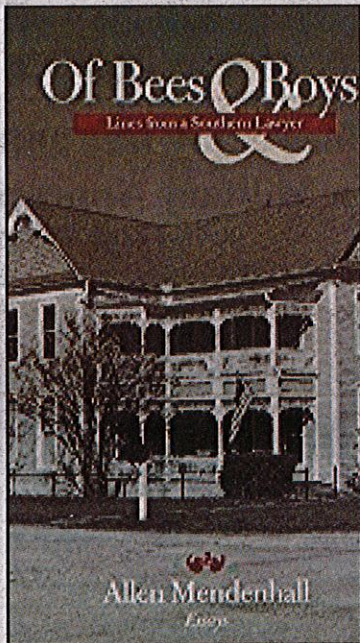


Local law professor pens "Of Boys & Bees"

By BRIAN HODGE

Allen Mendenhall (photo right) is a lawyer and author, but like everyone else the persona he has "at work" only scratches the surface of his true identity. Unlike most of us Mendenhall spends time writing out his thoughts in an effort to answer two existential questions most of us have pondered to varying degrees: Who am

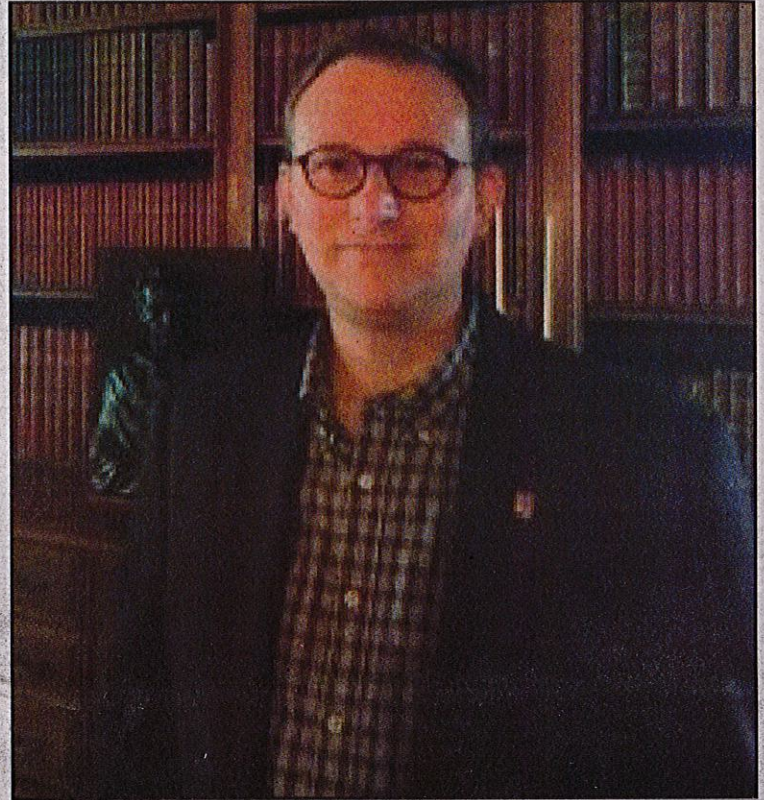


I? Why am I here? The results, a collection of nine essays that cover a cross-section of Mendenhall's observations on life, are compiled in a new volume "Of Bees and Boys - Lines from a Southern Lawyer." In its pages Mendenhall covers a range of topics using amusing, and often deeply reflective, tales from boyhood to a profession in teaching.

In his early twenties, Mendenhall faced life threatening cancer. Treatment cured the disease, but a stark resignation and acceptance of death left scars of a different sort. Death is a regular feature in Mendenhall's essays, though not in any gratuitous or needless sense. Rather it is a reflection, as

he sees it, of an aspect of the Southern culture of his boyhood. Southerners, Mendenhall says, believe in cultivating virtue, improving life, and accepting mortality. But even Mendenhall's reflections on death are served with humor and humility that makes their digestion not only palatable, but savory.

Mendenhall has a multi-faceted history in education. It is not uncommon for educated westerners, like Mendenhall, to take jobs teaching English in Japan, even if they do not speak the language. But the experiences teaching in prisons he describes in the book are eye-opening. While his university students at Faulkner's Jones School of Law take his literature course because it is requisite for their graduation, his prison students often seek more study in literature and approach the classes not only willingly, but enthusiastically. As Mendenhall explains books themselves are a valuable commodity in prison. They can not only pass the time, but also be stepping stones to higher education, a more productive livelihood after prison, and of course to conceal and even provide raw materials for contraband such as drugs



and weapons.

Mendenhall's publisher, Red Dirt Press, released "Of Bees and Boys" this month. He said he wrote each essay independently for various purposes and publications and never intended them to be published.

"My publisher saw one of these essays and asked if I had more,

"Of Bees and Boys: Lines from a Southern Lawyer is a delicious trip through a marvelous brain. Allen Mendenhall is the most literary of lawyers. He might have been a character out of Twain or Faulkner or his beloved Harper Lee explaining eternal truths to youngsters so they can understand and remember them. But he is real, and he opens his prolific mind in these joyous pages. If you are not from the South and want a slice of breezy southern life seen through the eyes of a master storyteller, read this book. If you are from the South, no doubt you will find a small piece of your personal history in here. I loved these tales so much, I read them twice; and I am from New Jersey."

— Honorable Andrew P. Napolitano, Senior Judicial Analyst, Fox News Channel; Distinguished Visiting Professor of Law, Brooklyn Law School

enough to constitute a book. I sent her what I had and they ran with it. Many of these essays I wrote just for myself initially. I wrote the essay about having cancer, for instance, because that illness changed my life in ways I needed to think through," Mendenhall said. "I think more clearly when I put pen to paper or fingers to keys, so that's what I did: I wrote."

Mendenhall is the Associate Dean and executive director of the Blackstone & Burke Center for Law and Liberty at Faulkner University and the author of "Literature and Liberty: Essays in Libertarian Literary Criticism." Along with his Ph.D. in English, Mendenhall has received his J.D. and LL.M. in transnational law and has worked as a staff attorney for Chief Justice Roy S. Moore of the Supreme Court of Alabama.

Air University observes 75th anniversary of Civil Air Patrol

U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Steven L. celebrate." The painting by