



Norman My True Friend
By Chaplain Paul Vescio March 2021



Preface

My father used to say that you can count your true friends on one hand and if you have just one true friend in life then you are a very lucky person. I believe Norm was a true friend not only to the people that he cared about but also to me. Norman cared deeply about his country, family, and friends, he tried to make things right by speaking out against the things he recognized that were very wrong.

Many people would say, "Why bother you're wasting your time?"

For people like Norm and myself it's only a waste of time if you don't try. Here is a passage from *To Kill a Mockingbird* that sums up just what I am saying.

"I wanted you to see what real courage is instead of getting the idea that courage is a man with a gun in his hand. It's when you know you're licked (beaten) before you begin but you begin anyway and you see it through no matter what, you rarely win but sometimes you do."

Norman won all 86 years of his life, his strength, wisdom, and courage allowed him to live and to die with grace and dignity. I feel very blessed to have been able to know Norman in the short time that I did and I will miss him, I will miss my true friend Norman. To Paula and family take care and God Bless, Your Friend Paul the Democratic Kidd.

After my mother and father died back in the 90s I became a healthcare activist fighting for better health care in America. My mother and father were treated very badly by a broken health care system. After they died I decided to fight back with the power of love instead of hate, I soon realized that love is more powerful than hate.

I decided to bring homemade cheesecakes into health care facilities to show appreciation to staff, nurses, and doctors so that hopefully that love would transcend into the quality of care for the patients. I have continued to do this for over 25 years now and it's called Cheesecakes For Christ. I didn't realize it was a ministry until after I had become a Chaplain years later serving our Lord in nursing home ministry. God knows what He's doing, God always knows what He's doing, He set this whole thing up.

Chapter 1 Activism 101

Around 2002 I joined the Alliance For Retired Americans this group fights to preserve Social Security and Medicare for America's Seniors. I soon began to go with this group visiting our elected officials in supporting health care reform in the United States. 2003 the Medicare prescription drug bill was created in order to lower prescription drug prices, President George W Bush was the president at the time and he was pushing for this bill to be passed, the bill actually was a sham that put billions of dollars in the hands of the pharmaceutical companies and the insurance companies and gave our seniors only a small discount on their prescription drug costs.

Our group began to go out and protest against this shameful piece of legislation. We went out and engaged our elected officials in voicing our opposition to this very bad bill. One of the things that I would do was to call in and voice my opinion about these very important healthcare issues on talk radio shows. I soon began calling the Mike Newcomb show called On Second Thought on KFNX radio. Mike Newcomb was a doctor whose practice was in the nursing homes. I soon began calling telling my family story and the horrors that happened to us because of a broken health care system. At one point a man by the name Norman Arkin who had heard me on the radio several times wanted to meet me. Norm contacted Louisa who was in the Alliance For Retired Americans to ask if there was a way that I could go to Norman's house to meet him. I decided to go, I

brought with me a hat that said prove it and a few of my writings and me and Norm really hit it off.

Our political views were the same, in fact a lot of our views about life were the same. Norman was in his 80s he was suffering from a blood thickening disease and he was pretty much homebound. Norm was calling in on the Mike Newcomb Show too and together we would call in to voice our opinion about health care issues. We were a really good team, I was Norman's legs and he was the wind behind my sails because of his friendship, encouragement and support.

At one point I realized calling in as Paul from Phoenix really didn't make much of an impact so I change my name to the Democratic Kidd in honor of my mother and father; you see my dad was heavily involved in politics in the state of Connecticut, he served high up in the Democratic Party back in the 60s and 70s. My mother and father did a lot in helping others. My father fought very hard for mental health reform in the United States among many other things so I thought calling myself the Democratic Kidd would be appropriate. What happened next was many other listeners changed their name to a nick name or calling name as well. The Mike Newcomb Show became very popular it was a force to be reckoned with we had a voice through that radio show and the Alliance For Retired Americans worked closely in cooperation with the Mike Newcomb Show.

Norman and his wife Paula had a son who died a few years earlier he was only in his 50s, my father had died a few years earlier as well, that void in both of our lives was filled through a beautiful relationship between Norman and myself. He was like a father figure and I was like son. I would periodically go to his house and bring his family a homemade cheesecake that I had baked, we would sit and talk about politics and life and make our plans for our next moves in fighting for real health care reform in the United States. The leader of our group once told me after I had gotten a little down about the fact that there were not very many people in our group, the fact is the Phoenix Chapter of The Alliance For Retired Americans only had about 20 people in it and she reminded me of a quote by Margaret Mead,

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world indeed it is the only thing that ever has.”

Here is one of my quotes that kind of goes along with it,

“Being an activist isn't about making a big splash all at once it's about making a little splash that in time becomes a powerful wave of positive change in the world.”

Chapter 2 Arizona State Capitol Protest 2003

The Medicare prescription drug bill was a really big deal our elected officials were having Town Hall meetings so that people could gather to discuss their views about this bill. I remember going out to Fountain Hills, Senator John Kyle had called a Town Hall meeting there, at the end of the meeting I walked up to him introduce myself and told him that my family had almost lost our home because of Medicare recovery, he invited me to walk with him to his car, he was accompanied by police and Sheriffs because he had received death threats that day. He assured me that they were working on trying to make American healthcare better for everyone.

Another time our group of The Alliance For Retired Americans went down to the State Capitol to protest at a rally that our elected officials had put together in support of this bill, there was supposed to be five busloads of seniors from Sun City coming to this event, they had food and music and guest speakers from Washington DC, one of which was Tom Scully the Head Administrator of Medicare. The buses never showed up that day, our group of about 20 people were standing in the back chanting and yelling,

“THIS BILL IS A SHAM!!!! THIS BILL IS A RIPPOFF FOR AMERICAN SENIORS!!!!”

I remember congressman JD Hayworth was so upset his face was as red as a tomato it was extremely embarrassing for those who had put this event together, our protest that day even made it into the newspaper, the AZ Republic Newspaper wrote an article about it.

At one point at the end of this event as people were leaving one of the public officials walked past me, not knowing who he was I chased after him, I caught up with him and began explaining what had happened to my family I soon realized this man was Tom Scummy (I changed his last name just for fun) the Head Administrator of Medicare appointed by President W Bush.

He explained to me that he had worked very hard on this bill and that it was a good bill, he said it will help a lot of seniors in dealing with their prescription drug costs. at one point I said to him,

“How would you feel if you had to tell your poor mother that her house would have to be sold in order to pay for her health care costs? How would you feel if Medicare recovery were coming after your family forcing you to pay for the health care costs that were provided by the state paid for through taxation.”

Mr. Scummy looked at me and said,

“Well Paul I guess I would just have to sit my mother down and explain to her that this is for the best in order to pay for her health care costs.”

I tell you if I had a pie I would have thrown it right in his face. He obviously does not understand that a house is more than just bricks and wood and shingles, a house to some people is a home it is where they raised their family where memories are stored it is the place of peace, comfort, and rest, and it shouldn't be stripped away from us through probate in order to pay for health care costs that were provided for us by the state through taxation that's like saying after 12 years of public schooling for our children we get a letter in the mail telling us we will have to pay back the money that was provided for their schooling. The dirt wasn't even dry on my mother's grave yet and Medicare recovery was already coming after us.

Our group went out and protested many times, we protested in front of Senator John Kyle's office in Phoenix AZ three of our members were arrested during a sit in at the Senator's office. Our group protested outside of a major nursing home in Phoenix where President W Bush came to speak in support of this bill, there I was standing in the street with my sign that read,

LIES, LIES AND THE LYING LIERS WHO TELL THEM THIS BILL IS A SHAM AND A DISGRACE!!!!

At one point they had officers on horses standing in front of me making sure I didn't step off the curb, they had a government official take pictures of me and then a white tactical van pulled up next to me with officers who were heavily armed all this because two or three people were standing with signs in opposition to this bill, you would think we were terrorists the way security surrounded us but all through it I held my ground even at the risk of getting arrested because the cause outweighed any punishment that they could have handed out to me.

The alliance for retired Americans in recognizing that this was a lemon of a bill made baskets of lemons and then we went to our elected officials and gave them each a basket of lemons, some of our elected officials talked to us. Congressman John Shadegg was in his office at the time and he and his secretary sat and listened to our concerns.

While all this was going on I was reporting our activities back to Norman and on the radio show On Second Thought with Mike Newcomb. Our group would have meetings in order to discuss tactics and in planning our next moves. It was a pretty big deal. The Medicare Prescription Drug Bill unfortunately passed into law on November 25th 2003 it was a big defeat for us but within that defeat there were victories, we were able to explain to our elected officials the need infixing a broken healthcare system in America.

I found out later that Tom Scummy resign from Medicare just two weeks after the bill was signed into law and got a high paying job working as a lobbyist for a major pharmaceutical company, when I found this out I was outraged and furious, I called the head administrative office of Medicare in Washington DC to express my outrage. I basically said to them,

“The Head Administrator of Medicare has the trust of millions of American seniors; they trust that person to be looking out for their best interest. Now listen to me if somebody like Tom Scummy ever gets to be Head Administrator of Medicare ever again I'm going to come to Washington DC and you'll have to drag me out of your office YOU HEAR ME!!!!!! YOU HEAR ME!!!!!! YOU F-EN HEAR ME!!!!!!”

It is very important that we make sure as a nation that our elected officials place Service Above Self in reaching out and helping others for the glory of God, we have to be very careful because if the wrong people get placed into a position of

authority like the Head Administrator of Medicare then we run the risk of being taken advantage of and lied to in the worse possible way.

Tom Scummy lied while testifying at a Senate sub-committee hearing about the cost of this bill, he lied and said the cost was millions of dollars less than it actually was, he told his subordinates to keep quiet about the cost otherwise they would be fired. America cannot afford to have people like Tom Scummy in a position of authority where their decisions effect the lives of millions of American families.

Chapter 3 Just Me and My Buddy Norm

One of many things that me and Norman had in common was that we are both entrepreneurs we both find a niche and fill it, we both try to help people through whatever businesses we create. Norman was in the food business just like I was, he was partners with Sid Green who provided food products to restaurants. after Norm died I worked with Sid's company for a short period of time. Sid had passed on too and his two sons were running the business.

When I would go visit Norman at his house I would always bring a cheesecake for him and his wife and family, they loved my cheesecakes, we would talk about politics and life and we would sit together and plan out our next moves. When we would call in on the Mike Newcomb talk radio show if I was first then Norm would always back me up and if he was first I would always back him up, we were very effective at getting our message out there. Like I said I was known as the Democratic Kidd, Norman at first was called Uncle Norman but after talking it over we came up with the name The Democratic Godfather, we thought it would have more of an impact, The Democratic Godfather invokes power, strength, and wisdom. It was pretty cool like I said, we were a team, I was Norman's legs and he was the wind behind my sails. Norman was Jewish and I am Christian and we got along just fine, one of Norman's sayings was,

“Are you speaking from strength or weakness?”

Which basically means when we are talking to somebody we need to stand on the strength of the truth and on the courage of our convictions, in other words we can't be wishy washy, we can't be compromising our principles if we are going to be fighting for quality, affordable, safe, efficient, compassionate health care in this country. The truth is we had better be speaking from strength and not weakness because speaking from weakness only leads to defeat, if you're speaking out of the strength with the courage of a lion with a very strong faith in God you shall be delivered unto great victory for the glory of God.

Joshua 10:25 Then Joshua said to them do not be afraid nor be dismayed be strong and of good courage, for thus the Lord will do to all your enemies against whom you fight.

As time went on Norman's condition worsened at one point he was unable to get the medication he needed. The medication cost \$3000 a month and if Norman didn't find a way to pay for it he could die. I was not only fighting for the preservation of Medicare, Social Security, and health care reform in this country I was also fighting for my friend Norman and I told people about this injustice and how wrong it was. The sad fact was if this man didn't find a program to help pay for his prescription drug costs he would die. There are millions of seniors in this country who have to make a choice between food and prescription drugs. One time the leader of our group whose name is Louisa took me on a tour of Sun City. Sun City AZ is a place where only seniors live. Many of the people that live in this community have golf carts, Louisa took me on a tour in her golf cart, we drove around Sun City, she took me to the activity center where I met Governor Napalitano at a Town Hall meeting once before and explained to her the need for health care reform in this country and I told her of the pain and suffering that my family had gone through.

Luisa explained to me that many of the seniors in Sun City own their homes outright, she explained to me that many of them are having to pick through the garbage in order to eat, many of them cannot afford basic necessities because of the high cost of their prescription drugs and medical bills, these poor people do not want to mortgage their homes, their homes or all they have left after their spouses have died, their homes are filled with memories and the love of family

they don't want to have to mortgage their homes in order to pay for their prescription drug bills and their medical bills and then risk losing their houses because they can't pay their mortgage. This is the sad truth, this is what is happening across our nation and there needs to be a change, the sad fact is locking patients away like zoo animals and prison inmates in order to keep them safe is inhumane and wrong, the human condition needs compassion, encouragement, and love in order to have a fighting chance to survive when dealing with major health care issues, don't get me started.

Thank God Norman found a program where his medication could be paid for but the question is how many seniors out there can't find a program to help them and they wind up in poverty or wind up losing everything in order to pay for their health care costs? It's not right things need to change and I'm going to continue the fight until hell freezes over and then I'll fight even twice as hard, what happened to my family and what's happening to millions of families around the country is a disgrace, people shouldn't have to work a lifetime, raise a family, pay off a home, scrimp and save just so we can pay for our health care costs and watch it all go right down the drain.

Norman was an entrepreneur he invented a putter called The Hipster because when you putt a ball while playing golf you shoot from the hip. The Hipster was designed so that you can shoot more effectively. Norman like myself had many ideas and we were not afraid to try new things. Now some of our ideas worked and some don't that's Ok because it's far better to have tried and failed than to have never tried it all.

A situation happened with the Alliance For Retired Americans where I had to step down, I don't want to get into it right now it involved a misunderstanding with one of the members, at one point I was very upset about this and reached out Norm, Norman reminded me that the important thing was me and those other people had lost a valued member, he encourage me exactly the way my father would have and as I listened to him I realized by joining the Alliance For Retired Americans was for Norman and my sake and that was the real blessing of it all, the blessing was in me meeting Norman helping him in making the last days of his life more enjoyable and for him to help me in dealing with the loss of my father, that was the real reason in all of this.

You see the Alliance For Retired Americans was the pathway that led me to Norman which became a true blessing as a father and son relationship.

After Norman died I wrote what is in the beginning of this e-book and gave it to Norman's son Peter at the funeral. Peter hugged me said,

"Thank you for taking care of my dad, thank you Paul for being a blessing in his life."

It wouldn't be for a few years before I would see Peter again he had been looking for me all those years and didn't know how to find me. Then around 2011 Peter was at a party and a mutual friend whose name is Gia was talking to Peter. Peter was explaining to her some of his ideas and she said to him,

"Peter you need to call Paul Vescio he's just the guy you need to talk to about this."

Peter was like, O MY GOD!!! O MY GOD!!! THAT'S THE GUY I HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR!!!"

A Letter From Norman's Wife Paula

I was arrested on a drug possession charge on December 6 2007 my attorney Henry Florence suggested that I get letters from people who knew me especially those I had helped in the past, I reached out to Paula and she said she would most certainly help, here is the letter that she wrote.

January 9 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Paula Arkin it is with great pleasure that I write a letter describing Paul's character.

Paul came into my and my late husband's life four or five years ago. He and my husband developed a father son relationship stronger than any one of our three own sons. They shared many beliefs politically and many laughs over the treasured time they had together. it seemed to provide one another the father, son relationship both longed to have.

Each time Paul came over he was sure to bring a homemade cheesecake for Norman and I. He knew that it was our favorite. I have to wonder how Norman's death affected Paul? It seemed to fill that father figure role that Paul longed for. I have enclosed a letter that Paul wrote to my family in honor of my late husband Norman Arkin.

He titled the eulogy, "Norman A True Friend" In my mind Paul was a true friend.

It is my hope that you will consider the fact that Paul at heart is a very good and genuine person with good intentions and compassion for others.

Sincerely Yours

Paula Arkin

THE HEALTHCARE ADVOCATE

By Chaplain America 193 Nov. 1 2020

When we enter into American healthcare, we have got to have all our ducks in a row by knowing in advance who to contact when dealing with certain issues. It is critical that we learn how to properly navigate through American healthcare not just for our own sake but also for our loved one's sake as well.

Take the time to find out who the Ombudsman is for each health care facility that you may have to go into someday this would mean contacting the Ombudsman Department and asking them about who is the Ombudsman for a particular hospital, nursing home, care center, medical rehab in your area.

The Ombudsman is charged with being your advocate while you or someone you love is in a health care facility. the Ombudsman arbitrates on your behalf with the

health care facility to resolve certain issues, they are a key member of your health care team get to know them in advance and be sure to call them in on day one of being admitted into a health care facility this way the health care facility knows that you know how the system works and that you mean business. This is how things are done in order to protect ourselves in American healthcare.

Another key player to have in your corner is the Surveyor. The Long Term Care licensing Department has Surveyors for each health care facility if there are any infractions in the CMS guidelines that the health care facility is failing to comply with then you can contact the Long Term Care Licensing Department and file a complaint and a Surveyor will be sent out on site to make sure that the facility complies with the CMS Guideline rules. If the health care facility still remains out of compliance after the surveyor comes on site, then that facility will be heavily fined for being out of compliance. Google and print out the CMS Visitation Guidelines for your state and for the nation.

Another key player to have in your health care corner is a Civil Rights Division. Each state has their own Civil Rights Division that is attached to the Attorney General's Office, get to know what your civil rights are and what your civil liberties are in American healthcare print out documentation on what your rights as a patient are and what your rights as a family member are learn them and have them with you because if a health care facility is violating your civil rights then the people to call are the Civil Rights Division of your state, talk to a Compliance Officer tell them the situation and if they indeed are violating your civil rights file a complaint it's their job to arbitrate with the health care facility in making sure your civil rights and your civil liberties are being honored.

Another key player is your Pastor or Chaplain, having a compassionate Pastor or Chaplain in your corner can mean all the difference between having a healthy positive state of mind or living in a state of hopelessness, anxiety, despair, and depression. don't wait until someone you love is in the hospital before you take the time to reach out to a Pastor or Chaplain, get to know them now while the skies are blue so when the storms of life come blowing in there already in your corner, they know you, they know your family, and they'll go the extra mile to be there for them.

When entering into American healthcare get the names of the Chaplain onsite if they have one and have that person come for a visit. Find out who the Social Worker, Activities Director and the Charge Nurse is, getting to know who these people are and how to contact them can help in expediting your loved ones needs more quickly, get to know what each of these person's responsibilities and functions are, this is how we prepare ourselves, also get to know your illness in side and out. Study what are the best options and what are the best treatments and what's best for you, after all you know your body more than they do. The first thing that happens when you go into American healthcare is the primary care physician will order a series of tests by a stream a specialists, their argument is better to be safe than sorry my response to that is, "It's better to be left alone with peace of mind then to be turned into a human pincushion for profit and greed." The fact is we don't need all of these tests, we need the tests that address our illness, be selective, be smart, ask questions, use the Internet to do research, keep your guard up, have at least one healthy screened family member be your medical healthcare advocate. Take notes, take names, watch very closely what's going on. Some of the most deadliest preventable medical mistakes in American healthcare are because patients were given the wrong medication or they were given multiple medications too close together or they were given the wrong dosage or they were given medication that the patient was allergic to but the staff was unaware of.

This is why it's so important to have somebody we love standing by our side when we enter into American health care, accidents happen, neglect happens, abuse happens, incompetence happens, greed happens, and if you have a strong advocate by your side who's watching over you, praying over you and making sure that you're receiving the love and comforts from home then the odds of these mistakes happening becomes very low because we're there holding staff countable in making sure that we catch mistakes in time when they are made.

These are only some of the precautions we need to take in American healthcare. I wrote a book with very simple down to earth instructions on how to protect ourselves and our families in American healthcare it's called,

"Healthcare an American Heartache" which includes "How To Protect Our Families in American Healthcare" It is FREE to Amazon Prime Members and FREE

as a PDF file on my website along with many other of my books.
www.miraclesofkingman.com

God Bless You, be aware, be safe, be informed from Chaplain Paul 193

The Democratic Kidd. John 3:16

Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding in all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths.

Isaiah 41:10 Fear not for I am with you, be not dismayed for I am your God I will strengthen you, Yes I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you My peace I give to you, not as the world gives do I give to you, let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid.