

Spring 1980

In Memoriam: Mason Ladd

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Recommended Citation

Charles W. Ehrhardt, *In Memoriam: Mason Ladd*, 8 Fla. St. U. L. Rev. 161 (2017) .
<http://ir.law.fsu.edu/lr/vol8/iss2/1>

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FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY LAW REVIEW

VOLUME 8

SPRING 1980

NUMBER 2

IN MEMORIAM MASON LADD

Mason Ladd was a great law teacher and lawyer who put his indelible mark on two law schools—the University of Iowa and Florida State University. He had strong roots in Iowa where he was born in 1898, graduated from North High School in Des Moines, Grinnell College, and the University of Iowa College of Law. Mason practiced in Des Moines prior to becoming a member of the Iowa faculty in 1929. He received an S.J.D. from Harvard in 1935. After ten years teaching at Iowa, he was appointed dean, in which position he served until 1966. Mason was popular among deans and teachers and had a reputation as a recruiter of gifted young teachers.

Mason Ladd was a scholar who was intimately involved in the creation of the modern law of evidence. He was a member of the Standing Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure of the Judicial Conference of the United States which reviewed the work of the United States Supreme Court Advisory Committee on the Federal Rules of Evidence and forwarded the rules to the Supreme Court of the United States for their approval. He also participated directly in the drafting of the Model Code of Evidence and was a member of the committee which acted for the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws in preparing the Uniform Rules of Evidence. He authored and co-authored casebooks on evidence, federal jurisdiction, civil procedure, and Iowa probate practice. His book *Cases and Materials on Evidence*, has been frequently cited by courts and widely used in law schools. He received numerous awards for his scholarly endeavors. Most recently, the Fellows of the American Bar Foundation presented Mason Ladd their 1979 Fellows Research Award for his extensive research in law and government. The attached bibliography indicates the scope of that research.

Upon completing his career at the University of Iowa at age 68, Mason accepted the position of Dean at Florida State and began to plan the establishment of a new law school. When he accepted this challenge, there was no building, no faculty, and no students. However, in the fall of 1966, the law school at Florida State opened with over 100 students enrolled. Under his leadership and constant prodding, the College of Law began its steady growth. Prior to his retirement at Florida State in 1969, he obtained funding for the new College of

Law building and completed the preliminary planning for its construction. For three years thereafter Mason returned each winter to Tallahassee to teach evidence and renew old acquaintances.

Ladd was a master in the classroom. I first knew him as a student in his evidence class at Iowa. The joy and fervor that Mason brought to the law of evidence was catching and his students quickly became immersed in the theory and rules of evidence. It was almost impossible not to learn with a teacher who was so inspiring. Some of the cases which were discussed will never be forgotten by his students. With his canes waving in the air, his discussion of the escapades of "Chiggers", the mule, during his trip down the Grand Canyon was a classic.¹

Mason had a sincere interest in seeing his faculty succeed. In 1967, Mason hired me at the new law school at Florida State. I was more than a little nervous when Mason told his three new faculty that during the week before classes began each of us would teach our first class to him as he sat alone in a classroom equipped for over 125 students. Although I was somewhat shaky asking Mason the hypotheticals that I intended to use in my first Torts class, he played the role of a student well and was full of praise at the completion of the hour. After that experience, my first hour in front of real students was anticlimactic.

Mason was proud of the law school he started at Florida State and worked hard to make it a success. The charter class was encouraged, cajoled, and made to work hard. He took a personal interest in his students. There were a number of students having difficulty in a course who were stopped by Mason in the hall, invited to his apartment for Sunday dinner, and told to bring their class notes. After the meal and visiting had been finished, the table would be cleared and Mason would spend the remainder of the afternoon tutoring. His interest in Florida State remained with him after he returned to Iowa. Shortly before his death, he helped with Florida State's application to The Order of the Coif. He was proud and happy when our chapter was awarded.

In his free time in Tallahassee, Mason tried to swim daily and liked to fish for bass when he had the opportunity. He talked frequently about his farm outside of Iowa City and looked forward to returning. He enjoyed seeing his orchard bear fruit and driving his well cared for tractor over the fields. Mason was close to his family. His wife, Esther, was truly his partner in life. He was a man of strong moral conviction and character.

¹ *Fred Harvey Corp. v. Mateas*, 170 F.2d 612 (9th Cir. 1948). Mason had visited the Grand Canyon and had someone point out Chiggers standing in a corral. Of course, the class was treated to a description of the mule.

The law and legal education will miss Mason Ladd. His personal traits together with his dedication, scholarship, and enthusiasm for the law serve as an exemplar for those who knew him.

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