“I have no doubt that the twentieth century will go down in history as the century of rights,” says veteran scholar John Woodland Welch (BYU History, ’70). “The rights trajectory of that century was inexorable and indomitable, progressing from voting rights, suffrage rights, and women’s property rights in the 1920’s to workers’ rights in the 1930’s and ‘40’s, civil rights in the ’50’s and ’60’s, privacy rights in the ’70’s, and also human rights, equal rights, gay rights, disability rights, children’s rights, and many more. While I certainly applaud these important steps forward, which have been won at the expense of lives, crusades, reputations, and costs untold, I can only hope that the twenty-first century will eventually go down in history as the century of duties: civic duties, human duties, equal duties, fiduciary duties, professional responsibilities, intellectual duties, religious obligations, environmental stewardships, and duties to future generations. Duties and rights are not polar opposites; they go hand in hand.”

That insight, expressed in 2013, broke through from his study of American history, philosophy, and jurisprudence. He asked: “how do we define rights? What are the moral implications of holding rights? “I hope this new insight will have practical utility for a lot of people, and not theoretical.”

“We need to balance the Rights-Duties Budget,” he continues, through concerted effort by everyone to:

- point attention toward duties and their linkage to rights in blogs, social media, editorials, and books
- collect real-life stories of professionals, politicians, and ordinary people who did their duties.
- donate to academic institutions that can provide scholarships, prizes, and subventions that encourage students, lawyers, and historians to write about duties.
- think creatively about remedies and incentives to prompt the voluntary fulfillment of obligations and civic service
- start or contribute to a dialogue that classifies all rights by their source of origin, so that mutual clarification of their attendant duties can be established.

It was, in fact, the last century that saw the rise of Welch’s training. As a student of Hugh Nibley and a mentee of Robert Thomas, Truman Madsen, and a host of professors from the BYU history department, including James Allen, Tom Alexander, Robert Hill, George Addy, Welch was fortunate. These monumental mentors, he says, were scholars to their core.

Welch’s studies in Greek and Latin tradition not only prepared him with a classical understanding, but fed his natural interest in other people. More than a decade after graduating from BYU and obtaining additional degrees from graduate programs at Oxford and Duke, Welch met with Dean Rex Lee, who asked him to teach at the J. Reuben Clark Law School.

“What if I wanted to teach a course on the laws of Hammurabi?” asked Welch during the interview with Dean Lee. His response, according to Welch: “That’s exactly the kind of thing we want.”

“Now, of course he didn’t mean it. But I did,” Welch said.

His determination to teach courses on ancient Near Eastern law and the Bible evolved from his background as a historian. Like any other craftsman, a scholar needs to master a lot of abilities: the capability of working with documents and the capability of using language precisely to say what you really mean, according to Welch.

He holds the Robert K. Thomas of Law professorship and says when the opportunity arose to name it, he couldn’t think of anyone he owed a deeper debt to. “Brother Thomas was very inspiring in a lot of ways, spiritually and intellectually. He especially wanted us to get tools that would allow us to make useful contributions,” Welch explains.

In 1981 Welch published Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis, a book about chiasmus represented in ancient languages. “That was an important publication for me because it was my first book and it gave me confidence that I
could pull together a group of non-Mormon scholars who worked with ancient texts,” Welch commented.

His decade-spanning work as a successful professor and scholar can be characterized by consistent, meaningful, collaboration.

“Throughout my career I have always tried to reach out to historians, lawyers, and biblical scholars who are not here at BYU and try to speak to and with them about interests that they have and where I could make a contribution to something they have thought of,” Welch said.

Welch’s adroit talent for communicating with scholars and a specialty in Mormon issues led him to organize the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies. Since FARMS, Welch has also entered his twenty-sixth year as editor of BYU Studies, a quarterly publication dedicated to disseminating scholarly religious material. Subsequent work from the journal prompted him to publish Opening the Heavens, a book that presents documents of key events such as the Restoration, First Vision, and the Revelation of the Priesthood.

A devotion to scholarship and leadership will undoubtedly shape Welch’s historical footprint. His contributions give expert witness of how to do one’s duty. In anticipating the next century, Welch’s inspirational voice will echo. It will take serious commitment and devoted effort to bring about the next century of duties: a collection of the world’s best writing on duties, documentation of the stories of those who nobly fulfilled duties, and the offering of positive incentives that prompt honorable civic service, to name a few. “We need to get out of the mode of ‘my rights, my privileges, my benefits.’ We need to think about other people,” Welch says. “I would like my legacy to bridge [history and the future] in a way that recognizes needs and abilities that can then be transformed into good decisions, what ought to be, what will be good and beneficial to all of us eternally.”

1 http://digitalcommons.law.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1052&context=clarkmemorandum#page=32
“I’M COMMITTED. I’M DEDICATED. I’M GENUINE. I’M PASSIONATE. I’M HONEST. I HAVE A REAL SENSE OF RIGHT AND WRONG THAT DRIVES ME.”

KATHLEEN ANDERSON

by Françoise N. Djoukeng

In her eighth-grade civics class, Kathleen Anderson watched as Ronald Reagan ran for presidential office. “It was the first time I remember coming alive in school. Politics really interested me at a young age,” Anderson says. A transplant from southern Virginia, Kathleen Anderson became a permanent Utah resident after graduating in political science (’89) from BYU. “My father did not think it was a useful major. As hard as he tried to convince me, he wasn’t able to persuade me to change my major,” Anderson explains.

Since then, Anderson has not only stuck with politics, but even calls it her “addiction.” She is now deep in the field, having run for vice president of the Utah Republican Party last summer. Her civic career spans education and government on local and state levels. Her political titles have included precinct chair, county and state delegate, Davis County party secretary, and Utah State Central Committee member.

Anderson has also fielded many phone calls over the years from political activists who noticed her above-average attendance at various political meetings, including the state caucuses. “I got called out-of-the-blue: ‘Would I be the president of the Women’s Republican Club in Salt Lake City?’” she recalls. “It’s the oldest existing women’s Republican club in the nation.” She was elected, and served in the two-year position from January 2010 until January 2012.

This position overlapped her work as vice president of the Utah Federation of Republican Women, which she held from December 2011 to December 2013. The group engages in fundraising efforts for Republican candidates for office and encourages political participation. In between raising eight children (her youngest is 13 and her oldest is 24), Anderson chooses to serve and volunteer. “I could have stayed home and just raised my children for the seventeen or so years I haven’t worked for pay. But I didn’t. I have always been involved,” Anderson said. “It’s very rewarding. You get paid, just not by money or a paycheck. You get paid in other ways.”

Anderson describes politics as an emotional experience and even at times “gut-wrenching.” She has learned much about her community and its members through her civic and political work. She recalls one of her eye-opening experiences while overseeing all Salt Lake County schools as a regional director for the Utah Parent Teacher Association. “I went in and out of every school in the school district and met with different principals and parents and PTA presidents,” she said. “I was ashamed at how little I knew about the demographics and issues in Salt Lake City. It is very easy to stay in a comfort zone but there is no growth there.” Anderson is proud of the work she has done and believes her moral convictions keep her in the heart of politics. “I’m committed. I’m dedicated. I’m genuine. I’m passionate. I’m honest. I have a real sense of right and wrong that drives me,” she said. Her love of good government and conservatism means she will continue to listen, observe and serve.