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James P. White

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A DEDICATION TO BOB MCKAY

JAMES P. WHITE¹

On July 13, 1990 the world of legal education and the legal profession lost a truly great man. It is difficult to describe how much Bob McKay contributed to American legal education, to the improvement of the profession, to the promotion of justice, and to the betterment of mankind. He was called to chair conferences, task forces, committees, special projects, studies and to undertake a myriad of other responsibilities. He did all with grace, style, good humor and great modesty. He was always available to help, give wise counsel, and be a friend.

Throughout his distinguished career, Bob McKay always emphasized the pursuit of justice. In the 1987 Report of the Long Range Planning Committee, chaired by Professor McKay, he stated in the concluding recommendation:

[L]egal educators should protect against the infusion by the profession of values that are in any respect unworthy.

* * * *

Ultimately, each law faculty is the guarantor of quality legal education for its students, the future lawyers of America. Even more important is the obligation to the public to train lawyers for competence and professional responsibility in the interest of justice.²

Again speaking to leaders of the profession, Professor McKay stated:

[I]ndividually and collectively we aspire to a more just society, for which lawyers are the principal architects. Lawyers can serve that role, however, only if they are individually competent and collectively concerned with using law as an instrument of justice. I suggest again, as I did in the beginning, that we perhaps ask too narrow a question when we ask how to improve mere technical competence. That is of course a proper goal, but not large enough. In my expanded concept of justice, I suggest we should be engaged in the search for professional

¹Consultant to the American Bar Association for Legal Education; Professor, Indiana University School of Law. B.A. 1953, J.D. 1956, Iowa; LL.M. 1959, Geo. Wash.; L.L.D. 1984, Univ. of the Pacific; LL.D. 1989, John Marshall; LL.D. 1989, Widener; Jur. D. 1992, Whittier, LL.D. 1993, Campbell.

²AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION, LONG RANGE PLANNING FOR LEGAL EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES: A REPORT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION SECTION OF LEGAL EDUCATION AND ADMISSIONS TO THE BAR 33-34 (1987).

competence to serve individual client needs, the public interest and, if it does not seem too grand, the cause of justice.³

At the 1979 Pound Conference, Professor McKay observed:

I am satisfied that the judges, lawyers, law teachers and others who have come together here are not met in any ordinary celebration of a speech of 70 years ago. One and all, they are here in the cause of justice. The speakers today, one after another, have eschewed personal advantage to themselves or their individual clients; they have worried instead how to make the system work better for all. The objective which brings us together is beyond individual self-interest. It is beyond lawyer self-interest. It is, indeed, beyond self. If I thought otherwise, or if *you* thought otherwise, we would not be here.⁴

It is fitting that this Symposium be dedicated to Robert B. McKay who throughout his entire professional career ever reminded all of those in the legal profession, judges, lawyers, teachers, and students that the profession must always seek justice. Compassion, hope and faith are necessary elements to the lawyer's behavior in an ethical and professional manner. Robert McKay was an embodiment of these qualities as he urged us to demonstrate creative leadership in solving the social justice issues of today and tomorrow in a manifestation of the highest calling of those privileged to be called lawyers.

³Robert McKay, *Lawyer Competence, Are We Asking the Right Questions* 13-14 (March, 1987) (unpublished remarks on file with the author).

⁴Robert McKay, *The Pound Conference: Perspectives on Justice in the Future*, American Bar Association, 1979 at 132 (emphasis original).