

## **'And Please, Don't Forget to Vote'**

I remember the cold early November morning eight years ago. I was on my way to the workers' compensation office on Church Street, most likely to argue that my injured client deserved to receive medical benefits for his job-related injury.

I recall neither the client nor the result, but what I will never forget is my encounter with an old woman who had fallen while she attempted to step up onto the sidewalk after crossing Church Street. Her face had been scrapped and she was bleeding. Along with another man, I helped her up and sat her down on a nearby bench. I never got her name, so I will call her Lottie.

Just an everyday encounter on a city street? Not for me. As Lottie cleaned herself and assured us that she'd be all right, I noticed her kind and grateful eyes, which had the imperfections that come with age, yet sparkled beneath a hat that was out of fashion but worn with a sense of dignity.

As she thanked us "ever so much", she reached out her hands from the sleeves of an overcoat. They were wrinkled ebony hands, with pronounced knuckles and veins, hands that most likely dished out many a serving at the church supper or stroked a grandchild's head as she sang a song her mother had taught her. She took my hand in hers, looked into my eyes, and said, "And please, don't forget to vote."

Lottie undoubtedly experienced examples of injustice that were business as usual in this century, examples of what thinking human beings would describe as our country's less-than-proud moments. But the sense of faith, wisdom and duty that she showed will be a fond and inspirational memory for me and every time I close the curtain on the voting machine to exercise a precious right that is all too often ignored or taken for granted.

Lottie understood this and felt compelled to share her sentiment. A portrait of true class in an old hat and overcoat.

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