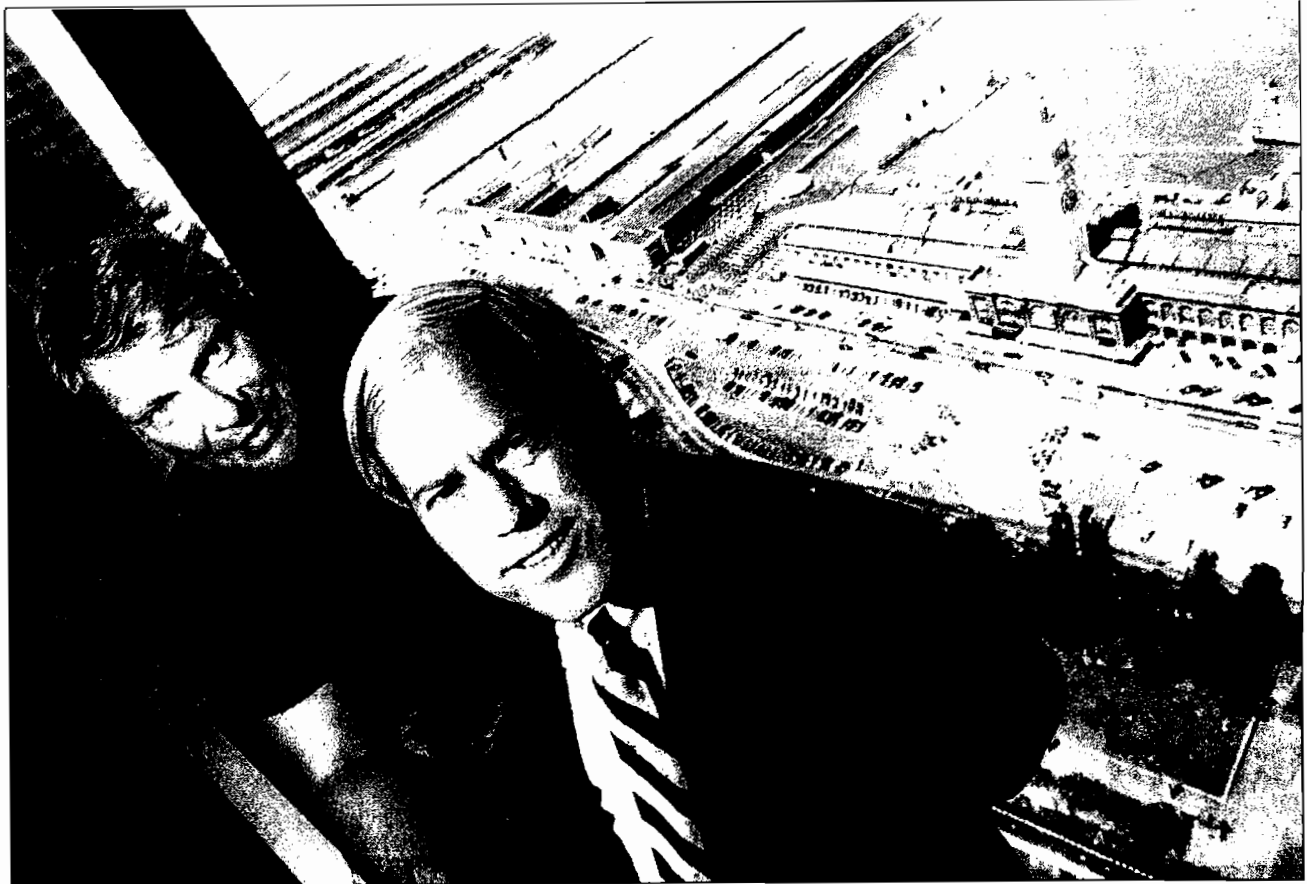


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ERIC SLOMANSON

**TEAM PLAYERS** — Golden State Warriors coach Don Nelson, left, and Tarkington, O'Connor & O'Neill partner John O'Connor wanted

to save the summer for some children headed for financially threatened camps.

## Good Sports

### Firm Partner and Basketball Coach Take the Offensive to Help Save Camps

By James Evans  
Daily Journal Staff Writer

It was a sad situation. Golden State Warriors coach Don Nelson told his friend, attorney John O'Connor, while the two were watching a championship playoff game between the Portland Trailblazers and Chicago Bulls in June.

Several local sports camps Nelson had been hired to direct were in financial trouble and may have to close, not only disappointing both the children and adults who attend, but possibly leaving them without a refund.

Nelson was merely an employee of the local promoter, and knew he wasn't liable for the monetary trouble, but he felt bad for the people who had plunked down their money and were looking forward to working with a professional

basketball coach. It was a sad situation, and something should be done about it, Nelson lamented.

"I felt bad about these kids not having anywhere to go," the coach recalled. "It wouldn't have been right. Most already had sent their money in, or at least their deposits. I wanted to do right by all these kids."

Nelson said he also had a more practical motive in mind — maintaining the value of his name. Paraphrasing Shakespeare, he said: "He who steals my purse steals trash; he who steals my name steals everything."

Fortunately the coach was talking to the right guy. O'Connor, a name partner in San Francisco's 56-lawyer Tarkington, O'Connor & O'Neill, is an avid basketball fan who plays on his firm's steamroller team in the Lawyers

League.

"I play any position they'll let me," said the 6-foot-1-inch O'Connor. "I'm either a slow guard or a short forward," he confessed, adding that the team has won the championship four times in the last decade.

O'Connor and Nelson have been friends since meeting at the Pritikin Institute a couple of years ago. They had played a few sets of tennis at Nelson's club and were watching the Bulls pulverize the Trailblazers when the coach mentioned the camps, operated by Marin County entrepreneur Max Shapiro.

"He knew he had no legal obligation, but he felt he had a moral obligation to these people," O'Connor said. "He wanted to know what he could do. There were some legal consider-



ERIC SLOMANSON/Daily Journal

**CHAMPIONING A CAUSE** — Golden State Warriors coach Don Nelson, standing, and, from rear, Charles Hoeveler, Brian S. Healy and John D. O'Connor teamed up to revitalize some financially threatened sports camps.

## Tarkington Partner Plays the Game To Help Save Basketball Camps

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ations, but there were more practical considerations," among them who would administer the business end of the operation and how much it would cost to keep the camps open.

O'Connor had a friend, Charles Hoeveler, who was president of U.S. Sports Development, the nation's leading operator of sports and fantasy camps around the country.

"I called Charlie and asked him to advise Don on the administrative function of the camps, and how much it would cost Don to pay for the camps himself," he said.

The result was that Hoeveler volunteered to take over the camps under the auspices of his company, while Nelson performed his normal role of camp director.

Hoeveler and Nelson are splitting the cost, and O'Connor and fellow Tarkington bankruptcy partner Brian S. Healy con-

tributed their time and expertise.

Healy provided the legal restructuring that allows Hoeveler to assume control of the camps and bring them under his umbrella for the years ahead without subject-

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John O'Connor,  
Tarkington, O'Connor & O'Neill

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ing him to legal or financial liability for Shapiro's debt.

The restructuring included consolidating the six basketball day camps into four and retaining one overnight camp and one fantasy camp. All take place in late July or early August and are attended by about

500 people, who can enroll until all the slots are filled.

"I don't know the exact amount, but it's going to cost Don a substantial sum out of his pocket," said O'Connor. "But he felt it was really bad for the kids, and wanted to do what was right."

Nelson confirmed that taking over the project will cost him a bundle, but said Hoeveler was shouldering an equal burden, as are many camp employees who have agreed to work for lower salaries.

Warriors player Billy Owens also is donating his time by making appearances at each of the camps, Nelson said.

"Instead of watching those camps close and having those kids have nothing to do this summer, I decided to run the camps and to run good camps," Nelson said.

"This is a case where a friendship has turned into a savior situation," he said, referring to O'Connor. "The lesson is it's great to have wonderful friends in a time of crunch."