

THE "ONCE UPON A TIME" HERO

In one of the European countryside towns lived Mr. Herman Gregory, a hero among his fellow citizens as an outstanding member of the Fire Brigade of his town.

He was known for his courage and ability to save lives from amidst flames, risking his own life in doing so;

One Saturday evening in August 2005, Captain Gregory died in a tragic accident, while fighting a fire in a multi-storey building. All the occupants were saved. However, he was crushed under a wall.

Mr. Gregory was seen to his final resting place in an impressive popular and official cortege.

Foremost among participants in the funeral was the parliament member and mayor of the town, who gave orders for a military funeral for the deceased, where the coffin was to be wrapped in the flag of the country.

Later, his widow was to keep the flag as a token of her husband's the bravery, at the national level and the official level;

Forty five days later, a local paper published some news that had leaked through the Forensic Department. The autopsy of Mr. Gregory had revealed 1.8% alcohol in his blood, which is twice the limit allowed for driving.

This would make him lose his driving licence for up to one year.

The paper speculated whether Gregory had been in a state to perform his job properly or not. Gregory's family got angry, so did the public opinion, all accusing the paper of tarnishing the image of an uncontested hero. To that, the

paper, together with part of the public opinion, found it necessary for every citizen to know the whole truth, without omissions or additions;

The Prosecution started investigating the matter, where it was found that Mr. Gregory was on his day off when the fire broke out.

He was having a drink with friends. Upon hearing the news on his wireless, he rushed out to join his colleagues on site.

This made him an even better person in the eyes of the public, with a greater sense of patriotism. However, part of the public opinion started raising questions, concerning Gregory's boss, who accepted him in the state he was in and in spite of its being his day off.

Still, Gregory's advocates found his behaviour more heroic, for rushing to risk his life for the sake of his fellow citizens. The other team answered that there was a difference between risking one's life, while on duty, and wasting one's life, while acting recklessly;

The debate over Gregory's heroism continued for long, but one fact remains: Gregory's heroism and status were no more the same, with all these details revealed;

Whoever contemplates this incident will find out that once a person reaches the highest degrees of appreciation and respect, it becomes a great moral burden and a professional commitment, before becoming a privilege.

Any trivial breaching of such professional commitment, whether intentionally or unintentionally, during working hours or outside them, could threaten the professional status of the individual.