure what Doc said, or what deals were cut, but as Bradshaw points out, it was no secret that Doc could make things happen. It was also no secret that he made things happen because he knew the importance of friendship.

JEROME AND MOTHER TERESA

Friendship was also central to Jerome Shen's work with Mother Teresa. Unlike Doc's relationship with Hearnest, however, Jerome and Mother relied less on face-to-face meetings and more upon a shared commitment to acting in service for the poor. Neither Jerome nor Mother Teresa knew a lot about the other's personal life, but they knew that they both agreed on a faith-based mission to the poor and to the pro-life movement. For that, they had tremendous respect for each other. Sitting on a corner table in the Shen house is a picture of Jerome and Mother Teresa outside of the St. Louis convent for Mother's religious order, the Missionaries of Charity. Written on the photo is a short, but powerful, message of appreciation for Jerome's work in St. Louis on her behalf. In silver ink, Mother wrote, "God bless you." Jerome's respect for Mother's work is manifest in the book he has outlined and begun research for, "I Thirst: Mother Teresa and Her Missionaries of Charity's Works in St. Louis, MO." Because their meetings were not frequent, the relationship between Mother and Jerome developed over a span of twenty years.

Jerome first met Mother Teresa when she visited St. Louis in April, 1978 to attend a series of meetings held by the Institute on Religious Life. She had also been invited by St. Louis Cardinal John J. Carberry to establish a mission in North St. Louis city. His interaction with her then, however, was nothing more than pleasantries. Jerome would have to wait until Mother's second visit to speak with her more extensively. When she traveled to St. Louis the second time, it was to dedicate her first St. Louis mission on June 19, 1979. The mission was at 2715 Bacon Street in North St. Louis, and, unfamiliar with the area, Jerome got himself lost for over twenty minutes trying to find the location. It turned out to be the most productive getting-lost experience in Jerome's life, for when he finally arrived at the Bacon Street Mission, Mother Teresa was walking out of the shelter to head to the dedication Mass. Jerome offered her and her fellow Sisters of Charity a ride in his car, but they declined and instead invited Jerome and his wife to walk with them to the Church. It was then, during the twenty-minute walk, when Jerome first began to make an impression on the Nobel Peace Prize winner.

During the walk, and on the subsequent trek back to the shelter after the Mass, Jerome first introduced the idea of Mother returning to St. Louis at the invitation of the St. Louis Archdiocesan Pro-Life Committee, for which Jerome was a board member and former chairman. Jerome thought Mother's response would certainly be, "Thanks, but no thanks," given the size of her commitments elsewhere. But much to his surprise, she didn't say no. She didn't say yes, either, but she left the door open and that was all Jerome needed. Self-described as a "pusher" in relationships, Jerome did not let his respect for Mother prevent him from persistently encouraging her to visit St. Louis as a guest of the Archdiocesan Pro-Life Committee. When Mother visited St. Louis a third

time in June 1981, in honor of her fifty years of missionary service, Jerome approached her again. This time, her response was to “call her in November.” Though he couldn’t call and speak to Mother directly, Jerome followed Mother’s suggestion and sent her a letter in November. After a period with no response, Jerome finally heard back in March – Mother Teresa would visit St. Louis again! The date was set for June 1982, and Jerome informed St. Louis Archbishop John May, who offered the official invitation. When Mother arrived on June 8, 1982, Jerome remained close to her as he served as a bodyguard. St. Louis Mayor Vince Schoemehl ordered some plainclothes policeman to help out, and set up a tinted van to carry Mother from St. Louis airport to the new mission. Jerome greeted her at the airport, and was humbled when he saw that her only traveling luggage was a small purse. While in St. Louis, Mother dedicated two projects to which Jerome had devoted much time and energy: a new mission house and a new shelter for pregnant women and their children. She also held a private Holy Hour of prayer at Jerome’s parish, Our Lady of Lourdes, for those strongly involved in St. Louis’ pro-life movement. This trip to St. Louis, Mother’s fourth, was a trip which had the work of Jerome Shen written all over it.

Before her death in 1997, Mother made only one more visit to St. Louis, to talk about pro-life issues with a Presbyterian group in June 1988. But Mother’s absence in St. Louis did not stop Jerome from staying in contact and continuing to expand her St. Louis missionary work. Mother’s favorable response to Jerome was not only a reaction to Jerome’s good works, but also to Jerome’s persistence. At one point, after Jerome had been asking Mother for her blessing to expand a number of services at the shelter, Mother told Jerome that in St. Louis, he was free to do whatever he wanted. When she visited in

1988, she came to Jerome with a new idea. She wanted to build a soup kitchen in addition to the shelter for women and children. She knew that Jerome had been instrumental in fund-raising and setting up the shelter, and now she was offering him a new challenge. Her message to Jerome was clear: “I know you can do it.” With the help of several large benefactors, Jerome collected more than \$450,000 to fund Mother’s soup kitchen. He also secured volunteer labor from several local labor unions, and within two years, the soup kitchen was up and running.

While the soup kitchen began to successfully serve over 100 people per day, Jerome began to wonder if even more could be done. This time, it was he who went to Mother Teresa with an idea. What if they added a job-placement program to the mission? At first, Mother was cautious about the idea because she thought it might be too much for the shelter to provide. Jerome, however, wanted to dispel two myths: First, that the people who were coming to the soup kitchen had a low attention span and didn’t want to work; and second, that people didn’t want to hire them. Jerome felt both of these myths were mistaken, but in order to convince Mother to approve the idea, he had to be persistent. Mother Teresa eventually sent him a message that he could do “anything he wanted” in St. Louis. Mother’s decision to give Jerome freedom to act on her behalf in St. Louis was proof that Jerome had earned her trust. While we don’t know Mother’s exact emotions at the time, she probably felt a mix of joy and exasperation – exasperation because Jerome seemed never to be satisfied, but joy because he was pushing in the right directions. With Mother’s blessing, Jerome wasted no time. In two weeks he had a job-search committee formed and a van borrowed from the Cardinal Ritter Institute to transport people from the shelter to nearby St. Patrick’s Center. As the program began to develop, Jerome created

an office in one corner of the soup kitchen, and set out to help those coming in find more than just a warm meal. Mother's faith in Jerome proved well founded. Her faith in Jerome, combined with Jerome's devotion to Mother's mission, formed the basis of their relationship. It was a relationship short on personal interaction, but filled with love and faith in each other. In this way, it was similar to the friendship between Doc and Warren Hearnese. Doc wanted to deliver St. Louis votes to Hearnese because he respected what he stood for. Jerome wanted to improve Mother Teresa's St. Louis mission because he agreed with her work. Both Hearnese and Mother Teresa were, in return, willing to listen to their friends because Doc and Jerome had earned their trust and respect.

An integral part of the Doc Lawler and Jerome Shen story, then, is this aspect of private friendship. But also important is the public side of Doc and Jerome. We know how they acted in these two powerful relationships, but what about the rest of the time? How did Doc and Jerome work in the world? Again, the most obvious answer is that most of the time they did extremely different things in the world. Jerome treated kids for sore throats and chicken pox, while Doc argued with contractors about how much his Steamfitters deserved to get paid. But in addition to different jobs, Doc and Jerome also employed different working styles. Of the character differences between Doc and Jerome, one of the most important is that Doc worked behind-the-scenes, while Jerome tended to be more inconspicuous when promoting his social agenda. As we now examine these differences in style, however, one recurring theme will be evident in both men's lives: there was nothing more important than nurturing family life.

THE "BEHIND THE SCENES" STORY

In both political and union affairs, Doc Lawler was the man “behind the scenes.” Especially within the St. Louis Democratic party, Doc served some important roles that weren’t noticed until he had passed away. One of the places where Doc acted as a kind of “invisible glue” was in north St. Louis city, where a political battle was brewing between two aspiring African-American leaders. U.S. Representative William Clay, who had once been an employee of Steamfitters Local 562, and Benjamin Goins, who had won the job of License Collector because of Doc Lawler’s help, were fighting for power in 1972. Doc’s unique position, a friend to both parties, allowed him to forge a coalition. Doc’s death, however, “[paved] the way for an intensified black political power struggle on the North Side.” It was felt by the local political analysts that “Doc [was] the only man the [Democratic] party could look to bring these factions together,” and after his death “no one [was] a likely successor.”^{xxxiv} While many elected officials might have become frustrated with so much uncredited work, working outside the public eye was the kind of political work best suited to Doc’s personality. A counter argument to this conclusion might be made that it wasn’t as much Doc’s non-desire for a public position which kept him from holding political office, but rather his inability to win an election.

If you looked only at his first three runs for political office, this counter argument would appear accurate. In 1947 Doc lost a bid for Alderman of the Second Ward. In 1952 he lost a close race for Missouri State Senator from the Fifth District. Ten years later, he lost a 1962 election for the State Senator from the Sixth District. In each of these three elections, Doc had done everything he could to win. He had registered under a different address to run in the Second Ward in ‘47, the Fifth District was rezoned in ’52 to help his cause, and in ’62 Doc used all of the Steamfitter influence he could in an attempt to win

the Sixth District seat. Doc's efforts in these three races, then, seem to suggest that he wanted to hold public office and just couldn't win a race. But if we put these first three races into context, and then consider the opportunities he passed by later in his career, we will see a different story.

To contend that Doc wanted to win the three races he entered is true, but it leaves out an important fact: Doc wanted to win *in order to help the Steamfitter political machine*. The St. Louis political landscape during these elections was split between machine vs. progressive politics. Doc and the Steamfitters were entrenched on the machine side, and the reform-minded progressives wanted to keep them out of office. In a telling political cartoon published in the *Globe-Democrat* on May 7, 1956 two men are holding onto a lever which represents "St. Louis Progress." One set of hands belongs to a man with large hands, a derby hat, beedy eyes, and half a cigar in his mouth. This man is labeled "Greedy Politicians." The other man, clean cut and with a face filled with conviction, is labeled "Civic Minded Citizens." The line above asks, "Who will chart our course?" With the lines clearly drawn, Doc felt an obligation to try and win a seat for his side. Every victory for the progressives meant less power to the unions, and to Doc that was bad news. Given this context, we see that Doc was not someone whose personal ambition for political office was a driving force. Doc didn't want to run for political office just to run. If we look at Doc's later political career, we will in fact see just the opposite. Doc was a man who would take political office only if it was a necessary step to support the Steamfitter cause.

In 1965, Doc had a fantastic opportunity to turn his election luck around and grab a seat in the Missouri State Senate. In September 1964, John Barrett, the man who had

beaten Doc for Missouri State Senator from the Sixth District, was appointed as St. Louis jury commissioner. In accepting that new post, he left his Sixth District seat open, and to fill it, Gov. Hearnes called for a special election on January 14, 1965. Because Doc had run a close race before, it seemed that Barrett's move might have "paved the way for Doc ... to replace him."^{xxxv} Doc was clearly the front-runner for the seat. But even though this election might have yielded a long sought-after chance at public office, Doc decided not to run. Why would he pass up such a promising opportunity?

The reason offered to the public was that Doc's duties as business manager of the Steamfitters union were too demanding to allow him to run. Eddie Roche, from the first ward, told the *Globe-Democrat* that "everyone was anxious to have John Lawler make the race," but explained that Doc needed "some time for his family," and therefore wouldn't have time to serve as a State Senator.^{xxxvi} There was truth to this argument since Doc was already spending the majority of each day at the union office and away at meetings. In 1965 he was also 61 years old, and though his health was not failing, he was still at the tail end of his political career. Another reason for Doc's choice to bypass the election, however, involved his friendship with Governor Hearnes. Because Hearnes was already fighting against an image of a mere machine politician, many Hearnes supporters hoped that "Lawler [would] stay out of the race" because they felt "his presence in the [Missouri] Senate could be embarrassing on occasions to the Governor."^{xxxvii} Because Doc was a very loyal friend to Hearnes, this line of reasoning helps to complete the picture. Another clue suggesting that Hearnes spoke privately to Doc is that six days before Eddy Roche announced Lawler wouldn't be running, Hearnes said in a radio interview that he didn't believe Lawler would be a candidate in the election. Hearnes

recalls today that Doc didn't want to put his family through the election process. Doc knew that if he ran, he would be attacked heavily by the *Globe* and by opponents. It wasn't worth it for his family and it wasn't worth bringing Governor Hearnes into the mess as well. Doc's choice not to run for the Sixth District State Senator's seat demonstrated that his loyalties to family and friends were stronger than his desire to hold political office. He demonstrated this again a year later when he was elected chairman of the Democratic City Central Committee. If we follow Doc's political progress as Chairman, we will see that loyalty was extremely important, perhaps even too important.

1966 was a year of firsts and onlys for Doc Lawler. When he was elected in May (by the 58 ward committeemen in a vote of 25-23) as chairman of the Democratic City Central Committee, it was the first and only time he would be elected to any political office. In June he gave his first and only extended newspaper interview to Herbert A. Trask of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. It was the first and only time Doc was visible as a politician, and not just as a supporter in the background. For many other politicians, the move to chairman of the city's most powerful Democratic body would have been a dream come true. For Doc, it was everything he didn't want. From the beginning, Doc's choice to run was heavily influenced by his loyalties to the Steamfitter machine. In 1966 Mayor Cervantes, whom the Steamfitters had previously backed, began to reject some of the Steamfitter demands. With the post of chairman opening up in May, both the Mayor and the Steamfitters saw an opportunity to increase their base of power. Mayor Cervantes decided to push for his campaign manager, Anthony Sansone of the 25th ward. If Local 562 wanted to beat Sansone, they would need someone with a number of connections in the party. Their answer was Doc Lawler. Doc was the only Steamfitter candidate who

could have pulled off a victory. After Doc's close win, Mayor Cervantes commented that "Doc has been around a long time and has done a lot for many of [the ward committeemen. They couldn't very easily vote against him." The headline of the story echoed Cervantes' comments, "Mayor Lays Defeat by Lawler to Friendships." It was a return to the basic back-scratching politics that Doc Lawler knew and loved. Doc had gained the trust of many in his party, and that showed when they voted him in as chairman.

Although Doc may not have wanted the position initially, once elected, he took his job seriously. The responsibility of the position also allowed Lawler to gradually move farther away from the influence of Larry Callanan. In an interview about his role as chairman, Lawler said all he wanted to do was "keep the [Democratic] party strong and united in St. Louis." When asked about his relationship with Callanan, Lawler asserted that "Larry has never tried to dictate policies as far as politics are concerned." And when questioned about the role of the Democratic party after an election is over, Lawler sounded more civic-minded than ever, suggesting that, "it is the obligation of the party to forget the election and help the community, regardless of politics."

While the validity of some of Doc's statements may be questioned (e.g. Callanan almost certainly tried to dictate political policies), Doc's tone of party and civic unity marked a definite change in his approach to politics. Most remarkable is that his interview would have sounded good to a reading audience. For once, public opinion of Doc Lawler might not be entirely negative. Doc did not leave the Steamfitters behind and moved on to a new political reality, but he was politically savvy enough to realize that for the good of the larger Democratic party, he had to publicly tone down some of his union

connections. His rhetoric as chairman over the next few months was again very different from statements we would expect from a younger Doc Lawler. When pushing for passage of a bond issue in September, for instance, Doc said that “a bond program is no place for personal, political, or any other kind of disagreement. It will help make a better city for all the people.” Even more shocking was that Doc backed up his support by referring to “a very fine committee of distinguished citizens [who have] studied each of the bond items. I am satisfied that they have screened them well and wisely. I am perfectly willing to rely upon their judgment and recommendation.”^{xxxviii} By relying upon a “committee of distinguished citizens,” Doc was in effect supporting a progressive piece of legislation. As a rough-and-tough poll worker in the second ward a year earlier, Doc proved he was still a machine politician. But as chairman of the City Democratic Committee, he showed he could also play a different kind of political game.

Even if he wasn't promoting his Steamfitter connections as frequently, the status of the working class was still at the forefront of Doc's agenda as chairman. In a speech given to the Young Democrats club at Carpenters Hall, Doc said, “the Democratic party is known as a working man's party Sometimes people forget that.” Doc never forgot the working man, just as he never forgot his Steamfitters. But as chairman, he realized that his primary goal was no longer jobs for men, but the unity of the Democratic party. When asked about the difficulty of accomplishing this party unity in the city, Doc gave an answer which tells us a lot about the way the chairmanship affected him. Doc answered that even though it would be “hard for an old scrapper like me,” he would “sit on the sidelines until after the August primaries” before pushing specific candidates.^{xxxix} Doc Lawler sitting on the sidelines during a primary election? It wouldn't be anyone's first

guess, but it was what Doc did in 1966 to help the Democratic party. Doc was the same man, but a different type of politician after becoming chairman. Even after he gave the post up at the end of the year, he held onto many of the unifying principles he had espoused as chairman.

While Doc was making a transition into a new political style, Larry Callanan was not. The split between the two men's objectives was beginning to be noticed by some observers. Publicly, of course, Doc never questioned Callanan. Doc's loyalty to Callanan was as strong as could possibly be, and this never wavered throughout both men's lives. Doc's loyalty to Callanan, however, may have limited Doc's political accomplishments. In 1966, the possibility of an internal rift began to develop. Callanan officially resumed control of Local 562 in October 1966 after his federal restriction was lifted. Callanan was voted business manager and replaced Doc at the top spot of Local 562.^{xl}

With Callanan officially back on the scene, local political commentators began to pick out the differences between Callanan and Lawler. Ted Schafers of the *Globe-Democrat* noted that "politicians say once [Doc] gives a pledge to support a candidate, he never backs away," but that Callanan "plays a different game. He likes the power that comes from getting people elected to office." In a new position as chairman, Doc would not be able to tolerate as much of Callanan as he did before, simply because he was spending more time in the public eye. When Doc was asked about the "Callanan Gift Fund," which had raised \$126,000 and which was scheduled to go to Callanan to pay for his past legal fees, Doc commented that before the money transfer could take place, "there [were] some obligations Larry forgot about."^{xli} Others also saw that "relations between ... Callanan and the offices of Governor Hearnest and Mayor Cervantes [were]

getting a bit sticky.”^{xlii} The tense relationship between Hearnese and Callanan put Doc in a difficult position. He was good friends with both men, but what could he do to stop Callanan’s relentless push for more control in the state capitol?

It was likely that Hearnese asked Lawler to intervene, and the political rumors at the time confirm that guess. In an August 1966 article, Jack Flach of the *Globe-Democrat* reported that “the latest reliable reports claim that John Lawler, who is Callanan’s chief lieutenant and head of the Democratic City Central Committee, has warned his boss to slow down a little in his quest for power.” Flach went on to say that “Lawler, a quiet man gifted with a political brain, may have spotted some danger signs.”^{xliii} Doc had indeed spotted danger signs, but Callanan wasn’t interested in attending to them. If Doc wanted to continue his post as chairman, he would have had to make a choice: remain loyal to Callanan, despite the political fallout, or adopt a more city-wide approach to politics. When Doc resigned his post at the end of 1966, Doc chose to stick with his life-long loyalty to Larry Callanan and Steamfitters Local 562.

Doc announced his resignation in December of 1966, and mutually agreed with the Mayor and other committeemen that Paul Berra would serve as his replacement. In a letter to his daughter Bridget, Doc exclaimed that he “sure was glad to get away from that post.” He was surprised that “the papers were ok for a change,” and he offered as his reason for resigning that, “with the election coming up next month and my meetings in Miami for a couple weeks, I just could not give it the time it needed.” At home, Doc’s wife was also relieved that “there hasn’t been too much in the paper about Pop quitting Chairman. Maybe they’ll lay off a little bit now I hope.” Babe was also glad that her husband would have a few less responsibilities and be able to be home more often. A few

weeks earlier, in a different letter, Babe had touched on the idea of Doc giving up the chairman's position.

I don't know when they're going to quit [being involved in politics.] I don't think they ever will. I believe I told you in one of my letters that Pop was going to give up Chairman of the Central Committee. I was so happy because it was his idea. He said it was just too much work. But he changed his mind again. So I guess I'll just have to put up with a few more headaches.

The sentiments expressed in these letters suggest that Doc's decision to resign as chairman was motivated primarily by the fact that he had too much work to do and couldn't spend enough time at home with his family. But how important was the previously mentioned influence of Larry Callanan? The *Globe-Democrat* speculated that "the final decision [was] ... up to Callanan."^{xliv} The paper's assertion may or may not have been true, but it is likely that Doc spoke to Callanan extensively about the job and whether or not to resign. Even if Callanan didn't directly advise Doc to quit, he could have heavily influenced the decision by changing Doc's responsibilities within the union. In other words, an alternative solution to Doc's dilemma would have been to keep the chairman's job, but reduce the time he spent working at the union. Callanan, of course, would not have liked this scenario, and one way to prevent that from ever becoming an option would be to make sure that Doc had plenty of union responsibility. Callanan knew about Doc's loyalty to the Steamfitters, and he might very well have played that card if he did work to persuade Doc to resign from the chairman's post. But regardless of their relative weights, it's clear that Doc's decision to resign from the Chairman's post stemmed from loyalties to his family, his friends and his Steamfitters. These loyalties made Doc the man he was, but they prevented him from being the Chairman he demonstrated he could be in his six months of service. Had Doc remained in the position

longer, perhaps he would have accomplished even more for the Democratic party. Doc, of course, would not have felt that sticking close to family and friends could ever be limiting.

FAMILY & FRIENDS: JEROME'S CAREER DECISIONS

Jerome Shen also found that professional interests did not always line up with nourishing family life. In 1958, Jerome and his family had lived in St. Louis for almost ten years. The family had grown, and he decided it was time to start his own pediatric practice. Working alone in rented office space on the second floor of Brentwood Medical Square, Jerome's practice began slowly. Not graduating from one of the two local medical schools, (SLU or Washington University,) meant he had very few referrals being sent his way. With his practice still fairly small, Jerome found time to explore his interest in adolescent medicine. At this time, the field of adolescent medicine was just beginning to differentiate itself from general pediatrics. Focusing on the adolescent ages allowed more attention to be given to problems such as drug abuse and sexual behavior.^{xlv} St. Louis, however, did not offer many opportunities to pursue these studies. Instead Jerome headed to Boston after winning a graduate fellowship at Harvard University's Graduate School of Medicine. There he would study under the pioneer of adolescent medicine, Dr. James Roswell Gallagher.

Dr. Gallagher had established the first adolescent health program at Phillips Academy in 1934, and started the world's first adolescent unit at Children's Medical Center in Boston. His 1960 textbook, *Medical Care of the Adolescent*, was the first of its kind, and he later founded the Society for Adolescent Medicine. Gallagher was clearly the leader in

adolescent medicine, and during Jerome's two year fellowship (1957-58) under his guidance at Harvard, Gallagher was impressed by Jerome's talents. About twenty years later, Dr. Gallagher encouraged Jerome to edit a new book, *The Clinical Practice of Adolescent Medicine*. In a section titled "In Appreciation," Jerome wrote that the book "could never have been started or finished, without the support and encouragement of my devoted friend and teacher, Ros Gallagher. In a sense this book belongs to him."^{xlvi} What did Jerome find so appealing about his mentor? Some of it had to do with Ros' intellectual abilities, but more important were the personal aspects of their relationship:

[Ros] has over the years generously made himself available for verbal or written consultation, on any subject and at any time, and has never failed to give a forthright and appropriate response. His strength of character and compassion manifest themselves in a deep commitment to young people, to his students, and to colleagues. Association with him inevitably generates an optimistic outlook and a desire for self-improvement.

Although the book was written in 1980, it carried a sentiment that Jerome demonstrated in 1958: a preference for practice over theory. In the book's Preface, Jerome wrote that he selected authors who would place an "emphasis on *practical* applications for practitioners."^{xlvii} He also thanked all of his "adolescent patients and their parents for giving [him] the privilege of sharing their burdens and, oftentimes, joys. Helping them to be healthier and to suffer less [gave Jerome] the true satisfaction of practicing adolescent medicine." For Jerome, the joy was in the patients, in the hands-on aspects of being a physician. Though he was capable of producing theory, Jerome was not inclined to join the academy. One important reason for this is that Jerome's medical background had not included a lot of time in research. But another important consideration was Jerome's desire to spend time with his family. The issue would become especially important for Jerome in 1959 because in August of that year, his youngest son Thomas was born. This

meant three kids under the age of ten in the Shen household, and Jerome didn't want to be working all the time. The choice to pursue academic research, then, or even to expand his private practice, was not much of a choice at all because, like Doc Lawler, Jerome's commitment to family came first.

As Jerome began to get more involved in the St. Louis medical community, he found himself at the beginning of the 1960's as Head of the Department of Pediatrics at St. Louis City Hospital. As Head of the Department, he would not only have to deal with patients, but also with hospital administrators – in dealing with labor issues, Jerome again looked a lot like Doc Lawler. Though St. Louis City Hospital has since been boarded up, in 1960 it played a major role in providing health services to city residents. Members of the Lawler family, in fact, worked as candy strippers in the building. It is highly likely that during Jerome's time there, which lasted until 1963, some of the people treated in the Pediatrics Department were family or friends of Doc Lawler. While Doc would never have known Dr. Shen, he would have loved what Jerome did for the medical residents under his supervision.

The size of the hospital meant that Jerome was responsible for nine residents, and combined with limited city funds, this meant that his residents had very little support staff. As a consequence, Jerome's residents usually had to do work usually assigned to technicians – taking patients' urine and blood samples, and then testing them in the lab. Unhappy with the way his residents were being treated, and unable to force any timely action from the city, Jerome decided he would simply hire his own lab technician to take care of the jobs on his floor. He recruited one of the faster technicians from the lab to come upstairs and work in the Pediatrics Department, and it seemed to him to be the

easiest solution. But even though Jerome's adjustment accomplished its goal of making life more pleasant for the pediatric residents, the arrangement quickly fell through when Jerome's bosses learned what had happened. When Jerome left City Hospital in 1963, it was in part because of disagreements with hospital management.

Jerome's renegade hiring procedures in City Hospital demonstrate his willingness to stand up for those who worked for him. It was the same sort of willingness that made Doc repeatedly stand up for the men in Local 562. But if they shared this commitment to "their people," Jerome's actions in City Hospital demonstrate different strategies. While Doc preferred low-key, behind the scenes maneuvering, Jerome chose a path destined to bring conflict. It is, after all, a little hard to keep a busy lab technician behind the scenes. As opposed to Doc, who favored negotiations, Jerome more often brought a sense of "my way or the highway" to the discussions.

Colleagues and friends acknowledge that it could sometimes be very hard to talk to Jerome because of his uncompromising tendencies. Though Doc Lawler was also not one to compromise, still he was known as someone people could come and talk to. Both Doc and Jerome were eager to stand up for the people who counted on them. The difference, essentially, was that Doc Lawler would at least listen to the person across from him. Though age (and with that experience) made him more open to differences, as a bright young doctor in the 1960's, Jerome showed very little interest in listening to anyone who disagreed with him.

If Doc Lawler did ever close his ears, it was to avoid one source: the *St. Louis Globe Democrat*. Though Jerome had his critics, he experienced nothing like the heat Doc repeated took from the *Globe-Democrat*. Though Doc's trials with the *Globe-Democrat*

may not immediately offer information on both Doc and Jerome, Doc's handling of the *Globe-Democrat* is so central to his public life that it is necessary to consider. If we are to know Doc Lawler, we need to return to the question the *Globe-Democrat* forces us to consider. Was Doc a hero of the working class or a villain who stalled civic progress?

HERO OR VILLAIN

In 1969 it seemed as if the *Globe-Democrat* had the story right on Doc Lawler. That year, *Globe-Democrat* reporters Al Delugach and Denny Walsh traveled to New York's Columbia University, where they each received a Pulitzer prize in journalism for their investigative reporting on Steamfitter Local 562. A year earlier, Doc Lawler, Larry Callanan and fellow Steamfitter George Seaton had all been indicted by a Federal Grand Jury for "conspiring in illegal political contributions by a union."^{xlvi} The case developed slowly due to a number of appeals, but the three men were eventually found guilty in June 1970. With a guilty verdict and a Pulitzer prize, it seemed in 1970 as if the *Globe-Democrat* had been right on the money with their reporting. Two years later, however, it was hard to be sure. The Steamfitters had immediately appealed the guilty verdict, and by January 1972, the appeal had worked its way up to the United States Supreme Court. In June 1972, the Supreme Court ordered the indictments dropped against Doc and Larry Callanan, both of whom had died by that time. In 1974, the entire case was dropped, and U.S. attorney Donald Stohr concluded that "the interpretation of the Supreme Court decision [would] not support a conviction under the facts of the case."^{xlix} But what do we conclude? Did the Supreme Court's decision mean the *Globe-Democrat* reporting had

been mistaken? To find a satisfactory answer to these questions, we have to make a detailed consideration of the issues being investigated.

The *Globe-Democrat* questioned a number of Local 562's policies, but the item that they were most interested in was the Steamfitters' "Voluntary Political, Education, Legislative, Charity, and Defense Fund." Though officially the fund was voluntary and to be used for a variety of purposes, in reality it was mandatory and used as a war chest to fund politicians who would promote Steamfitter goals once elected. It was this fund that made Steamfitter Local 562 stand out, enabled Larry Callanan to bully politicians and made Doc a powerful figure in the Democratic party. How did the Steamfitters create such a powerful stash of money? It wasn't purely through numbers. Steamfitter Local 562 had only 1200 men on payroll, which made them similar to a number of other small unions. They weren't the size of the Teamsters, and they didn't enjoy strong national support to give them power. The Steamfitter secret to success was a unique "voluntary" political fund system, which meant about \$1 a day for union members and \$2 a day for those working on temporary or out-of-town permits. In addition to regular dues, which members had subtracted out by their on-site employers and sent to the union, "donations" to the voluntary fund were paid in cash at the Steamfitter headquarters at 1242 Pierce Avenue. Assuming an average of 250 working days a year, the union could generate an annual political fund of over \$300,000. Though nothing in writing made donations mandatory, the unwritten rule was clear: If you didn't drop your dollar in the hat, you wouldn't be working for the Steamfitters.

Since everything involving the political fund was done under the table, the exact internal workings are a little cloudy. It is not too hard, however, to see how Larry

Callanan, the ex-convict and bully, would operate in such a set-up. If you raised your voice against the political fund, you had better watch out for Callanan. But in addition to Callanan the enforcer, Doc Lawler presumably was the persuader. John Angelides, a *Globe-Democrat* writer who saw Doc later in his political career, commented that since Doc “didn’t use the muscle that Callanan did, people felt they could talk to him.” If Steamfitters had concerns about the fund, as surely some of them did, Doc was there to reassure them that it was in their best interests. It’s important to realize too, that Doc Lawler wasn’t pulling a con on his own union members. Friends and enemies agreed with long-time political ally and friend Joe Roddy Sr. that Doc “always tried to be loyal to the people.” Doc felt that amassing a large political war chest was important for maintaining a healthy union. Even if the fund clearly promoted Steamfitter interests, and thus was not a plot by union leadership to steal from their own members, there remained the question of the fund’s legality.

In 1965, *Globe-Democrat* publisher Dick Amberg initiated the series of investigative reports because he felt the Steamfitter fund was in fact illegal. But as the investigation progressed, not all of his reporters agreed. Ted Schafers, one of the reporters originally assigned to the inquiry with Delugach and Walsh, describes his doubts in a section of Duncan Bauman’s book. About midway through the assignment, Schafers “asked to be relieved ... because [he] learned the Steamfitters were using a political action program duplicating one used by a Teamster Union in St. Louis and that the Steamfitter-officers had adopted it only after being assured of its legality.”¹ Schafers, in an opinion which was not made public in the paper at the time, felt that under these circumstances, “not only would it be unfair to prosecute the union and its officers, but also that any conviction

resulting would be overturned if appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.”^{li} Schafers opinion is a key piece of evidence in the Doc vs. *Globe-Democrat* debate. For if Schafers knew midway into the inquiry that the charges against the Steamfitters were not well founded, why didn’t the *Globe-Democrat* call off its investigation? One might go further and ask, why didn’t the *Globe-Democrat* check its sources before beginning the investigation at all? It should not have been very difficult or time consuming to run a quick comparison of the Steamfitter political fund to other union funds in the area. It would have been that easy to see that Local 562 was not engaging in an illegal practice. The *Globe-Democrat*’s decision to push the investigation suggests that they were not as interested in the truth of the situation, but in discrediting Doc, Callanan, and the entire Steamfitter operation.

Doc’s experiences with the *Globe-Democrat* are an essential part of his story, but the only reason the *Globe-Democrat* had anything to write about was because Doc took a lot of action. He acted in a manner that the *Globe-Democrat* didn’t like, but the fact was that Doc didn’t sit quietly. If that sounds familiar, it should – it is also an apt characterization of another man who solved problems by taking action: Jerome Shen. Seeing Doc and Jerome “in action” is to witness them in real-life tests, where the stakes are high and there’s little room for error. It is exciting, but it is also very revealing because we see how Doc and Jerome work under pressure. In the next two sections, we will see Doc and Jerome in different times at different places with different people. Yet in each case, we will see Doc and Jerome emerge victorious.

DOC IN ACTION: I DON’T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT PUBLIC OPINION

Doc Lawler – Hero or villain? This question was most volatile in 1963, when Doc was negotiating with the Mechanical Contractors Association (MCA) for a new labor contract for his Steamfitters. The two sides were clearly defined. On the MCA’s management side stood Civic Progress, CEOs, developers, the progressive politicians, the *Globe-Democrat*, Republicans, and other conservatives. On the Steamfitters’ labor side stood Doc Lawler, much of the Democratic party, machine/patronage politicians, and those who were poor.

The first work stoppage came in April, when 700 members of Local 562 walked off their jobs. Doc knew it would be a tough negotiating year since the Steamfitters’ three year contract with the Mechanical Contractors Association (MCA) would expire on June 15. In a preemptive move, Lawler met with the MCA in April and asked for the immediate implementation of a “union dues check-off system.” When MCA management told him that this demand should wait until the June renegotiations, Doc was quoted as saying, “The association men won’t show up to work tomorrow.”^{lii} What Doc said exactly is always difficult to find out because he never talked to the press. Unlike many others in his position, he wasn’t interested in small talk with the press or with maintaining any sort of media image. At a different set of negotiations later in the summer, he would be quoted as saying, “I don’t give a damn about the public and public opinion. The only thing I give a damn about is my family, my conscience, and my pipefitters.”^{liii} In the summer, Doc certainly didn’t make improving public opinion of the Steamfitters his first priority.

When the Steamfitters’ contract ran out with the MCA on June 15, no new agreement had been reached. For about 800 fitters, that meant that on June 17, it was time to strike

against the MCA. Later in the summer, on July 1, the fitters were joined by Plumbers Local 35, Lathers Local 3, and Plasters Local 3. Even though none of the unions were actually picketing construction sites, there were a total of 2,000 workers and its effect could be felt by many in St. Louis. Doc Lawler was at the center of it all. His union was the first to go on strike, his union had the most people on strike, and it was believed by many of the contractors that his hand controlled each of the separate union negotiations. When negotiations between the Plumbing Contractors Association (PCA) and Local 35 fell through, for example, PCA attorney J. Glennon McKenna said the “contractors are convinced that they cannot sign a new agreement with Local 35 unless it first receives Lawler’s approval.” The head of Local 35, Lawrence Knoll, refuted the claim, saying that “Doc Lawler is not calling the shots for the plumbers. We are two separate and distinct locals.” Suspicions were raised because both the plumbers and the Steamfitters belonged to the same parent union, the American Federated Labor (AFL). The contractors saw that the AFL could merge the two locals at any time. Combining the pipe trade unions would “increase the power of the controversial Lawler,” and labor observers believed “Lawler would emerge as the dominant leader of the combined crafts.” Why was the management side so afraid of Doc gaining additional power? The answer lies in Doc’s negotiation strategies.

Doc went into negotiations knowing what he wanted and not settling for much less. In his only newspaper interview on the subject, Doc was asked to comment on the assertion that he had “gained a reputation as a rough and tough negotiator.” Doc responded that “negotiations are my responsibility. I support my men and I realize how far I can go with contractors. If they can convince me that I’m going to an extreme, I’m willing to back up.

But they've got to convince me first. In regard to that 'rough and tough,' in the 20 years that I've been negotiating I know of no contractor who has gone out of business." In the summer of 1963, Doc showed no signs of backing up from his demands for a reduction in the work week from 40 to 32 hours, and a \$1 increase in fringe benefits (for welfare and pension benefits.) Upon receiving those demands in February, the MCA said that the fitters "want the world with a fence around it" and that the contractors didn't "anticipate [Local 562 would] get anything like what they are asking." With both sides entrenched firmly, the strike showed no signs of stopping in July. Doc, familiar with such stand-offs, was not inclined to budge. But just before the Fourth of July, he had to make a very difficult decision.

Summers in St. Louis are characterized by strong heat and humidity. At the beginning of July, St. Louis was experiencing a heat wave with ninety degree-plus days. At St. Joseph's Hospital in Kirkwood (just west of St. Louis city,) 150 patients had only wall fans to keep them cool. The hospital had recently sold its window air conditioning units because it had invested in new central air conditioning. The problem on July 3rd was this: the air conditioning system didn't work yet because the Steamfitters were refusing to add the final touches and turn it on. The contractor who installed the unit, Phil Miller, tried to get Doc to let two of his men turn the system, but Doc would only agree to it if Miller would accept the Steamfitters' terms in its strike against the MCA. Since Miller was a member of the MCA, that wasn't something he wanted to do. The situation worsened with each day. Sister Margaret Alacoque, administrator of St. Joseph's, bemoaned the fact that they had "\$300,000 tied up in [the] new system, without any benefit. The patients as well as the staff are suffering." The hospital chaplain, Fr. Harry Roberts,

finally called Doc and pleaded their case. Doc agreed to send a man out, but in a calculated move, the man he sent was only a service man, not experienced enough to work with a system the size of St. Joseph's. When the strike started in June, a Steamfitter inspection committee had traveled to St. Joseph's and determined that it was not an emergency situation. Still, even if hadn't been classified as an emergency, the St. Joseph's situation was certainly a major concern for Doc.

Doc felt torn between the two sides. To allow for the air conditioning to be turned on would be bending in favor of the contractor management, but on the other hand, leaving the air off meant that 150 patients and half the hospital staff would be miserably hot and possibly even made more sick. Doc was targeted by the most biting comments he would ever receive from the *Globe-Democrat* editorial page. On July 4, 1963 they asked, "Are Steamfitters People?" and concluded that if they are, "they'll never really convince very many of it until they throw the present rotten leadership of their union out, and put respectable and responsible men in their place."^{liv} On that same day, Doc reached his decision and agreed to "send sufficient men, including the general foreman who was in charge of the installation, free of charge, to put the unit into operation." Doc's requirement was that Phil Miller sign a release "that the men, other than the foreman, will not be employees of Mr. Miller's company." In a few days, the air conditioning unit was cooling the hospital. Talks between the MCA and the Steamfitters, however, were not yet up and running.

It would have been hard not to be on one side or the other in the fight between Doc Lawler and the MCA. The scant middle ground made negotiations very difficult. The MCA felt that collective bargaining with Doc was nothing more than "a series of

ultimatums.” Doc felt that the contractors, as well as the U.S. Department of Labor and the press, were all out to keep his Steamfitters from getting what they wanted. The stakes were extremely high because, after a period of slow development, St. Louis was in the midst of a construction boom. It was felt that “for the first time in recent history, that St. Louis [might] be rousing itself from its long-time lethargy and becoming a truly progressive, modern city”^{lv} Indeed, anyone traveling through downtown St. Louis would have seen a number of new construction sites, including those of the 55,000 seat Busch Stadium (finished in 1966) and the St. Louis Arch (completed in 1965). In the seven weeks the Steamfitters had been striking (since June 17th), they and the other striking unions had tied up over \$77,000,000 in construction. For those on the progressive side, and for many St. Louis citizens, Steamfitter demands for wages higher than other comparable industries, and for reduced work weeks, were outrageous. Other unions, including sheetmetal workers, ironworkers, and carpenters had settled contracts, and it made the Steamfitters seem even more as “a pariah among the more respectable union crafts.” Contractors and those interested in the economic growth of St. Louis grew increasingly angry with Lawler and charged that he was “utterly unconcerned that he may be killing millions of dollars of new projects and thousands of jobs inside and beyond his own union by his unreasonable strike.”^{lvi} A question surely being asked by many concerned observers was simply, “What could Doc Lawler possibly be thinking?”

What *was* Doc Lawler thinking? Contrary to what his opponents on the other side of the table may have imagined at the time, Doc didn’t like being on strike any more than the contractors did. In a letter written three years later, during a time of peaceful labor relations, Doc wrote that he was “happy to report there will be no strike this time. We

have got our new contract signed and sealed. Thank God for that.”^{lviii} But even if Doc didn’t like striking, he was more than willing to let it happen. In February of 1963, Local 562 had begun making strike plans by converting “the bulk of its assets from government securities to cash and [by placing] an assessment on Steamfitters for each day they worked.” The goal was to have a large hand of cash on hand in order to survive a potentially long-lasting strike. But why was Doc willing to strike for such an extended period of time? To answer this question, we have to consider Doc’s relationship to Steamfitter Local 562. At the center of the equation was Doc’s belief that putting his Steamfitters to work and getting them the highest possible wages was his chief responsibility as business manager of the union. Detractors argued that this approach smacked of, “I’ll take mine and the Devil take the hindmost,” but to Doc, selfishness was not the issue. Instead, he felt protection of interests were in danger of being forgotten. For Doc, the massive “civic progress” being made in the city of St. Louis represented the interests not of the working man, but of the business (management) elite. Doc’s Steamfitters were constructing buildings in which they could not afford to live, and were helping to create wealth that they would never own.

There were also underlying class issues. The Steamfitters had a reputation for being more rough than some of the other unions. With Larry Callanan’s criminal record, and an assortment of other violence-related incidents, there was sometimes an “odor of fear” surrounding the fitters. They spoke in a style many people thought was rough. Compared to those in management, and those who were leading St. Louis’ progressive push, the fitters couldn’t write as well, couldn’t speak as well, and were not as well polished around the edges. When Doc sat across from the MCA negotiators, he too was

outmatched in some ways. Doc had less formal education and though he was street-smart, he was not a scholar. Though he wrote many letters to his daughter Bridget, they were generally short. In one letter, he acknowledged his difficulty with grammar, and told Bridget he would let his wife write about “all the news because I’m not too good at that. It would take all evening for mom to spell the words for me.”^{lviii}

Given the class differences, the rift between Doc and the contractors was probably both professional and personal. Doc’s loyalty was both professionally to the union and personally to others in the working class like himself. When he sat down at the negotiation table, Doc’s goal was not to achieve personal glory or look good for the public. He never tried to defend his public image; a *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reporter noted that “Lawler will not talk with reporters in person or on the telephone.” Doc was not in the business of public relations. His job was to represent his “brothers” in Local 562, and anything less than that was selling out. Doc felt a great kinship with the Steamfitters, and later wrote that “the main thing [is] to keep all of [the] brothers working and we have been doing that so you can see the Good Lord is helping us.” When we understand that Local 562 was like a second family for Doc, we can understand why he wouldn’t have cared about stopping millions of dollars of construction projects. Loyalty to family was more important to Doc than any sum of money, and Doc’s stubborn loyalty would not allow him to see any other alternatives. In this case and others, one might say Doc was loyal to a fault. But he wouldn’t have seen it that way. In Doc’s world, the welfare of his family, friends and pipefitters was all that mattered. When Doc laid out his proposal and told contractors, “Take it or leave it,” he left no room for compromise because for Doc there was none: you were either loyal to your union or you weren’t.

Doc's hard-ball negotiating tactics drew the strike out until the night of Friday August 23, when it was announced that the MCA and the Steamfitters had agreed to a new contract. When members of Local 562 gathered the following Tuesday to ratify the agreement, they liked what they saw. Doc Lawler had successfully arranged for a "1.27½ an hour increase in wages and fringe benefits over a new three-year contract period."^{lix} In addition, he had bargained for a re-structuring of the pension fund management board which favored the union's interests. Were the 68 days of striking, and the loss of \$50,000,000 in St. Louis area construction worth it? For those who answered No, Doc was a villain. But those who answered Yes were the ones Doc cared most about. Perhaps he looked like a villain to much of the public, but the public was not the group Doc answered to. We don't know for sure if Doc was quoted accurately, but it's easy to believe that Doc did indeed quip, "I don't give a damn about the public and public opinion. The only thing I give a damn about is my family, my conscience, and my pipefitters."

JEROME IN ACTION: NO FEAR

Seeing Doc Lawler "in action," leaves us with a real sense of what he stood for, and we can use the same approach to better understand Jerome Shen. While Jerome never negotiated with labor management, he did twice negotiate his way out of Shanghai. In 1945, he fled with his wife and children to Chungking to escape the expected Japanese occupation, and in 1949 he returned from the United States to bring his family out of China as the communists were about to establish control of the government. If any two instances in Jerome's life had to be picked out as the defining moments of his life, these

would without question be them. These experiences of violent uprooting are at the heart of the Jerome Shen story.

Four years before Jerome led his family out of China to the United States, the Japanese occupation of Shanghai provided a practice run for the escape he would later plan from the communist army. In 1945, the Chinese Nationalist government was facing a serious challenge from the invading Japanese army. Japanese forces had taken the former capitol of Nanking, forcing the head of the Nationalist government, General Chiang Kai-shek, to move his government and military headquarters to Chungking. In Shanghai, Jerome and others in what he felt was a “younger generation” sensed that the future of the city wasn’t very bright. Not as patient as their parents, young adults like Jerome felt they should flee the city before the Japanese overran it. Also aware that his physician skills would be in high demand by the Japanese military, Jerome decided to move his young family to Chungking. Agnes Shen encouraged Jerome to leave, but his father counseled more cautious behavior. John Shen’s fortune was tied down to Shanghai, and he didn’t want to risk losing his wealth by fleeing to Chungking. It was Agnes’ vision, however, that resonated with Jerome.

With help from a banker friend of his wife Theresa Yao’s family, Jerome organized a small group of ten people to travel to Chungking. Chungking was the desired destination because there, Jerome and his family could receive military protection from the Nationalist army. Jerome’s father-in-law was also doing business there, and he would be able to help Jerome find lodging. With a six-year-old son and a three-year-old daughter, the move was also important because the good grade schools had already moved from Shanghai to Chungking. The move made sense for all these reasons, and in the summer

of 1945 the road to Chungking was filled with “all younger people.” Jerome, his wife Theresa and their children Jerry and Elizabeth traveled with their nucleus of Shanghai friends, and with seven servants from the Shen estate. While some of the distance was covered on horseback, the Shens walked the majority of the trip. The children were often placed in a wheelbarrow, sometimes sharing space with a pig Jerome brought along for trading.

The trip to Chungking took about three months, and in the tense military atmosphere there was no shortage of excitement. Jerome and his family could not take much with them on the journey, and Jerome’s plan was to disguise themselves as merchants. At one point along the way, the Shens ran into a Japanese soldier out on patrol. In what Jerome felt was an act of human kindness, the soldier saw the young Shen children and chose not to stop them for questioning. While this incident with the Japanese soldier didn’t escalate, Jerome found other ways to get himself into trouble. One night, a group of travelers stopped at the shore of a small body of water. It was a popular rest stop, and in addition to Jerome’s small group, a number of other people were eating dinner. While resting, two teenagers in a boat were trying to cross the water. Before they could get very far, however, a set of servants from a group other than Jerome’s hit them and took the boat. Displeased with what he saw, Jerome got up and hit one of the servants back. It wasn’t the best tactical decision. The other groups outnumbered Jerome’s group ten to one. Before he knew it, Jerome found himself surrounded by a large number of angry people, some of whom were yelling “I’ll kill you.” Already weary from traveling away from home, the rest of the larger group wasn’t too interested in defending an upstart young doctor. Theresa Shen thought her husband might really lose his life. Jerome, however,

was too excited to be fearful. After bargaining with the crowd circled around him, it was agreed that instead of killing Jerome, they would make him pour tea for everyone else. Pouring tea was considered the ultimate degradation, and for Jerome to pour tea to servants was a big disgrace to someone of the Shens' social status. Disgrace, however, was better than death.

Just as the trip to Chungking was about to end, Jerome learned that peace had been declared and that the Japanese had been defeated. The Shens continued on to Chungking, but once they arrived they found that everyone was eager to get back to Shanghai. Peace with the Japanese meant that Shanghai was once again the place to be. One historian estimated that “the influx of returning Chinese refugees beginning in 1945 probably boosted the population to its highest total in the city’s history.”^{lx}

This demand for return passage to Shanghai created long waits for many, but the Shens didn't have to wait long because Jerome maneuvered himself to the front of the line. Employing a trick that he would use again later, Jerome found one of the ship captains and explained to him that he was a physician and that the ship captain needed a doctor on board his ship. One can imagine the scene on the dock, as Jerome bargained with relentless energy. Although speculative, it wouldn't be hard to believe that the ship captain gave Jerome tickets to Shanghai partly because he did indeed want a doctor on board and partly because he just wanted Jerome to shut up and get out of his way. Either way, Jerome's bargaining resulted in a quick trip back to Shanghai.

In Shanghai the Japanese were gone, and the city was trying to rediscover its past glory. For John Shen and the others who stayed in Shanghai, it seemed as if the older generation had been right to stay at home. Perhaps Jerome had been too hasty in his

decision to flee. Jerome's impulse to leave Shanghai was correct, but it was five years too early. It wouldn't be until 1949 that Jerome would leave Shanghai for good. Between 1945 and 1949, Jerome made his first trip to the United States. For two years, starting in January of 1947, Jerome studied pediatrics at St. Louis University Medical School. Jerome stayed in touch with his family by writing letters, and his vantage point in America allowed him to see that a communist occupation of Shanghai was imminent. Jerome also knew that he didn't want his wife and children growing up with Mao Zedong governing China. Jerome felt there was only one thing to do. He would bring his family out of Shanghai to the U. S. For Jerome and his family, what followed in the year 1949 reads in many ways like a Hollywood-type script: a young, adventurous immigrant must leave his family to come to the United States; he then sees that his family is in danger; he returns to rescue his family from communism and bring them to democracy. And, like in a movie script, Jerome needed some Hollywood-type miracles: the enemies had to look away at just the right time and all his gambles would have to come out winners.

When Jerome returned to Shanghai, he had only ten days before Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist troops forcefully occupied the Shen estate. Before dealing with the communists, Jerome found that the Nationalist troops weren't interested in being very friendly either. In the ten days before the occupation, Jerome scrambled to get some important passport information. He ended up hiding it away inside the first page of a family album, and there it rested safely until the Shens made their escape. Though the Nationalist guards didn't find the passports, they did tear up much of the Shen estate. The once-beautiful dining room table was cut up for military purposes, the smell of human feces filled the yard and the soldiers stayed up late being loud and enjoying mahjong (a

Chinese game played with tiles.) The occupation lasted about three months, and the continual late nights of noise finally drove Jerome to confront the soldiers. One night, while the soldiers were playing, he approached them and suggested that they shouldn't be playing mahjong after midnight because it kept the children up. Chiang's soldiers became extremely angry with Jerome, who had both interrupted their game and directly confronted them in a manner they weren't used to. The rest of Jerome's family was afraid that the soldiers would retaliate for Jerome's insubordination. To try and avoid problems for the rest of the occupation, Jerome's father and wife worked hard to restrain him from interacting with the troops. Jerome stayed upstairs with his family, while the soldiers lived and worked on the first floor. When anything exciting would happen below, and the Shens could hear it on the second floor, Jerome's dad made sure to hold his son back, telling Jerome, "You're not going anywhere."

Life during these three months of occupation was extremely stressful. The communists knew that the Nationalists were hiding out in the Shen houses, so they would often fire bullets toward and into the house. Chiang's troops slept in the house and on the grounds, and there were tanks parked in the back yard. Since the Shens had so many guest beds, a number of soldiers made their temporary homes where the Shens had once entertained honored guests. There were frequent bombings, and every time a bomb dropped, the family ducked down and the kids became very scared. Jerry and Betty didn't go to school, so Theresa had to watch over them all day. It was not an easy situation to live with. Occupation by the Nationalist government eventually ended when Mao's troops seized full control of Shanghai on May 27, 1949, but four days before the official victory, Jerome knew the communists were going to win. If he wanted to get his family

out, he would have to act before the communists were able to set up a strong security net. As with the Japanese, Jerome's services as a physician would have been in high demand by the communists. If he waited too long, he would never be allowed to leave the country.

To organize his escape, Jerome worked with his in-laws, the Yao family. Jerome's own father and brother didn't want to leave their homes and businesses, which were rooted in Shanghai. The Yaos, however, decided to sell their houses and move their business. Theresa's brothers T.C. and Michael and her sister Dora were already in Hong Kong, looking to get to America. Still in Shanghai, Jerome turned to the same nucleus of people who had made the journey with him to Chungking. Their first plan was to fly from Shanghai to Hong Kong on a chartered plane. They made their reservation for Saturday night, May 22, 1947, but they were never able to get on board because the plane was taken by officials and used for another purpose. Because of the late plane cancellation, Jerome's options were extremely limited. He could feel the communist presence beginning to assert itself in the city, and waiting much longer intensified the risk. How could Jerome get his family to Hong Kong?

The answer, reached with help from the Yao family, was to take the first boat from Shanghai to Hong Kong. It wasn't clear to everyone in Jerome's party that it was wise to take the first boat. Wouldn't it be smarter, they suggested, to wait and see how the first boat fared? Jerome, however, viewed things differently. Sensing the communists were going to be shutting down transportation from Shanghai, Jerome wanted to take advantage of the confusion. Because their victory was still fresh, the communist troops

had not yet fully set up their check points. Acting on his instinct, and not on the advice of friends, Jerome bought tickets to Hong Kong.

The decision to flee to Hong Kong was not supported by Jerome's father. With Agnes Shen no longer living, it was a difficult decision for Jerome to leave his father and the Shen estate. John Shen's position was not without merit. He had lived through a number of political revolutions, and Mao's movement must not have seemed as threatening to him as to Jerome. John had also seen Jerome flee to Chungking four years earlier, only to return immediately to Shanghai. It made sense for John Shen not to leave behind the power, privilege, and wealth that he enjoyed in Shanghai. But Jerome, after spending two years in the United States, felt that leaving Shanghai was his only option. Despite the risks and the costs of leaving behind the Shen estate, Jerome was confident that he was right. Once Jerome decided he was right, no one could talk him into changing his mind.

Sunday, May 23 was Pentecost Sunday. Theresa Yao went to Mass at 8:00 am, while Jerome was making final preparations for their journey later that day. He hid jewelry in the family album, and after saying goodbye to his father and uncles, he took Theresa, Jerry and Betty aboard the boat scheduled to leave for Hong Kong. Once on the boat, the Shens had to wait for the communists to run an inspection of the passengers. This was the most crucial moment of the trip. The communist soldiers were checking passports and citizen papers, and were detaining anyone whose paperwork was suspicious. Because Jerome had been in the United States for two years, and hadn't received updated citizen papers from the Chinese government, his papers were a different color than they were supposed to be. He was in a very vulnerable position, and if they inquired about his background as a doctor, he would surely join the eleven people already detained. The

scene for the check was a single large room in the bottom of the boat. Everyone was seated around a number of wooden round tables, and two communist soldiers carrying bayonets were walking from table to table checking papers.

For someone in Jerome's position, the story should have ended here. One of the communist soldiers should have spotted his different colored papers, started asking questions, and immediately realized that this man was not only a wealthy land-owner leaving the country, but also a doctor who could be put to good use back in his native city. Given the odds against it, how was Jerome able to get past the communist guards?

The answer is that no one knows, but he did. Just a few tables away from the one where Jerome and his family were seated, the two communist soldiers stopped checking citizenship papers. Jerome was in the clear, but he could never figure out exactly why he had been so lucky. Perhaps the soldiers were tired, perhaps they had been given instructions to let the rest go, or perhaps, as Jerome later hypothesized, it was the "work of the Holy Spirit." For such a pivotal moment in his life, it might seem strange that Jerome had so little control over its outcome. Jerome had been lucky. But Jerome had also put himself in a position to get lucky. His series of decisions – to travel to America, to travel back to Shanghai, to leave the Shen estate behind – were necessary steps he followed before being graced on the boat. In order to bring his family to Hong Kong, Jerome had to combine luck *and* talent. On the next leg of the Shen's journey, from Hong Kong to America, Jerome demonstrated that talent when he orchestrated a boat trip through a characteristic mix of resourcefulness and insistence.

When the Shens arrived in Hong Kong, it seemed as if all of their fellow passengers already had plans. They asked Jerome where he was staying, but he didn't know; he

hadn't had time to set anything up. To solve the problem, Jerome turned to one of the few documents he had been able to carry, a letter signed by the Shanghai Medical Association which instructed him to investigate public health for the government. He knew that there were two government hotels in Hong Kong, and since the Laster Hotel was already booked, he turned his attention to the Hong Kong Hotel. He asked for the manager, showed him the letter, and talked long enough to convince the manager that he was someone important and worthy of a room. The manager said they had no rooms left, but would Jerome like a suite instead? And so one night after being in the bottom of a dark boat, Jerome finagled his family into a fancy suite with a bedroom, sitting room, and a study. Jerome pulled his next coup when he had his family on a boat for America four days later. This was remarkable, given that the average time for people waiting to get to America from Hong Kong was several months.

After the hotel, Jerome and his family stayed for a few days at the apartment of one of Jerome's classmates. Jerome's classmate was afraid they would be there for a long time, but Jerome was making sure that didn't happen by negotiating with ship captains. Jerome once again suggested to the ship captains that they needed a ship doctor, so they should take him and his family on the trip. To bolster his case, he also showed them a book from SLU Medical School which listed him as an "Instructor." Jerome argued that he had to get back immediately because he needed to arrive before school started. Within four days, Jerome was able to secure passage on a ship. His medical services were actually needed because one of the passengers had a case of the measles, and several others became ill. In July 1949, Jerome, Theresa, Jerry and Betty sailed under the Golden Gate Bridge and into the San Francisco Bay. When they came through the turnstiles and

stood for the first time as a family in the United States, Jerome would have looked like any other new Asian immigrant. But had anyone heard his story, they would have known better.

STOPPING TO THINK: ONE FINAL LOOK AT DOC & JEROME

At the beginning of this narrative, we visited the wake and funeral of Doc Lawler. As we take a final look at Doc and Jerome, we start by making another visit. After Doc died, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* columnist Jake McCarthy wrote, “it takes the death of a man like Doc Lawler to make a community stop and think.”^{lxix} The community did stop to think about the questions we’ve been asking. What kind of a man was Doc Lawler? Were the *Globe-Democrat* and the federal authorities right or wrong in their assessments of his character? McCarthy believed that the Steamfitter leadership had been targeted and convicted because “some people thought unions shouldn’t spend money on the kind of politics that enhance their members’ interests, even in a time when every candidate from Richard Nixon on down is looking for a millionaire to bankroll his campaign.” McCarthy’s reasoning was that “even in a society that has its stock deals and tax writeoffs and special undercover business transactions, we’ve always made politicians fair game for criticism. So Doc Lawler had his name muddied up through the years.” McCarthy was right to identify elements of a class struggle in the attacks on Doc. But Doc was also a target because he was devoted, consistently and loyally, to Local 562, to the working class, and to the Democratic party. He made a perfect target because he was always there to be criticized. He didn’t ride any fences. How to interpret Doc’s beliefs

and actions is left to the reader. Was his career marked by selfishness or loyalty? Narrow-mindedness or consistency? The questions remain unanswered, but one thing is for sure. You always knew where Doc stood on an issue.

This narrative has traced the exciting, sometimes controversial, lives of Jerome Shen and Doc Lawler. But Jerome and Doc were not revolutionaries. They changed St. Louis, but not the entire world. They were also men who recognized their own limitations. Two letters, one from Doc and one from Jerome, demonstrates this recognition of limits. Writing to his daughter Bridget, Doc commented in October 1966, on the occasion of the upcoming November elections:^{lxii}

Well time is running short now as the election is getting near. We are having quite many meetings but we don't seem to be able to get it moving the way it should. Nobody seems to take any ins. [interest] in it. The people sure have got away from elections, but they sure do beef when things don't go their way but they don't want to take time out to vote. If they every take the freedom of voting away from them, maybe they [would] wake up or if they put the poll tax on them like they do in the south then they might see what they are missing. But I hope it don't come to that

Doc accepted the political process, and the limits of this process were proper to respect. Though Doc wanted certain people in office and wanted certain issues promoted, he recognized that that the only real agent of change was the voting public. This accounts for his complaint that “the people sure have got away from elections.” He wanted people out in the polls because he knew that even the most effective backroom deals could not match up to a majority vote. His annoyance that people “sure do beef when things don't go their way” suggests that even though Doc might have been able to influence some decisions in the city of St. Louis, he also needed people to “take time out to vote.” Doc knew the support and participation of the public was vitally important. He couldn't do everything himself.

Jerome's acceptance of the powers above him are exemplified in a 1998 letter written to St. Louis Archbishop Justin Rigali, the head of the St. Louis Catholic Church.^{lxiii} In the three-page letter, Jerome outlined three cases of what he felt were "unethical things going on in [St. Louis'] Catholic institutions." After detailing cases of possible euthanasia, Jerome made nine direct suggestions about what the Archbishop should do in response. These included suggestions for a public statement from Rigali, establishing a special hotline for such cases, setting up a series of conferences to promote Catholic teaching on life and death, and establishing a "Defense Fund for Life." It is in the ninth and final suggestion, however, that we see where Jerome felt human action could go no further. In this suggestion, Jerome writes that "as we all know, whatever we do, the ultimate result is decided by God's will. Therefore, the most important thing for all of us to do is pray." Whatever Jerome, Archbishop Rigali, or anyone else might do, ultimately the results would be "decided by God's will." For Doc Lawler too, it came down to this simple faith: Trust in God's plan.

It might seem odd to finish this narrative by emphasizing that Doc and Jerome were men who recognized their limitations. But why not point out that they were men who forced fundamental shifts in the way things happened in St. Louis, Missouri, that they were instruments of change like Martin Luther King or John D. Rockefeller? Just because no St. Louis street will ever bear their name, it would be folly to dismiss their lives as unworthy of remembering.

When we look at Jerome T. Y. Shen and John L. Lawler, what do we see that is worth recognizing, worth remembering, and worth telling others? What we see are two men who exceeded their potential given their opportunities. They pushed themselves and took

advantage of virtually every chance that arose and every talent that they were given. Doc took what he learned in the Kerry Patch and applied it to politics and the Steamfitter Union. Jerome took advantage of the opportunity to get to the United States. It may sound simple, but upon further examination, it is not. How many times could they have given up on themselves and ignored their talents? Why didn't Doc give in to public pressure and the critical media? Why didn't Jerome stay with his family in Shanghai instead of risking a dangerous escape to the United States? When the Kerry Patch menaced its own, or when the field of pediatric medicine cold-shouldered a new Chinese doctor, what stopped Doc and Jerome from quitting? Why didn't they give up their hopes and ambitions? This narrative has focused on getting to know Doc and Jerome precisely because if you knew Doc and Jerome, you'd know why they didn't quit and why they not only survived, but thrived, in the city of St. Louis.

But the larger question still lingers – how do you explain the success of Doc and Jerome? It might seem to some that it was the individual efforts of each man, combined with help from family and friends, that led to fantastic lives. Courage, determination, and self-reliance are attributes which seem to fit these two men who wrote their own rules for life. This story, of two strong-willed independent men, is one way to see the lives of Doc and Jerome. But if you were to ask either man how they accomplished so much, the story would be different. Doc and Jerome would probably answer immediately: I was successful because of God's grace in my life. Their story would parallel the exclamations in Psalm 23, which was read at the Shens' anniversary Mass, and which captures the spirit of humble gratitude that surfaces after all the bubbling excitement has stopped.

They were two men in St. Louis, Missouri, and looking back on all they have done, they would join in saying, “God,

*You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Only goodness and kindness follow me
all the days of my life;
And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
for years to come.*

Both deeply influenced by Catholic theology, Doc and Jerome felt their lives were a small part of a divine plan. They didn’t think they were extra-special or smarter or tougher than anyone else. What they did know was that they had talents, ideas, supporting spouses, loving families, and generous friends. The story of Doc Lawler and Jerome Shen, then, is not interesting because it couldn’t happen to anyone else. It’s interesting because it *could*.

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- ⁱ Bauman, Duncan. *Behind the Headlines: Stories About People and Events Which Shaped St. Louis*. Tucson, AZ: Patrice Press, 1999. 13.
- ⁱⁱ Bauman, 64.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Bauman, 91.
- ^{iv} Bauman, 130.
- ^v *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 2/1/72. "Tribute From All Levels Paid to 'Doc' Lawler."
- ^{vi} *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 2/1/72. "Homage Paid To John L. Lawler."
- ^{vii} *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 2/1/72. "Tribute From All Levels Paid to 'Doc' Lawler."
- ^{viii} *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 6/2/66. "Party Won't Be One-Man Show, Lawler Says"
- ^{ix} *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 2/1/72. "Homage Paid To John L. Lawler."
- ^x Eucharistic Prayer III.
- ^{xi} Gospel of Luke, 22:39-46.
- ^{xii} Doc Lawler letter to Bridget. 10/23/66.
- ^{xiii} Elizabeth Lawler letter to Bridget. 9/18/66.
- ^{xiv} Elizabeth Lawler letter to Bridget. 9/26/66.
- ^{xv} Doc Lawler letter to Bridget. 2/26/67.
- ^{xvi} *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 9/5/72. "Doc Lawler: A behind-the-scenes."
- ^{xvii} Doc Lawler letter to Bridget. 11/20/66.
- ^{xviii} Doc Lawler letter to Bridget. 4/6/66.
- ^{xix} Doc Lawler letter to Bridget. 9/18/66
- ^{xx} Doc Lawler letter to Bridget. 9/18/66.
- ^{xxi} Primm, James Neal. *Lion of the Valley: St. Louis, Missouri*. Boulder, CO: Pruett Publishing Co., 1990. 417.
- ^{xxii} Leighton, C.R. *Harpers* 1960. As used in Primm, 418.
- ^{xxiii} Adams, Henry. *The Education of Henry Adams*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1973. 466-467.
- ^{xxiv} Diamond, Etan. "Kerry Patch: Irish Immigrant Life in St. Louis." *Gateway Heritage*. Missouri Historical Society: Fall 1989, 26.
- ^{xxv} Diamond, 27.
- ^{xxvi} Diamond, 28.
- ^{xxvii} Diamond, 27.
- ^{xxviii} Primm, 419.
- ^{xxix} Sergeant, Harriet. *Shanghai*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1991. 218.
- ^{xxx} Sergeant, 271.
- ^{xxxi} *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 9/5/72. "Doc Lawler: A Behind-the-Scenes"
- ^{xxxii} *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 5/17/53. "Trouble Nothing New to Larry Callanan"
- ^{xxxiii} *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 9/18/64. "Bradshaw Hits Sen. Symington's Tie With Lawler"
- ^{xxxiv} *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 2/1/72. "Lawler's Death Leaves Gap in Party Leadership."
- ^{xxxv} *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 9/18/65. "Lawler Favorite to Fill Barrett's Seat in Senate."
- ^{xxxvi} *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 12/8/65. "Linehan to Face Goodwin in Race for State Senate."
- ^{xxxvii} *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 11/28/65. "Hearnes Plans Election to Fill Vacancy in State Senate: John Lawler Get Third Opportunity to Seek St. Louis Legislative Seat."
- ^{xxxviii} *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 9/27/66. "City Bond Issue Wins Support From Lawler."
- ^{xxxix} *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 6/21/66. "Lawler Cites Party Spending Without Result."
- ^{xl} Callanan had been out of jail on probation since 1960, but had maintained a low profile because he was barred from participating in union activities. In April 1964, however, his sentence was commuted by President Lyndon B. Johnson, and this allowed him a year later to officially re-enter the union. He had already taken back control of the "Voluntary Political, Educational, Legislative, Charitable, and Defense Fund" a year earlier, in September 1965.
- ^{xli} *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 10/19/66. "Callanan Officially Back in Power."
- ^{xlii} *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 5/14/66. "Are Steamfitters Losing Connections?"
- ^{xliii} *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 8/27/66. "Steamfitter Shoe Pinches Democrats."
- ^{xliv} *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 12/13/66. "Lawler Considering Quitting Chairmanship"

^{xlv} The definition of “adolescent” ages varies: at Harvard at the time it was as broad as 10-23; while at Cardinal Glennon Children’s Hospital in St. Louis it was 13-15 or 15-18. By age 18 the general expectation is that the patient will seek a general practitioner to serve as the primary care physician.

^{xlvi} Shen, Jerome T.Y. “In Appreciation.” *The Clinical Practice of Adolescent Medicine*. Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York: 1980.

^{xlvii} *Ibid.* xx. (His italics.)

^{xlviii} *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 5/11/68. “Callanan, 2 Others Post \$1000 Bond Each.”

^{xlix} *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 2/2/74. “Steamfitter indictments are dismissed.”

^l Bauman, 60.

^{li} *Ibid.*

^{lii} *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 4/10/63. “Steamfitters Strike for Dues Checkoff.”

^{liii} *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 8/4/63. “Contractor Group Quotes Lawler as Saying That Public Opinion Does Not Concern Him.”

^{liv} *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 7/4/63. “Are Steamfitters People?”

^{lv} *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 8/2/63. “The Goose and the Golden Egg”

^{lvi} *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 8/22/63. “Can St. Louis Afford Steamfitters?”

^{lvii} Doc Lawler letter to Bridget, 4/6/66.

^{lviii} Doc Lawler letter to Bridget, 4/6/66.

^{lix} *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. 8/24/63. “Steamfitters, Contractors Agree On Wages.”

^{lx} Murphey, Rhoads. *Shanghai: Key to Modern China*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953.

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^{lxi} McCarthy, Jake. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. 2/2/72. “Looking Back at Doc Lawler.”

^{lxii} Doc Lawler letter to Bridget, 10/23/66

^{lxiii} Letter from Jerome T.Y. Shen to Rev. Archbishop Justin Rigali. 11/25/98.