

WHY RETIRE?

AS A YOUNG BOY, I distinctly remember hearing my older relatives and their friends complain about their work. This was particularly noticeable on Sunday evenings as they contemplated getting back into the grind of another week. It always perplexed me to hear them talk that way. “Why would anybody continue to do something they don’t enjoy?” I wondered. Why not do something you *do* enjoy? And if you enjoy it, why stop?

These questions developed a passion for what I call *lifetime effectiveness*: engaging in productive work throughout one’s lifetime. I believe there is honor in work and that God has created us to work and be productive in His creation. This ideal runs contrary to the modern goal of retirement, a historically new idea that, in my opinion, deserves to be challenged.

In 1880, more than 75% of men over the age of 65 actively participated in the labor force. Since then, the labor force participation rate of these men has declined steadily to less than 20% despite the fact that today’s average 65-year-old is more than capable of working (and with his experience, he is perhaps more valuable than ever). Studies show

that we are not spending more time *in* “old age,” but we are taking longer to *get to* “old age.”¹ A 1990s MacArthur Foundation study found that most middle-age people feel 10 to 15 years younger than their actual age and feel generally optimistic about their future health.² Indeed, today’s “old” really are not so old anymore.

Better health in late life is good news, but it also brings some new economic realities. Over the last century, the retirement rate has risen, the average age of retirement has declined, and life expectancies have increased dramatically. (The average life expectancy, which was 62 in 1935, is about 78 today.)³ If the current trends continue, today’s 20-year-old can expect to spend one-third of his life in retirement. That is simply unsustainable, and we are about to be hit by the economic tidal wave of retiring baby boomers that will crush the financial capacity of a comparatively small producing population.

For this reason, we need to rethink retirement. We simply cannot expect to live longer without being willing to work longer. The reasons go far beyond sociology and economics, however. The biggest beneficiaries of seniors choosing to remain in the



That's more of a challenge than a question. Four professionals beyond the age of 80 explain why they remain engaged in their vocations.

By Troy Schrock

workforce are the seniors themselves. Spending days on the golf course or relaxing in a vacation condo may be fun for a while, but in talking to retirees about their lifestyles, one finds a fairly consistent theme: they're *bored*. Though a period of leisure and relaxation may be well-deserved and even enjoyable for a time, the retiree who completely checks himself "out of the system" denies himself the fulfillment of productive work. It feels *good* to be productive.

Not everyone has bought into the notion of retirement. I decided to look for people who have chosen to remain engaged in their vocations beyond the age of 80. It didn't take me long to find four of them. These people don't have to work; they choose to work simply because they like being engaged. They essentially ask the same question I've asked for a long time: *why not do something you enjoy, and if you enjoy it, why stop?*

Bernie Moray is the owner of a furniture retailer. Dorothy Zehnder still runs the kitchen at her famous restaurant. Jack Kirksey simply loves serving his hometown. George Roumell enjoys arbitration work. These four have different backgrounds, different industries, different motivations, and different

personalities; yet when I asked why they choose not to retire, each was somewhat perplexed! "I'm not sure I've thought of it that way," said Moray. "I don't know how to answer that," said Zehnder. Roumell was more emphatic: "I challenge your premise that retirement is expected!" Kirksey is simply "happier when I am engaged in work than when I am not." They enjoy their work, they find fulfillment in the contributions they make, and they don't see why age should keep them from doing that.

I really admire these people. In reading the edited interviews on the following pages, I hope that their zeal for their work will motivate each of us to find ways to remain productive through our "retirement" years, which may be just the key to enjoying them.

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1. Dychtwald, Ken. *Age Power*. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, 1999. 86.
 2. *Ibid.*, 90.
 3. Arias, Elizabeth. "United States Life Tables," 2004. *National Vital Statistics Reports*; vol. 56 no. 9. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2007. 34-35.



Bernard (Bernie) Moray

Gorman's Furniture
Southfield, Michigan

BERNIE MORAY first entered the furniture industry in 1949 with Robinson Furniture, a high-end retailer in his native Detroit. After selling their sofa beds around the country for a couple years, he moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan to run the factory that Robinson opened there. By 1960, that factory was manufacturing \$3 million worth of upholstered furniture annually.

When Robinson filed for bankruptcy in 1965, Moray bought a little company called Gorman's. The next year, Moray opened the store in Southfield, Michigan that still operates today. That proved to be an especially good move when his Detroit store burned down in the 1967 riots.

Today, Gorman's operates five Michigan stores, including one in Grand Rapids that has an interesting story behind it. Moray had been operating a successful operation there when, in 1995, the owner of his building sold the space to someone else who wanted to get into the furniture business. Fifteen years later, that store had to liquidate, so Moray leased the same building and

opened another Gorman's store in that location.

About five years ago, Moray opened Gorman's Hospitality Solutions, a Chicago-based company that sells furniture for timeshares, apartments, and hotels. That business now generates about \$3 million per year.

"And in all that time," chuckles Moray, "I got older."

Why have you chosen not to retire?

One factor is seeing my retired friends who are bored out of their skulls. They say, "I never should have sold out and retired."

More than that, however, is the health factor. Some of my retired friends think they have to call the doctor every time they bump a knee. They spend half their time trying to keep their bodies in shape because they're deteriorating.

My philosophy is that if you have been very active, you need to replace that activity with another activity or your mind and body will atrophy. I like what I do, I enjoy what I do, and I do it well. The Lord has been good to me, and as long as I have the physical and mental capacity to work, I'll die in the saddle.

How do you maintain the physical and mental conditioning necessary to keep going at your age?

I played tennis for years before a knee problem put a stop to that, but I still work with a trainer three days a week and exercise on my own to make sure that I'm physically fit. As for mental fitness, I'm challenged every day.

How so?

For one thing, I read a lot. I subscribe to every important furniture publication. As former president of the National Home Furnishings Association, I'm in touch with key people in the industry every week.

I also remain actively engaged as owner of our business. We run a very professional organization, and I have to stay current. If you would have ever told me we'd be on Facebook and paying people to give us keywords for our website, I'd think you were crazy! But

we do that now (and it has paid off very well).

Was there a certain point when you made a conscious decision not to retire?

I'm not sure I've thought of it that way. Since you ask, I suppose there was one such moment. About 40 years ago, my wife mentioned reading an article that said age is just a number, and as long as everyone in a group is physically and mentally tuned in, age should not matter. Age difference may matter in high school, but nobody cares about it in the real world. People are recognized for their knowledge and ability. With that in mind, the article said to pick an age early in life and choose to be that age for the rest of your life. So I decided to be 48 forever.

I've got to tell you, that's been a big help to me. My friends recently threw a huge 90th birthday party for me. I enjoyed that, but when it was over, I said, "Listen all you people. I am 90, but my real age is 48. I've gone back to it now, and I'm going to stick to it as long as I live."

I'm not ashamed of my age; in fact, I'm proud of it. But if I focus on 90, the clock is ticking, and that's somewhat frightening. I'd rather focus on 48. That's been one of my secrets.

What are some of your passions outside of business?

Several charities are very important to me. One is the Friendship Circle, an organization devoted to children of special needs—mostly autistic. I've been with them from the beginning. We service thousands of kids every day on a \$5 million annual budget.

I'm also on the Board of Visitors at Wayne State University. I enjoy being involved in a lot of things. It keeps me well-rounded and gives me something more than furniture to talk about with other people.

How do you manage work/life balance?

My wife was also in the retail business for a long time, so she is very involved and supportive of our work. My wife

and I are very social. We are busy no less than 4-5 nights a week.

If more people stayed engaged in their vocations later in life, what would be the benefits to them as individuals and society as a whole?

Some people think that when they are financially secure, they can retire and do everything they want to do. But then they find there is nothing to do. Many years ago, I heard a presenter say, “Most of the people in this room are looking forward to retiring at 65, but I have news

for you: the average person who retires at 65 dies 11 months later.” I don’t know what those numbers are today, but I think the trend is legitimate.

Longevity is not in my genes. My father died at 59, and my mother died at 70. I attribute my health to good doctors, vitamins, and continued activity. I count my blessings every day.

That’s wonderful. It is a blessing to engage in something you enjoy for a lifetime. How do you envision passing on what you’ve done to the next

generation?

Everything is in place. This business is self-supporting and in a good position to grow beyond me. We have a strong team. The executive managers hold equity, so they’re working for themselves as well as the company. My son will inherit the majority of stock and real estate, but he won’t be the president. He’s found his niche in another area of the company. It doesn’t matter what function you perform as long as you are performing a positive function for the company.



Dorothy Zehnder
Bavarian Inn Restaurant
 Frankenmuth, Michigan

FRANKENMUTH used to be just another rural farming town in mid-Michigan. Then William “Tiny” and Dorothy Zehnder, along with Tiny’s family, bought the Fischer’s Hotel in 1950, and everything began to change. Following two money-losing years in 1956 and 1957, the Zehnders defied conventional wisdom by expanding the restaurant and remodeling it in Bavarian style. After a week-long celebration with German entertainment in 1959, Michigan’s “Little Bavaria” was born. (That celebration still occurs annually as the Frankenmuth Bavarian Festival.)

The Bavarian renovations and expansions have hardly stopped since. The Bavarian Inn Restaurant now seats 1200, and with the impressive Bavarian Inn Lodge next door, it is one of Michigan’s most popular family attractions. Following the Zehnders’ lead, the rest of Frankenmuth has adopted the Bavarian theme. It is truly a unique place.

Tiny died in 2006, but Dorothy still runs the kitchen as she has since they bought the place in 1950. She still uses many of her original recipes, and even at 90, she still regularly works six days each week. Her motto is: “if you don’t feel well, go to work and pretty soon you’ll feel better.”

One word describes a conversation with Dorothy Zehnder: *delightful*. Her energy and positive attitude would put much younger people to shame. Even at 90, she sounds believable when admitting she would have to work for someone

else if she left the Bavarian Inn. But she won’t be leaving the Bavarian Inn. We’ll let her tell you why.

You’ve built quite an organization. How many people do you serve?

We serve about 15,000 each week—sometimes 18,000. We cook all day long. We want everything to be fresh, so we don’t make much ahead of time or else the food gets mushy.

I hear you have published a cookbook.

Yes, I have. It just came out, and it’s going very well. When we remodeled and “Bavarianized” this place in the 1960s, I did all of the menu planning. Most of our food, including our pies and cakes (all of which we bake ourselves), are still from my recipes. People enjoy the book for those recipes, but people tell me they also love the stories we included about the history of our family and business.

What is your role in the business today?

My role is to keep things in order and make sure we have a good product. I love to work with the employees. I have been blessed with good health, and I enjoy what I’m doing.

Most people in America start thinking about retiring long before 90.

I’m not interested in retiring. I’ve been here so long that this is home. If I retired, I would miss visiting with our customers and lifelong friends who come to eat. If you ever come to Frankenmuth,

ask for me and I'll come out of the kitchen to visit with you, too!

I'm someone who needs to be around people, so being here every day keeps me from getting bored. Plus, my job allows me to come and go whenever I like. I don't have to punch a clock. I'm kind of my own boss. I guess you can't beat that, can you?

No, you can't. I suppose if you left, you would have to work for someone else.

[Laughing] Yes, I suppose I would! I need to stay active. If I'm invited to a party or chamber function, I am able to go. If I worked for someone else, I would lose that flexibility.

I also have family here. My son works in the restaurant, so I see him every day. My granddaughter is our general manager. Working here is a nice retirement for me. Maybe some people wouldn't like it, but I enjoy it.

You like the people connections, and you like to be productive. What else motivates you to continue working?

I like to cook. It's satisfying to make a good product and get it on the market. I like the fact that people enjoy my recipes. That is probably what has motivated me all these years.

Did you always think you would work this long?

I don't know how to answer that. Retirement never crossed my mind. I love what I'm doing. If I retired, I would have to play cards and bingo. I would rather spend my "retirement" right here visiting with people and making recipes that thousands ask for.

What prompted your interest in this kind of work?

I was born on a farm. My father was a very good farmer and Mom, my sister, and I would help him. I didn't care much for farming, so when my sister got married, I was glad to go into the house and do the cooking and cleaning. That's where I got my start. I made meals for my family. After I married, I made meals for my husband. Five or six years later, we bought the Fischer's Hotel, and I

began cooking for the restaurant.

Today, the Bavarian Inn is obviously much larger than what we initially bought. Other people have played significant roles in growing our business. For example, my son has always dreamed up big things for us to do. He grew this to a 1200-seat restaurant. That was hard work, but it was exciting! We play hard and we work hard. Through it all, I still cook like I have from the beginning, and I love it.

I never dreamed our organization would be this big. But if you're motivated, you just work hard from year to year, and suddenly you find that you've grown into a larger business.

You keep quite a pace for 90. How do you stay physically and mentally fit?

I don't do much, in particular. I have been blessed with good health. I don't tire easily, so I can keep the pace. My mother was a strong and motivated person, and she instilled this work ethic in me.

Having your family involved probably helps with life balance, but what do you do to maintain a balanced life while working 5-6 days a week?

I come to work, and when I'm ready to go home, I go home. That's all I can say. I enjoy what I'm doing. I love people, and I love our employees. I do go on trips occasionally and visit other family members. When there's a party, I attend the party. Nothing special. I just enjoy life!

What are some key lessons you've learned?

You have to have a lot of patience. Having children conditioned me for



Photo courtesy of Bavarian Inn

picking up every day after our employees. I've also taught a lot of kids who worked for me as their first job. That requires patience! I have to show them how to hold a knife, peel a potato, or clean equipment. You would be surprised how many girls come in that don't know how to make a sandwich. They just put the butter in the middle, and I have to say, "Don't do that or the first thing the customer will taste is butter."

I have to teach every day, but I enjoy it. It's more than just a job for me. I've been doing it for 60 years, and my employees feel like my own children. It's rewarding when they come back after many years to see their "first boss."

I'm sure there are some great stories from some of those former employees!

Yes, there are! One young man who worked as our fryer is now a chef in a 5-star restaurant. That's a big accomplishment, and he got his start here. He comes back to see me periodically. I like to think that if he had not started here, he may have never become a chef. He

liked the food business, so he pursued it. That's rewarding.

A gentleman who worked for us in the 1950s recently came back to say hello. He's now a professor at a college in Ohio. I feel good about those stories. Many say that working here funded their college educations.

How do you pass organizational leadership experience to the next

generation?

We have family meetings. I see the grandchildren frequently, and we talk about my experience. I can't really say anything more specific than that. This is just my lifestyle; the lessons sort of naturally pass on.

Do you see the family staying in this business after you have passed on?

Yes, I do. I think this business will

go on forever. At least, I hope it does. How many family members will be in the business? I don't know. Right now, we have three. Some have gone to food service jobs in the big cities, so they're used to the city life at this point. Maybe in 15-20 years they'll grow tired of the big city and come back, but I just don't know. If they do, we will welcome them and find a place where they can contribute.



Jack Kirksey

**Mayor
Livonia, Michigan**

WHEN WE interviewed Mayor Jack Kirksey, he was dealing with the aftermath of a 100-year flood that had backed up the city's storm drainage systems, resulting in extensive damage to about 1200 homes. Many residents were demanding compensation from the city, and the local news media was following the story closely. It was just the type of situation that requires many thankless hours from city leaders, but

Kirksey was not complaining. With more than 60 years of work experience, not much rattles him.

Kirksey began his professional career as a teacher in Detroit. Following time in the Air Force and a few years of teaching, he chose to go to the booming suburb of Livonia to pursue a principal position. Around this time, he and his wife, Patt, began volunteering as campaign managers for various candidates. "I've probably run 45 elections," Kirksey says, "and I've only lost one."

When a state representative who was running for state senator asked Kirksey to take his spot, Kirksey became a candidate for the first time. He started with 20% name recognition, and two weeks later, he had 80%. ("It's the best \$600 I've ever spent!" he says.) After eight years in the legislature, a GOP political maneuver designed to bump two Democrats from their seats had the unintended consequence of bumping the Republican Kirksey, as well. "That ended up being a good thing," he says.

Kirksey thought his political service was over, but he later ran for Livonia Mayor and won. Term-limited after eight years, he "retired" again, only to run for office once more when his replacement decided not to seek a second term. At the time of this interview, he was just finishing up his third (non-consecutive) term and had announced his intent to run one more time. [Editor's note: he has since been re-elected.]

At 83, one would not be faulted for questioning his capacity to lead a large city. Sitting down for a conversation with him, however, soon removes all doubt. Jack Kirksey is still on top of his

game, and his wit is as sharp as ever! Residents look forward to his speeches for their string of well-timed jokes, and more than once during this interview, we found ourselves laughing with him.

You're 83 years old. Why put yourself through the headaches of being mayor of a city of about 100,000 people?

This may sound Pollyannaish, but I really love this city. I want to do as much as I can to help it continue to thrive. After my first two four-year terms, I had no intention to come back. I left with an 80% favorability rating, and people had already thrown enough retirement parties for me since I had "retired" so many times! But then the next mayor decided he didn't want to stay, and people felt I was the best and most experienced option to replace him. I'm currently finishing that four-year term. Once again, my intent was to be done. However, the people I thought most able to lead this city were unable to do so for various reasons, so I reluctantly entered the race again.

In short, I continue to do this because I feel it serves the city well. Experience does make a difference. Of course, so does age. I don't fault people for being concerned that I'll be 87 by the end of this term. In observing others, I have seen a difference in performance between 83 and 87. If I ever see that I'm slowing down or not able to perform as needed, I will step aside.

To this point, I still feel I can perform at a high level. Last week, I had a 17-hour day when I started with a live interview at 6:15AM and got home after 11:00PM. I may be old, but I still remembered my name, address, and phone number

[laughing]. The Lord has blessed me.

As much as you love serving this city, you're still choosing to forgo other activities you would enjoy, aren't you?

I don't have a burning desire to play golf all day long. (Besides, I'm a treacherous golfer.) My wife and I have taken some cruises, but we're not compelled to travel. We enjoy visiting our children in Salt Lake City and Denver, but they have to go to work, so we might as well do the same.

As corny as it sounds, I don't feel like I'm coming to work when I walk into this office. We have a good time, laughing and tackling whatever needs done. It's not like I'm being held here against my will. I enjoy the place.

Would you still be engaged professionally if you were not the mayor?

Probably. I always have been. I loved being a principal, I enjoyed the legislature, and I learned a lot as a consultant. I've also had some stints in some other things, and I've enjoyed each one. Even if I had never changed careers, I think I would have continued to like any of them.

Please share one particular leadership lesson you've learned along the way.

While getting my teaching degree, I took a job as a lifeguard on Belle Isle. [Editor's note: Belle Isle is an island park in the Detroit River.] The head lifeguard at the time was a notoriously bad administrator, but he was a big guy, and nobody wanted Big John to look at them crossly. We would sit on the tower for four hours without a bathroom break. Some would be scheduled to start at 9:00 and break for lunch at 10:00. Nobody was on time for anything. As I watched my stretch of beach, I had a lot of time to think about how I would run things differently if I was in charge.

I eventually got that chance. Years later, I was working as a teacher and

had summers off, so they made me head lifeguard. I created a very efficient schedule. Everyone knew exactly where everyone else was at all times. Every two hours, you got beach patrol to break up the monotony. After four hours, you could break for lunch.

You know what? I had more complaints that summer than Big John had in ten years! For example, people who had never worried about punctuality complained when they were relieved five minutes late. That was one of my first leadership lessons: people will not always commend you for doing the right thing.



Photo courtesy of City of Livonia

Much of your career has been in public service. What prompted that interest?

Some of it was circumstantial. I never planned to hold public office; I was actually emphatic that it would never happen. I'm not looking for a public service comment on my tombstone. Things have just worked out that way.

I suppose I've always wanted to lead. I was born on the outskirts of Atlanta, and when I was four years old, I was playing in the backyard with four or five other kids. I remember saying "I'll be the leader!" for whatever game we

were playing. Another girl said, "You always want to be the leader! Why can't someone else be the leader?" For some reason, I've always remembered that.

What personal benefits have you seen from remaining engaged in your work?

I feel very fulfilled when I'm engaged and making a difference in some way. As a lifeguard, I saved several people from the Detroit River. I often wonder what those people ended up doing. As a state representative, I was able to use my position to rescue an abused child and get her to her grandparents. Six years later, her grandparents brought her to my office so I could see how well she was doing. That was very fulfilling.

I know how to retire; I just don't know how to *stay* retired. It's been good for my mental health to have more on the plate than what I have time to do. I'm just happier when I am engaged in work than when I am not.

How do you stay physically and mentally fit?

I like to work. When I'm not in my office, I do yard work and carpentry. I walk to work as often as I can (and home for lunch), which is one mile each way. Some days, I get in six miles.

When my kids were growing up, I used to work the daylights out of them—mixing concrete, digging holes, etc. Now, when I visit them, they have what they call "get even" time, which means big jobs for me to do while I'm there. *They* don't think my wife and I have aged. When we go hiking or skiing, they don't see why I can't keep up with them.

My wife has made sure I've eaten healthy. I grew up in the South, and we put a lot of sugar in our tea. When Patt and I were just getting accustomed to living together after marriage, I'd say, "Where's the sugar and cream?" She'd say, "Over there. If you want it, go get it." Being the lazy male, I figured out how to drink bitter coffee. I'd say, "Where's the salt?" and she'd reply, "If

you want it, go get it.” So I learned to eat without salt! [laughing] She just took charge from the get-go.

We’ve never smoked or abused alcohol, either. Our longevity could be in the genes, but a lot of it is the lifestyle.

I’m not trying to sound like Superman, but I have the energy, so I enjoy expending the energy. I don’t see work as a job or obligation.

Are your friends predominantly your age?

I am surrounded by a lot of younger people. Some of the people who run my campaigns were friends of my kids, and now they’re friends of mine. I enjoy being around young people, and I think

they see me as a peer.

Your love for your wife is evident. Talk some more about the role she has played in your career.

We have been married for 58 years. If she were not my soul mate, my life would have been entirely different. She has been totally understanding of the careers that we have pursued. She is just an unusually magnificent person, and she is so respected by the family. She has made all the difference in my life.

She will be 80 soon, and she’s still teaching parenting courses. People will run up to us, and I’ll think they’re coming to see the mayor, but they’ll say, “There’s Ms. Patt! Oh, Ms. Patt! You

saved our marriage!” She might have more constituents than I have!

If she had not been so understanding and forgiving over the years, it would not have been good. We just have a lot of fun! We enjoy what we’re doing, we enjoy one another, and we enjoy life.

What do you do to pass on your experience to the next generation?

For one thing, I’m talking to you!

In city government, I like to challenge the younger folks with questions to force them to think through potential consequences of a decision. I try to pass along what I can, but I’m not on any kind of crusade to do so.



George E. Roumell, Jr.
 Arbitrator/Mediator
 Detroit, Michigan

ALL IT TAKES is a phone call to sense George Roumell’s dedication to his work. He doesn’t like to mince words, and he doesn’t have time to waste. With his schedule, he can’t afford to.

Roumell has been a member of the

Bar since 1955 and began teaching law in 1956. More than 55 years later, he still makes the hour drive each Monday night to teach two classes at Michigan State University. He travels all over the country to give speeches and teach seminars. As if that were not enough, he still runs a large arbitration practice, which he has been doing for more than 45 years. His accomplishments and awards are numerous: he is a past president of the Detroit Bar Association and State Bar of Michigan, a recipient of the Hudson Award (the highest award given by the State Bar), and the Seymour Award for Excellence in Arbitration. He argued before the United States Supreme Court in the 1977 Detroit desegregation case, a subject on which he is still asked to speak.

Roumell graciously agreed to our interview, and we found that years have not diminished his passion for his work.

Arbitration, teaching, speaking all over the country... You run at an amazing pace! Why have you chosen not to retire?

It’s a tradition among the men in my family. My uncle, Judge Thomas Roumell of the Wayne County Circuit Court, continued working to 89 – one day before he died. My father worked until the day he died. It’s a tradition.

Is that tradition what motivates you?

That and the fact that I enjoy what I do. My hobby is my work. I enjoy going to different factories, police departments, public organizations, and private companies. I enjoy meeting people and helping them with their problems.

So the leisure activities typically associated with retirement don’t appeal to you.

Now wait a minute. I’ve been to China, France, Japan, Greece... I’ve traveled to all the continents except Australia. I enjoy the opera, the symphony, the theater. I go to Stratford, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and Broadway every year. I enjoy plenty of other things, and I always have.

How do you maintain the physical and mental conditioning necessary to keep up that pace?

I don’t worry about that, but I suppose there are some things that help. I have never drank or smoked. I eat a Mediterranean diet: olives, rice, lamb, fish, etc. And I eat oatmeal for breakfast.

Oatmeal isn’t Mediterranean!

No, but it keeps the doctors away!

As far as exercise goes, I drive a fast car on my way to teach each Monday night! [laughter]

You mentioned your family tradition of lifelong work, but was there a certain point when you decided that you would not retire?

I challenge your premise that retirement is expected! I don't see anything unusual about working late in life. I just enjoy what I do. I'm happy with what I do. I enjoy teaching young people in law. I enjoy dealing with the typical problems of labor arbitration. I enjoy teaching seminars across the country. I'm a teacher, a writer, and a decider. That's challenging and intellectually stimulating.

I admire your approach, but only a small percentage of people see that as normal.

I had not thought about that.

I have thought about it a lot, and I think society would benefit

tremendously if more people stayed engaged in work later in life.

I don't think about things like that, and my friends and I don't talk about things like that. We talk about our work and what we're trying to achieve. There's always stuff I want to get done that I haven't done yet.

Would anything cause you to stop doing what you are doing?

Nothing would stop me. There's nothing tremendous about what I'm doing, and I've got to get that out of your mind. Look, it's my job to be an arbitrator. I happen to enjoy it. I happen to help people. Sometimes I save lives, help companies, or help governments. I enjoy contributing to society in that way.

A lot of leaders share those attitudes and will appreciate hearing that, but

the general mindset in America is not oriented that way.

I disagree. You just haven't come across them. If I was a pro basketball player, I wouldn't be playing at 80, but I would be coaching. You make your contribution where and when you can.

I know you don't see it as anything extraordinary, but are there any other significant factors that have enabled you to continue working at this age?

I think a good marriage is very important. When there is peace at home, you can do an awful lot. I've been married for 55 years to the same woman.

Frankly, I'm having too much fun to consider doing anything else! I'm enjoying life.

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