Thoughts (idle or otherwise) about the proliferation of attorneys, imaginative billing procedures and a useless profession:

"It sounds a little grand, I know, to say 'my lawyers' in the plural, but I didn't start out that way. I started with one lawyer, but you know what happens. One moves in and pretty soon there are seven, all in the same office. They get together all day long and say to each other, 'What can we postpone next?' The only thing they don't postpone, of course, is their bill, which arrives regularly. You've heard about the man who got the bill from his lawyer which said, 'For crossing the street to speak to you and discovering it was not you . . . twelve dollars.'" George S. Kaufman (quoted in his biography by Howard Teichmann).

"Lawyers are like a lot of crafts that many of us live by, great, but useless. One level-headed man could interpret every law there is. If you commit a crime, you either did, or you didn't, without habeas corpus, change of venue, or any other legal shindig. But Lord, if we go into things that are useless, why, two-thirds of the world would have to turn to manual labor. That's really the only essential thing there is." Will Rogers.

And even idler (and perhaps more otherwise) thoughts about the litigation boom and alternative methods of dispute resolution:

"There was a young lawyer who showed up at a revival meeting and was asked to deliver a prayer. Unprepared, he gave a prayer straight from his lawyer's heart: 'Stir up much strife amongst the people, Lord,' he prayed, 'lest thy servant perish.'" Sen. Sam Ervin, (quoted in Time 1973).

"They can't sue me for a half million for a letter I didn't write." "Oh no? Somebody like Adelman could. I can just see that lawyer he's got. Crippled from chasing ambulances. Mutilated from being caught in fires he's started for insurance money." John Kennedy Toole.

Random quotes you have always needed to describe the opposing lawyer — and which you are now glad that he didn't have to describe you:

"He was a bad lawyer . . . but he was the most sensible man talking nonsense I ever saw." Daniel O'Connell . . . "He has occasional flashes of silence, that make his conversation perfectly delightful." Sidney Smith . . . "I have suffered from being misunderstood, but I would have suffered a hell of a lot more if I had been understood." Clarence Darrow . . . "The difference between genius and stupidity is that genius has its limits." Anon. . . . "Had [he] been present at the creation, [he] would have given some helpful hints for the better ordering of the universe." Alfonso the Learned.

And only slightly modified quotes (random and/or otherwise) which might serve the same purpose:

"The trial attorney] was in his late forties, tall, reddish, and looked as if life had given him an endless stream of two-timing girl friends, five-day drunks and cars with bad transmissions." Richard Brautigan . . . "Beware of the [attorney] who works
hard to learn something, learns it, and finds himself no wiser than before. He is full of murderous resent-
ment of [attorneys] who are ignorant without hav-
ing come by their ignorance the hard way." Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. . . . "No [attorney], however conserv-
active, can stand before a [court] day after day and refrain from saying more than he knows." Morris Cohen . . . "The world will be puzzled to decide whether you have abandoned good principles, or whether you ever had any." Tom Paine (to George Washington).

1. Concern about the proliferation of lawyers is not new. The father of Robert Edwin Davis, Dallas Bar President in 1980, contributed an excerpt from a biography of John Adams — concerning a dinner ("a most splendid Feast") which Adams had in 1794 with Judge Willing of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court:

   Judge Willing told us a Story of a Lawyer here [Philadelphia], who the other Day, gave him upon the Bench the following Answer, to a Question 'Why the Lawyers were so increased.'
   'You ask me why Lawyers so much are increas'd
   Tho most of the Country already are fleec'd
   The Reason I'm sure is most strikingly plain
   The Sheep are oft sheared yet the Wool grows again
   And tho you may think e'er so odd of the Matter
   The oft'ner they're fleeced, the Wool grows better
   Thus downy-chin'd Boys as oft I have heard
   By frequently shaving obtain a large Beard.'

2. MacNelly's comic strip "Shoe" (9/16/79) proposes an effective — if somewhat cruel — solution to the problem of the increasing number of attorneys:

   "Today's topic is lawyers . . . something has to be done about lawyers.
   "They're everywhere! Writing laws, opinions, regulations — and all of them in a language that's so ridiculous we have to hire other lawyers to translate. You can't do anything these days before you talk to a lawyer! By mastering the art of gobbledygook, lawyers have amassed incredible influence and power.
   "It's time we did something to cut these guys down to size. And I say start at the root of the problem — shorten their pads!"

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