

# The Legal Light

The J. Reuben Clark Law Society, Orange County Chapter  
January 2006

## Looking Forward to A Great 2006

By Jeff Shields  
Chair of the Orange County Chapter

Greetings J. Reuben Clark Members

As the new Chair of the Orange County Chapter of the J. Reuben Clark Law Society, it is my pleasure to welcome you to an exciting new year, which is already loaded with great speakers and events. Please see Calendar section of this edition of The Legal Light, and please save those dates on your own calendar.



It is also time to renew your membership, and to update any changes to your contact information. Please use the 2006 Membership Application attached to this edition of The Legal Light and respond as rapidly as possible. We are delighted to announce that membership dues have not increased (for Gold, Silver and Bronze memberships), although we will be offering even more "bang for your buck" this year.

For example, we are already assembling a color photo directory (to include photos and information for paid members only) which will be distributed to all of our own members, the BYU Management Society, the BYU Alumni Society, Orange County Stake Presidents and Bishops, other JRCLS Chapters, etc. If you did not get your photo taken at our most recent luncheon, please e-mail a photo to, and/or contact, Dawn Mosley ([dawnmosley@cox.net](mailto:dawnmosley@cox.net)), who is in charge of our Photo Directory Committee. Membership information and photos will also be placed on our Chapter's website ([www.jrcls-oc.com](http://www.jrcls-oc.com)).

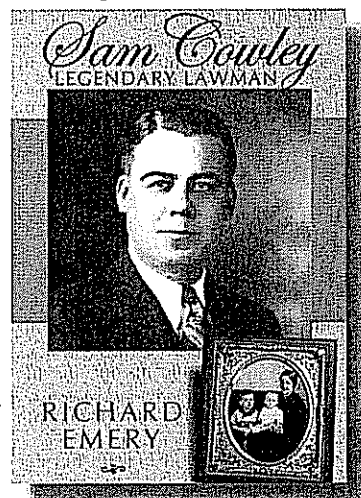
If you have any questions, or at any time if you have ideas, comments or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact me (my contact info is set forth below). Looking forward to a great 2006 for our Chapter!

## Sam Cowley: Legendary Lawman

A Book Review  
By Paul Hoffman

If you visit the memorial room at the FBI's office in Santa Ana, you will find a prominent portrait of Sam Cowley. Although well known to most Latter-day Saints in his day as a top gangster-fighting FBI agent, Sam Cowley is a virtual unknown today, even among most LDS people. On a recent Sunday, I asked if anyone in my ward's High Priests Quorum knew who he was. No one knew. This is unfortunate because, in many ways, Sam Cowley personified the highest ideals that the J. Reuben Clark Law Society seeks to promote.

A recently-published book by Richard Emery entitled "Sam Cowley: Legendary Lawman" (Cedar Fort, Inc. 2004) does much to restore the worthy memory of this man, who passionately fought to protect innocent citizens from machine gun-toting gangsters during the lawless years of the Great Depression, when bank robbers were being romanticized by constant media coverage.



Born in 1899, the son of apostle Matthias Cowley and the brother of another apostle, Matthew Cowley, Sam served a mission to the Hawaiian Islands at the age of 17. After his mission, he graduated from the Utah Agricultural College (now Utah State University) and, in 1929, the George Washington University Law School. Later that year, he joined the FBI for an annual salary of \$2,900.

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# Sam Cowley: Legendary Lawman

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At first, he worked in Los Angeles on routine FBI matters from bankruptcy fraud to copyright infringement. There, he met his future wife, Lavon Chipman. In 1930, they were married in the St. George Temple.

The FBI soon recognized Sam Cowley's hard work, thoroughness, organizational skills, attention to detail, and passion for his work. The FBI transferred him back to Washington, D.C., where he rose quickly through the ranks, even though he never sought the limelight and was always quick to give credit to others for the success he achieved in bringing lawbreakers to justice. In October, 1932, Sam became the Supervisor of the FBI's Kidnap Desk, where he worked on the infamous Lindbergh kidnaping case. Notwithstanding the long hours he put into his work, Sam found the time to teach Gospel Doctrine on Sundays and to help Lavon care for their two sons.

By the summer of 1934, Sam Cowley had been promoted to the third-highest position in the FBI, as Assistant Director in charge of investigation. He was placed directly in charge of the FBI's Anti-Gangster unit, which, because of the notoriety of several bank-robbing gangs roaming the Midwest, the FBI was under great public pressure to suppress.

Sam reported directly to the FBI's director, J. Edgar Hoover, who described Sam's work ethic as follows: "Cowley was a man who turned out a large volume of work and who accepted responsibility and asked for more. His attitude was commendable, his loyalty beyond question, and his personal habits were above reproach."

Most of Richard Emery's book is dedicated to a detailed factual presentation of Sam Cowley's efforts to bring to justice the top gangsters of the 1930's, who were responsible for the killings of dozens of citizens and law enforcement officers. Sam was determined to bring the epidemic of successful bank robbers to an end before a rising generation of young thugs decided to emulate such seemingly untouchable criminals. It was Sam's leadership and tireless pursuit that eventually brought to justice such notorious individuals as "Pretty Boy" Floyd, the Ma Barker gang, John Dillinger, and "Baby Face" Nelson, names made famous in subsequent Hollywood movies.



**Cowley (left) testifies about the death of Dillinger**

It was in the pursuit of, and ensuing gunfight with, FBI-designated Public Enemy No. 1, "Baby Face" Nelson, that Sam Cowley met a heroic and tragic end to his young life of 35 years. Although Sam received mortal wounds in that encounter, ballistics tests showed that Sam had fired the bullets which also mortally wounded "Baby Face" Nelson. J. Edgar Hoover later remarked: "I have said many times that Sam Cowley was the bravest man I ever knew."

However, beyond the notable description of his physical bravery and professional skill, I was even more impressed by the many accounts of Sam Cowley's character by his contemporaries. His supervisor, J. Edgar Hoover, said of him:

"When I said Sam Cowley was the bravest man I have ever known it is not because he shot it out with 'Baby Face' Nelson nor yet because he directed the manhunt which trapped and finished that other public enemy John Dillinger. Many another special agent of the FBI would have acted precisely as Sam did in similar circumstances. . . . Sam Cowley's courage was beyond heroics.

"He was brave enough to be scrupulously honest in little things as well as big things. He didn't accept the easy way out, a half-truth, a white lie, or a turned head. It is said of Sam by those who knew him best that he never told a lie in his life. I know for a fact that he knew what was right and did what was right, regardless of provocation. That's the kind of courage that can carry a man proudly from the cradle to the grave. Sam had no false pride. There wasn't a pretentious bone in his body.

"One wonders what makes such a man as Sam. I think one of my co-workers found the answer. This man said that Sam never spoke to him about matters of religion, but that his attitude and bearing were those of a man whose faith was rooted in certain basic certainties. . . . His was the calm of a man who did his best and left the final decision to a Higher Power. Sam was deeply and devoutly religious, a man of great faith. The longer I live the more certain I become that faith is the source of strength which enables men to hold to their duty in the face of overwhelming odds. . . . Good law enforcement requires men of faith."

Sam Cowley accomplished much in his short life and is a worthy example of the highest ideals of the J. Reuben Clark Law Society. Today, a simple bronze plaque adorning a wall at the entrance to Old Main on the Utah State University campus reads: "In memory of Samuel Parkinson Cowley, Class of 1925, who died in the service of his country, November 28, 1934, for the cause of justice and the safety of his fellow men." *Note: Photos and quotations used with permission. Copyright 2004 Richard L. Emery.*

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**J. REUBEN CLARK LAW SOCIETY  
ORANGE COUNTY CHAPTER**

**2006 Events Calendar**

**January 19, 2006 (Thurs.)**

**(NEW VENUE!)**

**Luncheon**

Time: 12:00-1:30 p.m.

**Location: Knobbe, Martens, Olson & Bear  
2040 Main St., Ground Floor Conf. Room, Irvine**

Speaker: R.Q. Shupe, Esq.

"Joseph Smith and the Law in Early Church History"

**February 17, 2006 (Fri.)**

**J. Reuben Clark Law Society Conference**

Location: Hotel Monaco, 700 F Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20002 - (800) 649-1202

Invited Speakers: Alberto Gonzalez, Michael Young, Kevin  
Worthen, and William Atkin

**February 27, 2006 (Mon.)**

**Women Lawyers Breakfast**

Time: 8:30 a.m.

Location: Mimi's Cafe  
22651 Lake Forest Drive (Lake Forest)

Discussion: "Balancing Career & Home"

**March 16, 2006 (Thurs.)**

**Luncheon**

Time: 12:00-1:30 p.m.

Location: Knobbe, Martens, Olson & Bear

Speaker: BYU Law Prof. Cheryl B. Preston

"Avoiding Gender Bias in the Legal Profession"

**April 27, 2006 (Thurs.)**

**Second Annual Religion and The Law Symposium**

Time: 6:30-8:45 p.m.

Location: Chapman University School of Law  
One University Drive, Orange

**May 18, 2006 (Thurs.)**

**Luncheon**

Time: 12:00-1:30 p.m.

Location: Knobbe, Martens, Olson & Bear

Speaker: Judge William R. Sheffield (Ret.)

Former General Counsel for the LDS Church in Asia

**July 13, 2006 (Thurs.)**

**Luncheon**

Time: 12:00-1:30 p.m.

Location: Knobbe, Martens, Olson & Bear

(Tentative) Speaker: Judge Jay S. Bybee

Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals

**September 22, 2006 (Fri.)**

**2006 Chapter Annual Dinner**

Location: TBD

Speaker: TBD

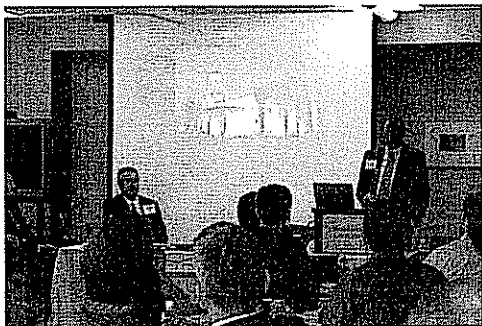
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### NOVEMBER LUNCHEON

On November 16, 2005, our Orange County chapter was privileged to hear from Joseph I. Bentley, Esq., Chairman of the International J Reuben Clark Law Society, who spoke regarding the legal issues surrounding the Newport Beach Temple

Bentley has been involved in virtually every significant aspect of the process of acquiring the site and getting approval for the Temple. The process has taken a couple of decades. In 1989, President Hinckley first discussed with Bentley the possibility of an Orange County Temple. A couple of years later, he tentatively approved obtaining an option for a temple site, along with one for the Newport Beach Stake Center. At the dedication of the San Diego Temple in 1993, President Hinckley predicted that a temple in Orange County was possible.



The Church then requested that land adjacent to the original site be purchased for the Newport Beach Stake Center, saving the original site for the Temple. Media publicity and the construction approval process went smoothly at first until the media mentioned that a "towering" steeple would be built on a "dazzling white" temple. Complaints then followed.

A short history of steeple litigation regarding temples in Boston and New York was summarized by Bentley. Despite the favorable resolution of such steeple litigation, President Hinckley wanted peaceful relations with the neighbors and agreed to reduce the steeple height to 100 feet. When a few neighbors appealed the approval, the Mayor of Newport Beach privately met with them and suggested that it could go back to 124 feet, unless they fully embraced the Church's further reduction to 90 feet.

Opposition then ceased and final approval was obtained.

Bentley also recounted inspirational moments connected with the mounting of the angel figure atop the steeple. He showed pictures of raising the Moroni statue as it was outlined with a strange halo around the sun, a rare atmospheric condition that miraculously appeared just as the statue was being put in place. Finally, at the dedication, President Hinckley's eyes moistened as he related in a personal conversation with Bentley how much it meant to him to come to Orange County to dedicate the temple.

## **Service Opportunities**

There are a number of service opportunities for members of the JRCLS-OC through the Orange County Bar Association. We encourage members to support these activities. Hal Nelson is in the process of putting together a calendar of some of these events for consideration by our members. These include Law Day, Volunteer Connection Day, and the OCBA Food Drive.

We would also like to put together a panel of attorneys who are willing to provide telephone consultation to church leaders to assist church members with legal issues. This has proven to be a very helpful service to these leaders and has not created a burden on those who have provided this service. If interested in serving on this panel, please contact Hal Nelson at 949-770-6788.

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