

2021

Hello Don, This Is Charles

Donald R. Andersen
Skinner Law Group

Recommended Citation

Donald R. Andersen, *Hello Don, This Is Charles*, 86 J. AIR L. & COM. 325 (2021)
<https://scholar.smu.edu/jalc/vol86/iss3/3>

This Tribute is brought to you for free and open access by the Law Journals at SMU Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Air Law and Commerce by an authorized administrator of SMU Scholar. For more information, please visit <http://digitalrepository.smu.edu>.

HELLO DON, THIS IS CHARLES . . .

DONALD R. ANDERSEN*

WITH THESE WORDS delivered in his distinct tones, Charles Tarpley was on a mission. Charles's presence was as big as Texas, and the "ask" when he made a request was not trivial. Charles requested and expected the best that he could get. In every conversation, the person he was talking to knew that a call from Charles not only was not trivial but was an honor because Charles was always seeking the best speakers for his passion—the Annual SMU Air Law Symposium. By the time I first met Charles,¹ he had already been on his mission for many years, and I witnessed Charles's mission for at least forty years before his retirement. While the full duration of his commitment is not known to me, for him, it was a mission of a lifetime—a mission that he successfully completed.

I got to know Charles best when he was kind enough to enlist me to prepare the "Recent Developments" presentations several times over four decades. To Charles, the "Recent Developments" was extremely important because, as the leading symposium topic annually, it sets the tone for the symposium as the pre-eminent professional event in aviation law. The topic was important to him, and to the Aviation Bar, because it brings to the Bar the latest developments that impact their cases and seeks to put those developments into context as the law evolves in the overall landscape of aviation law—which we all recognize

* Donald R. Andersen is currently counsel at Skinner Law Group, a national firm, in its Atlanta office. He has been active in the litigation of aviation cases and a contributor to the *SMU Journal of Air Law and Commerce* on multiple occasions over the past forty-five years.

¹ Charles would expect at least one substantive footnote. When Charles and I first met in 1977, we both immediately recognized that we shared a significant symbol of our fellowship as aviators. Charles, like Fred Weber at Lord, Bissell & Brook (and I am sure others at that time), proudly wore a Glycine Airman watch with its twenty-four-hour dial. At some point, we retired those watches, but during that era, it was a symbol (and a useful instrument) of the aviators who needed to keep up with multiple time zones.

as multi-faceted and involving international law, constitutional law, complex jurisdiction and procedure, conflicts of laws, product liability and tort law, and regulatory and administrative law.

But this is only a part of the story. The larger part of the story is that Charles was a friend, a mentor, and a gentleman. Charles was deeply involved in aviation law throughout his career, whether working as an attorney, insurance executive, or professional airline pilot.

As a friend, Charles was always interested in the personal and professional lives of others. He would gladly share his own experiences—often in a regaling story—and seek out the experiences of others. Still, he was also interested in his colleagues on a profoundly personal level. Charles and I once spent an hour together at the Atlanta airport during a chance meeting while he was traveling to Washington to be with his friend John Tigert in his last days, and I was traveling to Dallas to visit my father shortly before he passed away. A few weeks later, Charles kindly noted the local Dallas–Fort Worth newspaper reports of my father’s passing, chronicling my father’s long career in aviation and forwarding the articles to me with Charles’s comments.

Over the years that followed, Charles enlisted support for the *Journal of Air Law and Commerce*, asking for a presentation or an article. “Don, this is Charles . . .” was the introduction of every call. By the end of each call, I felt that a close friend reached out to update me and make sure I felt his support. It was always a pleasure and an honor to be on board with him on another mission.

Charles is remembered very fondly. Fortunately, being involved in the unique practice of aviation law for decades, we meet many who remain close friends throughout our careers. Charles Tarpley was a treasured and integral part of our profession. I know that others will always remember him just as fondly for the example and course he set for all to follow.

Charles, this is Don . . . thank you, dear friend. The mission was well done, is on course, and continues as you charted it.