

Farewell, Madison

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Though a law professor's life is never dull, there are times of relative repose and reflection. One who is also a full time university administrator of course finds fewer respites. Yet even for one who is doubly occupied, a transition between universities causes one to reflect upon experiences and institutions. It is at such a time, having completed my years as a Wisconsin law professor (and president), and about to assume the same role at the University of Virginia, that I thought a few reflections might be in order.

The opportunity to teach law at Wisconsin has been a rare and challenging experience. My first contact with the UW Law School occurred in the summer of 1970, when I came to Madison (my first visit here, in fact) at the invitation of Willard Hurst to assess the effects of the teaching assistant strike that spring. Willard arranged for me to talk also with Nathan Feinsinger and with Arlen Christensen, both of whom had played significant roles in resolving the strike. I toured the Law School building that afternoon, and came away with the distinct impression of subterranean passages and tortuous corridors—an impression which proximity and greater familiarity have, I may say, in no way diminished! But the visit also reinforced my admiration for the school and those of the faculty I had already known or met that day. Little did I realize that ten years later I would be joining that faculty.

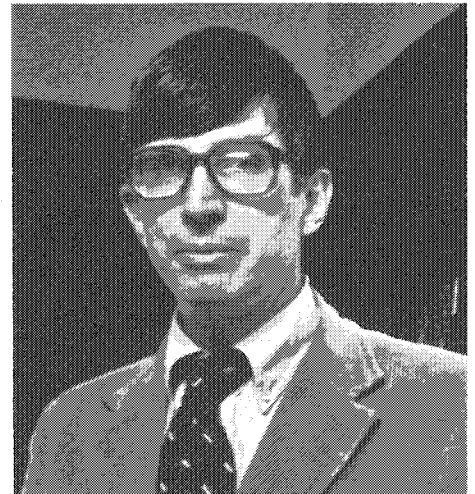
No law faculty of which I have been a member—Berkeley, Buffalo, Cincinnati and Indiana being the others—better combines the qualities of collegiality and challenging ideas than does this one. Nowhere else is there the sense of excitement or ferment—in and outside the classrooms, and of course in offices and the faculty lounge—that I have found here whenever I was able to enjoy my membership in

this community of legal scholars. No law school fits better into the larger context of a research university, or makes better use of interdisciplinary ties and links between scholars across campus. This is truly an exceptional group of colleagues, distinctive quite as much for their variety of background and perspective as for their collegiality and cordiality.

The students have also been exceptional. During the past five years I have taught one course each semester. Through constitutional law, commercial law, and advanced contracts, I have come to know some 350-400 of the most promising young lawyers and future lawyers to be found anywhere. In fact, the students are in many ways as collegial as the faculty; they approach problems and issues in and outside class with a common quest for insight rather than a passive expectation that the professor alone knows (or will discover) the answer. Time and again I have learned from my students as we have explored fascinating paper topics or puzzled unresolved questions of constitutional or commercial law. I can only hope they learned as much from me as I did from them—and I look forward to hearing from many of them as they apply what we learned together to the practice, making, judging, or in at least a few cases I hope, the teaching of law.

Law school deans tend to be unsung heroes and heroines, but I have a very special feeling about the two deans under whom I have served here. Orrin Helstad not only made me welcome in the early months (ably aided by Stuart Gullickson) but along with Charlotte became Karen's and my co-hosts for an annual gathering of law faculty and judges which I hope my successor will continue.

Cliff Thompson is, of course, a special friend and one I will miss most keenly on leaving Madison. He and I were debate



partners and college classmates in the '50's and have shared many experiences since then. Just last spring we recreated at Marquette University a 1954 debate which first brought both of us to Wisconsin—and though we lost the original debate, we felt last spring that we had finally joined those we could not beat! Since he and Judith came to Madison, Cliff has been an exemplary dean as well as a dear friend and colleague. I especially regret leaving his faculty now that we have been reunited.

One other quality that I have much admired is the strong support from alumni that has been shown through the recent capital campaign. I have been privileged to meet with a number of law alumni groups during the last three years, and have found them unfailingly supportive, as well as curious about the current condition of the Law School. If the distinction of a professional school is measured in part by the quality and support of its graduates, there should be no doubt where Wisconsin ranks in this dimension as well.

As I recall these qualities I have so valued during my years on the UW Law Faculty, I can only hope the future will be even brighter and more illustrious. All the ingredients are here—a faculty of first-rate scholars and teachers, a challenging and committed student body, a supportive and accomplished alumni, and a congenial university setting. One could not ask more than this, and I would not expect to find more anywhere else.