

THE PAUL HALL MEMORIAL LECTURES



**A Legacy of
Leadership**

HERBERT BRAND / Paul Hall Memorial Lecturer

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PAUL HALL MEMORIAL LECTURES
A PROGRAM OF THE
PAUL HALL MEMORIAL ENDOWMENT
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

A Legacy of Leadership

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The Transportation Institute*

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PAUL HALL (1914 - 1980)

Paul Hall was respected in all quarters of the marine transportation field. As President of the Seafarers International Union of North America, Senior Vice President of the AFL-CIO, and as head of that organization's Maritime Trades Department of 43 national unions whose memberships total eight million American workers, he was a unifying force in bringing together all elements of the maritime industry. His lifelong respect for, and interest in, education was reflected in the establishment of the unique and successful Seafarers Harry Lundeberg School of Seamanship at Piney Point, Maryland, a vital source of trained seagoing personnel.

Throughout his working career he sought to bring together the industry, to improve working conditions, to meet the challenge of foreign competition, and to advise government on how the U.S. Merchant Marine might be revitalized.

THE PAUL HALL ENDOWMENT

The Paul Hall Memorial Endowment promotes marine transportation educational programs inside and outside the University of Southern California. The endowment was established at USC in 1981 through contributions from friends and associates in marine industry, organized labor and the private sector to honor Mr. Hall, who died in 1980. USC uses endowment income to support USC Sea Grant Program projects in marine transportation and port and harbor management. The Memorial Lecture Program was developed in 1987. It honors distinguished contributors to marine transportation, bringing to the public their thoughts in the form of an annual lecture series.

A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP

Herbert Brand

It is a special honor to have been chosen to give the first Paul Hall Memorial Lecture, because I was fortunate enough to spend virtually all my working life in the personal and professional company of this unique man.

There is a strong temptation to speak of Paul Hall as one of the legendary figures of our times. Many of us regard him that way. But I know Paul would be uncomfortable with being labeled a legend. And he'd be uncomfortable being tagged as he so often was, with such gaudy words as "labor giant" or "statesman" or "Presidential advisor"-even though he was all these things, and much more.

I have searched through memories of Paul that span almost four turbulent decades. If I were to attempt to capture him in a single phrase, it would be "pragmatic idealist." He was a man who had a vision without being a visionary . . . a man who had a dream without being an idle dreamer . . . a man who would never abandon his ideals or compromise his principles, but who still knew how to trim his sails to the realities of the world in which he lived, through which he moved, and on which he has so deep an impact.

I look around today, and I realize how much of an ally Paul Hall was to each segment of society represented here.

To those from the labor movement, this allegiance is hardly surprising. In any battle, on any front, he stood shoulder to shoulder with working men and women because he subscribed to that simplest of all trade union philosophies-that "an injury to one is the concern of all."

To those from management, Paul had the capacity-at one and the same time-to be an adversary across the bargaining table and an ally in preserving the industry on which both the union and the companies depend for their survival. Paul was an advocate of the principle of "interdependence." He was wise enough to know that it's no more possible to operate a merchant marine without ships than it is to operate it without manpower. And so he and his union stood side by side with shipowners and shipbuilders in the unending struggle to preserve this industry.

Paul Hall was an ally of the government, too. He recognized the unique nature of the merchant marine as the nation's fourth arm of defense. It was often an uneasy alliance, compounded by the fact that the government's performance in protecting and promoting this industry so often fell far short of its promises.

And while those of you from the halls of academe may not realize it, Paul Hall was your ally, too. Because of economic circumstances, he was a man of little formal education. In spite of his background-or, indeed, because of it-he had an unquenchable thirst for knowledge. Paul was one of those truly self-educated men. During the years he spent as a crewmember aboard ship he absorbed knowledge from any and every source imaginable. Paul never lost that thirst-he never stopped reading, never stopped listening, never stopped learning. His mind was a treasure trove of things he had learned and had never forgotten.

His personal experience taught Paul that education is a lifelong process. And out of that knowledge grew his special alliance with the educational community. More than two decades ago, he established the Harry Lundeberg School of Seamanship at Piney Point, Maryland.

Piney Point, as some of you may know, had been used by the Navy during World War II, and Paul's plan included removing the massive concrete torpedo bunkers, dredging the channel, enlarging the docking area, acquiring a fleet of vessels that could be used for training and as floating classrooms, refurbishing the barracks and building a library-in short, converting the facility into a full-time school.

Some of us who heard him talk of his plans and hopes and dreams for this school wondered if, perhaps, Paul's reach had finally exceeded his grasp. Happily, we were wrong and Paul was right.

The original concept was to help young men acquire the basic skills they needed to pursue seagoing careers. But that was only the beginning. Paul learned, early on, that many of these youngsters who dreamed of going down to the seas in ships were sorely in need of basic education. So to the curriculum he added programs in remedial reading and writing.

Because Paul erected the Lundeberg School on the firm foundation that life is a continuing education, he expanded the school's courses still further, making it possible for these young men to come back again and again, upgrading their skills, helping them climb the career ladder so that, over time, they can move from ordinary seamen to better-paying positions as engineers, mates and masters.

Today, the vocational education curriculum is complemented by a variety of opportunities for academic advancement. In addition to the reading skills program, the school offers an Adult Basic Education program, a high school equivalency program, an English as a Second Language program and a college level program leading to associate in arts degrees.

Over the last two decades, thousands of young men have passed through the school at Piney Point, acquiring education free of charge - and at no cost to the Government-emerging from its classes to make their own contribution not only to the maritime industry, but to society as a whole.

This series of annual lectures is our way of the reminding the world that Paul Hall passed this way- and it is a fitting tribute to the man. If he is in need of a living memorial, surely it can be found in the Lundeberg School-testimony to his vision, his determination and his sense of the common thread that unites labor, management, government and education, and to his qualities of leadership.

I have chosen to emphasize these unique characteristics about Paul Hall because, in my mind, they provide a far more illuminating portrait of the man than would the dry and predictable recitation of his achievements as President of the Seafarers International Union of North America ... as Senior Vice President of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations ... as President of the AFL-CIO Maritime Trades Department ... and as a working partner with industry and government in pursuit of a strong merchant marine.

These were tasks that he undertook with his customary vigor and they helped produce a high degree of labor unity-from seagoing unions to shoreside unions-in support of this maritime industry of ours. Paul Hall had an unyielding dedication to the future of maritime-and his is sorely missed now, as we engage in the continuing search for ways to keep this industry alive-not merely for its own sake, but to preserve the national security, as well.

Perhaps it is coincidence-perhaps it is fate-that we should be meeting here this week to discuss problems of concern to the merchant marine, because we seem to have come full circle in the past half century.

Fifty years ago, almost to the day, the United States Maritime Commission completed its economic survey of the industry and sent its first report to Congress as required by the Merchant Marine Act of 1936. That report detailed what Chairman Joseph P. Kennedy and the other Commission members called "the many perplexing problems affecting the ocean-going shipping industry." And it proposed practical, achievable ways to keep American-flag vessels plying the sealanes of the world.

And as we gather here, another Presidential body-the Commission on Merchant Marine and Defense-has recently issued its second report of similar magnitude.

Now many of us have a right to certain cynicism about Presidential commissions. They have become the fashion in Washington over the years. When government finds itself confronted with a seemingly

intractable problem, it appoints a commission ... the commission members engage in exhaustive study ... and they make recommendations to the President and the Congress. Often that's as far as it goes.

The ultimate tragedy is that the commission approach is oftentimes little more than an exercise in futility ... a form of window dressing ... a calculated ploy that makes it possible for government to create the illusion that it's doing something about a problem when it actually is doing nothing.

The 1937 report was a horse of a different color. It grew out of a sincerely shared concern by Franklin Roosevelt, the Maritime Commission and the Congress that something had to be done to develop an adequate and well-balanced merchant marine. It wanted to end the feast-and-famine approach to maritime policy.

The Maritime Commission in 1937 concluded that the history of the United States with respect to its merchant marine had been, as it put it with almost calculated understatement, "most unfortunate." Here's what its report said:

"We have generally acted under the lash of necessity which precluded the planning necessary to a sound commercial policy. Our present attempt to compete in the international carrying trades was born of the World War.

"Previous to the war we were a negligible factor in the overseas trade. Then, goaded by necessity, we requisitioned, bought, seized and built vessels at a rate never equaled in the history of the world. We blanketed the oceans with ship services in a frenzied effort to make up for our negligence of the preceding half century."

The 1937 study emphasized that, in the period following the first World War, "we have gone back a long way from the ambitious program of the early 1920s. We are about to start again, not in a riot of enthusiasm, not with an expenditure of billions, but with a carefully planned program that gives due regard to the factors of need, method and cost. Therein, we believe, lies our hope for the future of the American merchant marine."

Parenthetically, let me remind you that at the time of the 1937 study there were 426 vessels in nearby and overseas foreign trade. And they carried 35.7 percent of our waterborne foreign commerce-without cargo preference. Today we have some 360 ships carrying 4.2 percent-with cargo preference.

Even by the standards of that day, the \$200 million that the Commission proposed be spent on construction and operating subsidies was a modest amount. But, the Commission emphasized, it would make a good beginning on replacing a fleet that the government had allowed to grow old and obsolete in the years following World War I.

But the Commission felt it was vital to make such an outlay, because, it said, a viable merchant marine "must be viewed as an instrument of national policy." The report made the case, as few studies have ever done either before or since, that an ocean-going fleet was vital to both the nation's commerce and its military strength.

Because of the combined determination of the Maritime Commission, the Roosevelt Administration and Congress, we were far better positioned by the time World War II erupted. Because of their foresight, we were able to produce the largest merchant fleet on the face of the globe in order to provide the necessary sinews of war that were so essential in defeating the Axis powers.

On two occasions since the end of World War II-during the conflicts in Korea and Vietnam-the merchant marine demonstrated the obvious need for American-flag vessels and American seamen to carry the weapons of war to far-flung battlefields. We discharged our missions in Korea and Vietnam despite the fact that government had once again lost either its nerve or its senses . . . that it hadn't learned anything from past history, and had repeated the same mistake of allowing that maritime industry to fall into disarray.

And now we've rounded the circle. I don't have to recite a litany of the gloomy statistics about our merchant marine, because they're all too familiar to everyone here. It is enough to say that, fifty years after the historic 1937 study, we're still trying to find the key to unlock the door to maritime's future-a door that someone keeps slamming

shut despite the obvious necessity to maintain a maritime industry in peacetime so that we'll be prepared to meet our obligations should war ever break out again, anywhere around this troubled world of ours.

And now we have a new Presidential commission weighing the consequences of that neglect or indifference, and trying to come up with sensible solutions to set us back on course once again.

In its first two reports, this Commission has taken a no-nonsense position on what it clearly perceives as the "clear and growing danger to the national security in the deteriorating condition of America's maritime industries."

The Commission emphasized that the time has come to replace the haphazard, on-again-off-again approach to a maritime industry that-whether you count the dwindling number of ships or the shrinkage of the the seagoing workforce, whether you examine the decline of ship-building, ship repair facilities or shipyard suppliers-displays all the symptoms of massive, almost terminal neglect.

The most encouraging part of the Commission's seven-point program is its clarion call on the federal government to enunciate a clear and workable national maritime policy . . . one that mobilizes the resources of every federal department and agency to begin the massive task of rebuilding the merchant fleet and its supporting shipyard industrial base.

The Commission's seven principal recommendations throw down the gauntlet to the White House and Congress. In essence, it has told the Executive and Legislative branches of government to buckle down to the task . . . to work in harmony with each other and to come up with whatever is necessary to end the alarming situation in which a deteriorating maritime industry poses a clear and present danger to the national defense.

The Commission didn't say, "Think about it." The Commission didn't say, "Do something some day." Instead, it laid down a blueprint for action by the Administration and this second session of the 100th Congress. And it sounded an unambiguous signal for "full steam

ahead"-right now-on a workable program. And it made clear that, whatever it costs, the burden should be borne by the nation as a whole because of maritime's role as an indispensable part of our national defense system.

Yet, I have a certain amount of cynicism about what will happen next. After all, during seven years in office, the Administration has demonstrated precious little inclination to reverse the declining fortunes of our merchant marine.

The promises it made when it came to office have long since been forgotten. Instead, the White House has paid lip service to our industry, uttering pious platitudes and little else. The leadership it promised in the wake of the Carter experience was never demonstrated.

In recent years, it has been the Congress who has been our one sure and constant ally. As a matter of fact, the present Commission came about, not because of anything that the President did, but because Congress mandated its creation to deal with the problems confronting this industry.

But it would be a mistake to believe that, just because Congress is on our side, we can sit back, relax and assume that we're home free.

It's an ancient Washington axiom-but a true one-that the President proposes and Congress disposes. And so, while the word "leadership" has probably been done to death in the nation's capital, it is nevertheless true that without White House backing-deeds, not words-we could end up with our rudder jammed, turning in circles, always hoping for the best but never getting it.

We find ourselves in the twilight of the Reagan presidency. Because time is running out on this Administration, the report of the Commission on Merchant Marine and Defense could conceivably go the way of so many other Washington reports. . . published with a certain amount of fanfare, and then stuck away on some shelf to gather dust.

It doesn't have to be that way-and if Paul Hall were here today, I know what he'd say. He'd remind all of us that, as old Andy Furuseth, one of the great giants of maritime labor, used to say: "Tomorrow is also a day." And Paul would be planning tomorrow's strategy right now.

Assuming that this Administration remains on its present tack and allows both time and the so-called "free-market forces" to drive the U.S. flag from the high seas, it is of paramount importance that the Commission's report serve as a means of educating a new Administration, a new Congress and the American people of the depths and urgency of the problem.

The realities of the world today dictate that American self interest must be served. The pure "free-market" arguments don't answer the question of how we provide for the merchant marine part of the national security equation-and by security I refer to both physical and the economic viability of America.

Incidentally, we see no "free-market" in OPEC's activities-an operation in which state-owned vessels are an integral part of the cartel. Isn't it likely that, if we drift into a zero shipping and zero shipbuilding capability, a maritime cartel unfriendly to the United States could also emerge?

If you think we have problems now, just try to imagine what our plight would be if we had to face that kind of scenario.

Fifty years ago today, the leadership of this country-the Administration, the Congress and the industry-took a hard look at the need for a vital merchant marine. Working in harmony, they set in motion steps to assure a viable shipping capability so fundamental to our nation's security and economic needs.

Now, fifty years later, let us hope that the report of the Denton Commission will be the first step toward restoring America's visibility on the high seas in a manner consistent with our position as a world power.

The man we memorialize here today-Paul Hall-was well aware that problems can be either stumbling blocks or stepping stones. And I know where his heart and energies would be concentrated. He would be battling with everything he had to make certain that the American people understand maritime's role in terms of its contributions both to national defense and to a sound American economy.

It is appropriate, then that in this place and at this time, we dedicate ourselves to achieving that goal-for we are, all of us, inheritors of a maritime legacy that reaches back to the founding of this country ... and we are custodians of the dream of regaining and retaining our rightful place on the world's sealanes.

HERBERT BRAND

Herbert Brand is Chairman of The Transportation Institute, a Washington-based organization engaged in maritime industry research and promotion. The Institute directs its major efforts toward the preservation and promotion of a strong maritime capability in the United States.

The Transportation Institute is composed of companies engaged in the nation's foreign and domestic shipping trades, and in barge and tugboat operations on the Great Lakes and inland waterways.

Mr. Brand has been involved with the maritime industry for more than forty years. He had been Director of Public Relations of the Seafarers International Union, leaving that position in 1967 to join The Transportation Institute. He became Chairman of The Transportation Institute upon retiring as its President in 1980.

A graduate of the University of Alabama, Mr. Brand served in the U.S. Navy during World War II.

Among the activities with which he has been involved are:

- Board of Directors, Florida Alliance
- Advisory Committee, National Waterways Conference
- Board of Governors; Executive Committee, National Maritime Council
- Advisory Board, United States Merchant Marine Academy
- National Positions and Resolutions Committee, Propeller Club of the United States
- Maritime Preservation Task Force, National Trust for Historic Preservation
- Unemployment Insurance Advisory Council, State of New York
- Selection Board (1966), Department of State
- Maritime Affairs Committee, Navy League of the United States
- Marine Petroleum and Minerals Advisory Committee, U.S. Department of Commerce

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