

# Gerry L. Spence



## BIOGRAPHY

Gerry Spence, recognized nationwide for his powerful courtroom victories, including that for the estate of Karen Silkwood against Kerr-McGee and those for the defenses of former Philippine First Lady Imelda Marcos and White Separatist Randy Weaver, takes pride in being a country lawyer.

Born, raised and educated in Wyoming, Spence graduated cum laude from the University of Wyoming Law School in 1952. The University awarded him an honorary Doctor of Laws degree in May 1990. He also was honored for law and letters by the American Academy of Achievement.

He spent his early years as a prosecutor and gradually developed an insurance clientele, becoming one of the leading defense attorneys in the intermountain west. After successfully defending insurance companies for many years he "saw the light" and took on a new direction—representing people. No more corporations, insurance companies, banks, or big businesses. Representing people remains his steadfast commitment.

Spence first gained national recognition when he received a \$10,500,000 verdict against Kerr-McGee in the Karen Silkwood case on behalf of her children. Later he earned such verdicts as \$26,535,000 against Penthouse for Miss Wyoming and successfully defended Ed Cantrell in the famous Rock Springs, Wyoming murder case. Spence received a \$52,000,000 verdict against McDonald's Corporation, the fast-food chain, on behalf of a small, bankrupt, family-owned ice cream company for McDonald's breach of an oral contract. A Utah medical malpractice verdict of over \$4,000,000 established a new standard for nursing care in that state. In 1990 he won acquittal for Imelda Marcos on multiple charges after a three and one-half month trial in New York City. In 1992, he received a record-breaking \$15,000,000 verdict for emotional damages incurred by his quadriplegic client because a major insurance company refused to pay the \$50,000 policy more than twenty years earlier. Two weeks later he added \$18,500,000 in punitive damages to the award. In 1993, Spence successfully defended Randy Weaver on murder, assault, conspiracy, and gun charges in the famous Idaho federal standoff case. In 2008 at the age of 79 Spence

defended Geoffrey Fieger in Michigan in a politically charged case brought by the Justice Department against Geoffrey Fieger for alleged violations of federal laws governing campaign contributions. The ten count indictment also charged conspiracy and obstruction of justice. The jury acquitted on all ten counts. He has not lost a jury trial since 1969, and he has never lost a criminal case.

He is the author of sixteen published books:

- ***Gunning for Justice***, describing the story of his struggle through a painful and desolate metamorphosis to become the leading spokesman for a new system of law and lawyers for the people (Doubleday 1982);
- ***Of Murder and Madness***, recounting a true story of insanity and the law (Doubleday 1983);
- ***Trial by Fire***, portraying the story of Miss Wyoming versus Penthouse (William Morrow 1986);
- ***With Justice for None***, detailing his views on the failure of the American justice system, (Times Books 1989, Penguin Books paperback 1990);
- ***From Freedom to Slavery: The Rebirth of Tyranny in America***, characterizing how Americans have given their freedoms to the new master, "the New King" (St. Martin's Press 1993);
- ***How to Argue and Win Every Time***, a national best seller, discussing in depth the power of persuasion and teaching that everyone is capable of making the winning argument (St. Martin's Press 1995);
- ***The Making of a Country Lawyer***, revealing through a painfully honest autobiography how a country lawyer became one of the greatest trial lawyers of our time (St. Martin's Press 1996);
- ***O. J.: The Last Word***, painting his portrait of America and its troubled justice system in the twilight of the twentieth century (St. Martin's Press 1997);
- ***Give Me Liberty!***, outlining how we, "The New American Slaves," can free ourselves and our nation (St. Martin's Press October 1998);
- ***A Boy's Summer***, communicating in a book of short essays activities, adventures, and experiments that fathers and sons can do together (St. Martin's Press 2000);
- ***Gerry Spence's Wyoming***, turning his attention to his native state to share the marvels and mysteries he finds in the landscape and among the people through photography and poetry (St. Martin's Press November 2000);
- ***Half-Moon and Empty Stars***, his first novel, telling the story of twin brothers, half Arapaho, half white, set in a small Wyoming town (Scribner 2001);

- *Seven Simple Steps to Personal Freedom*, is a powerfully affirming, large-hearted, and life-changing book that asks us all to take the greatest risk for the greatest reward—our own freedom (St. Martin’s Press 2001);
- *The Smoking Gun*, a riveting true account of a trial that adeptly exposes the unrelenting power of the state, which so often crushes those—guilty or innocent—who come before the bar of justice (Scribner 2003);
- *Win Your Case*, Spence shares a lifetime of experience teaching you how to win in any arena—the courtroom, the boardroom, the sales call, the salary review, the town council meeting—every venue where a case is to be made against adversaries who oppose the justice you seek (St. Martin's Press 2005); and
- *Bloodthirsty Bitches and Pious Pimps of Power*, using the full force of his own rhetorical skill, developed through decades as a legendary trial attorney, Spence exposes the deepest and most troubling consequences of the language of hate, the greatest risk of which is the rise of the Fourth Reich--this time in America (St. Martin's Press 2006).

From June 1995 through September 1996, Spence teamed with television network CNBC to create The Gerry Spence Show, which aired live for half an hour every Friday night. The show discussed legal and social issues that affected the lives of the people of our country.

For many years Spence has lectured at law schools and conducted seminars at various legal organizations around the country. He is the founder and director of the nonprofit Trial Lawyers College where lawyers learn to try cases on behalf of the people. His Trial Lawyers College also conducts a yearly death penalty seminar for public defenders and others defending against the death penalty, and Trial Lawyers College provides four weekly seminars around the country. He has also founded the New Judicial College for judges, an annual retreat for judges at Thunderhead Ranch.

He is also the founder of Lawyers and Advocates for Wyoming (L.A.W.), a nonprofit public interest law firm. Spence served as legal consultant for NBC television covering the O.J. Simpson trial and has hosted and appeared on Larry King Live and the Rivera Show numerous times and numerous other national television shows.

Gerry Spence is the founding member of The Spence Law Firm, LLC, and practices in Jackson Hole, Wyoming with his partners, J. Douglas McCalla, Roy A. Jacobson, Jr., Kent W. Spence, Robert A. Krause, R. Daniel Fleck, G. Bryan Ulmer, III, and Mel Orchard.

-----