

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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