

THE ORAL LEGAL HISTORY PROJECT
LEON S. FORMAN, L'39

TRANSCRIPTION

Jason Dymbort (JD): It is Tuesday, April 13, I am Jason Dymbort, for the Oral Legal History Project at Penn Law, and I'm with Leon Forman. Thank you Mr. Forman for joining me with the project.

Leon Forman (LF): It's my pleasure.

JD: Let's start with your childhood. Where were you born?

LF: I was born in Philadelphia, on March 28, 1915.

JD: You went to school in Philadelphia.

LF: Yes.

JD: What kind of student were you?

LF: Well, in high school, I was a good student. I graduated West Philadelphia High School and remarkably, I was a shy student. It is sort of surprising that I became a lawyer under those circumstances.

JD: What were your favorite subjects in school?

LF: In high school, I would say that my favorite subject was mathematics, and I did well in that. When I continued studying Calculus in college, I did not do as well. I gave up on the subject.

JD: When you grew up – the time period that you did grow up – was the Great Depression. What are your memories of that time?

LF: Actually, before the Depression, in the 1920s, my father was in business, he had a partner, and they were doing reasonably well, such that our life was fairly comfortable. But he made some very poor investments, and his business suffered during the Depression, the result was that our life became a bit more difficult. We had a rough time starting in the 1930s.

JD: When college ultimately rolled around, why did you decide to attend Penn?

LF: Well, I think that was more a matter of circumstances. Penn was local, and my parents were not in the position to bear the expense of my being away from home, and in those days it was more unusual for a high school student to travel to go to college. Today

it's quite common. Penn was an outstanding school; we're all proud of it here in Philadelphia. It just happened naturally.

JD: Did you like it?

LF: *Yes and no. I liked the fact that Penn had a great faculty and provided great opportunities for education. But it was so big, and it was so strange for me, particularly as a Jewish student that until I made some friends, I was not particularly happy here.*

JD: You mention that "as a Jewish student" it was a little tougher. Why is that? Did you run into anti-Semitism?

LF: Well, back in those days anti-Semitism was more prevalent than it was today and the University of Pennsylvania was filled with as much anti-Semitism as many schools in the Ivy League. It was difficult – particularly if you wanted to participate in athletics and other cultural – I should say and cultural activities at the school.

JD: The friends you made, they were other Jewish students who faced similar prejudices?

LF: Yes, yes.

JD: But, despite the anti-Semitism and the slow start, you must have done well, as an undergraduate, considering that you graduated in 1936 with honors. What was your major?

LF: My major was political science. I also emphasized in the other social sciences: economics and sociology. I enjoyed economics particularly. One of the professors in my senior year encouraged me to become an economics teacher, but I indicated to him that I had plans to go to law school because that's what my father wanted me to do.

JD: You were a member of the Pi Gamma Mu honorary social science fraternity. I assume that was for your involvement in the social sciences.

LF: That is an honorary society that students were elected to as a result of their accomplishments in the social sciences. I don't remember now what the eligibility requirements, but it was for accomplishments in those fields.

JD: Despite graduating with honors, I think you mentioned earlier that you weren't as good a student in those first few years of college as you were towards the end.

LF: That was true. The first few years – I was in the college, not in the Wharton school – and the first few years of college there were requirements in the classic fields of study and I had difficulty with those subjects: languages and English literature, contrary to my wife who is quite good in those subjects.

JD: Moving on from college, going to law school. A little bit before law school – although, perhaps, some in your family may have blown this out of proportion – you did participate in pitching with the Philadelphia Athletics.

LF: Well, as a youngster, I was always interested in sports. I spent my summers as a camper, at a summer camp, in the Pocono's, later was a counselor, and became a fair athlete. Not outstanding, but reasonably good. One of my sports was throwing a baseball, and the Philadelphia Athletics were world champions in 1929, '30, and I think '31. I graduated high school in 1932, having pitched for the high school team. My father had an acquaintance with some of the ball players, and arranged for me to pitch in batting practice in September 1932. I enjoyed the experience, although I was scared to death. Somebody passed word to me later, and ask me why I didn't come back. I took that as a complement, but said that I intended to go to law school.

JD: Did you play any sports in college?

LF: I played freshman basketball and I tried out for the baseball team, but at the end of my freshman year, I had some difficulty with my back side and required surgery. I decided to give up sports.

JD: You mentioned that you entered the field of law in large part because of your dad; your dad sort of pushed you in that direction. What do you think your dad's motivation was for that?

LF: Well, my father was not a well-educated man. He was more or less a self-made businessman. He had very little education as a child. His ambition was to have his children get as much education as possible. I had a brother who died at a young age, and I am sure that had he lived my father would have wanted him to go to college as well. So it was my father's ambition that I seek a college education, and I think he had in the back of his mind that he wanted me to be a lawyer. So I got a lot of encouragement in that direction.

JD: Before he mentioned the law to you, had you ever thought about it on your own?

LF: Not really, not really.

JD: Is there anything else you thought of perhaps as a career goal growing up?

LF: Well, it's too long ago for me to remember that I had anything else in mind. I suppose it was always possible since I was interested in mathematics in high school that I might have drifted into the accounting field, but that was not really a serious consideration.

JD: Okay. So like Penn for undergrad, you went to Penn for law school. Why did you choose Penn Law?

LF: When it became time to select a law school – this was 1936, and we were in the midst of the Depression. So the expense was an important factor at that time. I was able to earn a half a scholarship to law school, so that made it a little easier for my father. I could take the trolley cart to go to law school. I didn't require dormitory accommodations, or any other particular help.

JD: Did they give special tuition breaks for residents of the city?

LF: I don't believe so. I don't think we were treated different than anyone else financially. The only help that we received was the half of scholarship that I had earned.

JD: Well, just like with college, you graduated the law school in 1939 with honors. Could you tell us what the law school curriculum was like in the 1930s?

LF: It was not as widespread as the law school curriculum is today. Back then the first year courses were required, and the selection of courses for the second year was not very great. Most students concentrated on the traditional fields of law. Today it's quite different. Today there must be 100 courses available in the law school. That was unheard of back in the 1930s.

JD: Was the curriculum rigorous? Were you working a lot as a first year, second year student?

LF: The first year in law school was quite different. I thought all the students in the class had problems. It was a different experience from college, it was more rigorous, and the amount of work was greater. We took, in most courses, one exam at the end of the year. We had no mid-year exams. It was stressful to wait a whole year and then take one exam, and have your grades depend on that one experience. But that was the way it worked. We managed to get through it. There was one other difference. Today the entrance requirements for law school I think are more rigorous. The result is, if you were admitted into a law school in the Ivy League, for example, the chances of your not graduating are very small. Back in the 1930s, of the first year class, about a third flunked out at the end of the first year. After the first year, you usually managed to escape being flunked for the remaining two years.

JD: Do you recall having a favorite class while at law school?

LF: Not really. There were some classes that I perhaps enjoyed a little more than others. I can't say that I had any favorite subjects; even bankruptcy, which I specialized in later in life, I really can't say it was a subject I became attached to while I was in law school. I enjoyed it, but I enjoyed it as I enjoyed some other subjects.

JD: So when did you realize that bankruptcy would be your preferred area of the law?

LF: Not until a number of years later. I would say sometime around the 1950s I became interested in bankruptcy. That was more or less by accident. I was with a firm that

practiced in that field. It seemed like an interesting field. Bankruptcy is an interesting kind of law because it cuts across all the other fields of law, so you have contact with almost every other subject in a bankruptcy case.

JD: While you were at Penn, you were member of the distinguished Penn Law Review and a member of the Board of Editors. Today, in fact, your granddaughter is also a Law Review board member. Could you tell us what the Law Review was like, and what your experience was like on it?

LF: Law Review operated differently back then. What happened at the end of the first year, the first thirty students or thereabouts, were invited to compete for Law Review positions. They had to – the competitors – had to write a little comment (or note) on a recent case that was assigned to them. Then they would exchange their comments to other competitors and critique the other work. In that way, the prior year's Board of Editors conducted a competition and developed scores for the second year students, those who were about to become second year students. At the end of each month, a certain number of the competitors were eliminated. Finally, those who were left standing were elected to the Law Review. Usually, about 15 or 16 students. Finally, there was a competition for the six members of the Board of Editors. That competition was conducted usually over the Christmas holidays and involved some additional work: writing a note, a law review piece of work. Based on the second competition, plus what had gone on before, the prior year's Board of Editors selected six students to become the new editors of the Law Review and to conduct the operation of the Law Review.

JD: So it was a lot of work.

LF: It was a lot of work.

JD: Was it enjoyable?

LF: Yes, yes. We made a lot of friendships during this period; we learned a lot that we didn't learn in class. The research work was invaluable.

JD: While you were at the law school, you were awarded the Gowan Memorial Fellowship. Do you recall this award and why you were chosen to receive it?

LF: That award was given to students who graduated from the law school and who achieved high standing. There were four Gowan Fellowships awarded. It meant that you were given an opportunity to spend an additional year at the law school for which you were paid a modest compensation. It was not only an honor, but it was an opportunity to accomplish further education. I had the good fortune to be assigned to the dean, who at that time was Herbert Goodrich and who later became a judge in the Third Circuit Court of Appeals. During the period that I was a Gowan Fellow, and was working for Dean Goodrich, he had to be away from the law school for periods of times to make speeches in connection with his campaign to become a Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. During his absence, he asked me to teach some of his classes of his first

year course. It took me about eight hours to prepare for a one hour class. That was quite an experience. One of the students in that class, sitting in the front row, and asking the most difficult questions, is now a famous teacher at the law school – Leo Levin. He was a first year student when I was a Gowan Fellow. He sat in that torts class. For many years when I used to see him after that, he would always call me ‘Professor’.

JD: It must have been quite an experience to go to the other side of the lectern, really, from being a student to being a teacher.

LF: Very scary.

JD: You’re less involved today with the law school, but you’ve been back at least to see the building. Is the building a lot different from what it used to look like?

LF: Many things have changed. The law school back then consisted of the building which sits on 34th Street, and partly on Chestnut Street. That original structure, classes were in there, the faculty offices were in there, the library was in there on the second floor. And that was it. The law school today must be three times that size. If I didn’t ask directions whenever I’m in the law school I would be lost.

JD: Today, you mean.

LF: Today.

JD: Today, now, you’re the chairperson of the Law School class of 1939. Still a few members of the class remain, and are you still in touch with members of your class?

LF: My class only graduated 93, 94 students. I daresay that there are less than a third of them living. Most of the classmates who were good friends of mine have passed on, and I sort of became chairman by default. There really isn’t anyone else left in the Philadelphia area who was going to serve as chairman, and the alumni office at the law school, sort of gave me the position.

JD: So you graduate Law School in 1939, you were a Gowan Fellow, and then you go to the law firm of Wexler, Weisman, Forman & Shapiro –

LF: No, that’s not true. When I was a Gowan Fellow, that was ’39-’40. There were very few jobs available, particularly in the Philadelphia area. Even fewer for Jewish students. I was fortunate through a recommendation of the dean, and also of a few of the lawyers who I knew, to receive an appointment, as a law school to Common Pleas Court Number Seven (they had numbers back then). So I worked for a year as a law clerk for three common pleas judges, and I enjoyed that experience, and became very close with those three judges.

JD: Is it from there that you went to the law firm?

LF: Then, from there, I received an appointment at the law firm that was known as Wexler & Weisman. It was a commercial law firm. It did a lot of collections and general practice. You must remember, that at that time, the practice of law was for the most part a general practice. There were very few specialists. There were a few tax lawyers. There were a few patent lawyers. Bankruptcy was considered to be a specialty. But other than that, lawyers did anything. They tried cases. They handled divorces. They handled workman's compensation. They handled accident cases.

JD: Was the firm big?

LF: No, it was a small firm. It was about maybe half a dozen lawyers.

JD: So it was, in effect, a lot of lawyers – a few lawyers – doing a lot of different things?

LF: That's correct.

JD: Did you do a lot of different things as well before you concentrated in bankruptcy?

LF: Many. I spent time doing virtually everything that a lawyer could do at that time. I did not think of bankruptcy as a specialty until some years later.

JD: At what point did the firm take on your name, when you became partner?

LF: Oh, that was many years later. You must remember you're talking now about 1941. This is the time of Pearl Harbor. I was married in 1940. But I was subject to the draft. Eventually, I was drafted into the service in 1943, until February of '46. So, that was a gap in my legal career, although I did do some legal work when I was in the service. When I was discharged from the service in February of '46, I wasn't sure what I wanted to do, and I did interview with several lawyers before I eventually went back to Wexler & Weisman. By that time, the firm was called Wexler, Mulder & Weisman. Mulder was one of my law professors at the Penn Law School, as a matter of fact he was the professor who taught me Bankruptcy law.

JD: What other positions did you have in the military.

LF: I did some intelligence work, which consisted of interviewing under subterfuge all new all new recruits in the Air Force, I was in the Air Force, were subjected to interviews for purposes of classification. Some of those interviews were to interpret the loyalty of the recruits. We had a series of questions that were we were required to ask. And I did that work for a while. Later on I was assigned to the legal department on this particular base in North Carolina. I was given the assignment of assisting other soldiers with their legal problems. Particularly as that base became an overseas placement depot, and that meant that soldiers who were going to be sent overseas were recommended that they try to get their personal affairs in order.

JD: When you came back from the army, I guess you went back to the Wexler firm.

LF: Eventually. I worked there for about three or four years, but I was very unhappy. I was doing routine work. I didn't seem to be going anywhere. And despite the fact that I was married with two kids, I picked myself up one day and walked into the office of the senior partner and announced that I was leaving. And he said 'Where are you going?' And I said I hadn't the faintest idea, but I am going to leave here. He was very generous. He said, 'Well, you can stay and work here, and you'll be paid as long as you want to, until you find another opportunity.' I did stay there – I don't remember how long, I think it was two months. As a matter of fact, I was offered a job in the legal department of RCA, which was then headquartered in Camden. I was about to make that decision, when I developed an opportunity with another small law firm where I knew the lawyers. I thought, well, I don't think I want to leave Philadelphia. So I called the general counsel and said I was not going to accept his offer. He said, 'Well is it money? Maybe I could get you some more, a bigger salary.' So I got a raise before I went to work there. But I decided to stay in Philadelphia, and remained with this other law firm for about three or four years. During that period, Morris Weisman, of the old firm, had conducted a campaign to try to get me to come back. Eventually, I did go back. But I went back as a partner. My name wasn't on the firm at the time, but at least I was a member of the firm. It's interesting. While I was away from the firm, John Mulder, who was then the first director of ALI-ABA, the American Law Institute and American Bar Association, Committee of Continuing Legal Education, asked me to prepare a handbook on bankruptcy, even though I had not spent a lot of time practicing in that area. But he always thought that I was a good teacher, he said he would work with me on it, and we spent several months preparing the book, and it became a best seller by ALI-ABA. They used it in their advertising, and students frequently bought it as a primer for their examinations in that course.

JD: Is this the Fundamentals book?

LF: No, this is the Compositions, Arrangements and Bankruptcy, I think it was called.

JD: Okay, yeah. Now eventually – so when became a partner at Wexler – over time it did merger with Blank Rome.

LF: Oh, that was many years later. I went through quite a long career before we get anywhere near the merger with Blank Rome. I eventually got into the bankruptcy field, probably in the 1950s, and started to do a lot of work in that area. I enjoyed it. Bankruptcy at that time was a specialty. It was looked down upon because there were a number of lawyers who did not live up to what we would consider the best standards of the bar. I made up my mind that regardless of what field I was in that I was not going to lower myself to someone else's standards. I also got a reputation as a good bankruptcy lawyer. Sometime during that period a bankruptcy occurred that involved the bankruptcy bench in Philadelphia. At that time, the process was for the judges of the district court to make the appointments. So I prepared a biography and took it around to all the judges of the district court, and sort of solicited their support for my appointment to that bankruptcy. One thing that I failed to recognize at the time was that politics played an

important role. I failed to consult with the political leaders of the city. The result was that I did not get the appointment, though I had the backing of the relevant committee of the bar association and also of some distinguished lawyers in Philadelphia.

But that may have been a lucky circumstance, because immediately after that disappointment, my practice sort of took off. I began to receive work from the larger law firms that did not have lawyers in the bankruptcy field at that time, and also from some of the banks. So my reputation as a bankruptcy lawyers started to flourish during this periods. I guess it was in the late 1960s – well, let me back track. In the early '60s, somewhere around 1960, I was fortunate to be elected to the National Bankruptcy Conference, which was a small organization of about 50 or 60 lawyers, judges and teachers, specialized in the bankruptcy field, who were an informal group that were available to assist Congress in the improvement of bankruptcy legislation and bankruptcy practice. That increased my reputation, and enabled me to attract more work. Wexler and Weisman were getting older. In the late 1960s, Wexler who had lost his first wife, married again. The second wife insisted that he move to Maine, which meant that he had to retire from the practice of law in Philadelphia. This was around 1970. And Morris Weisman became ill. So he had to retire. The question was whether the remaining lawyers of this firm were going to continue with this practice, and whether we had the nerve to go ahead without the two named partners. I remember we had a meeting – I was the oldest member of the firm at that time – the next lawyer in line was ten years younger. There was quite a gap, and a number of lawyers were quite concerned. I said, 'Well, look, we have an established practice. It's true we're new to a lot of the clients. But I think we can do it.' I encouraged them to go forward. And at that time we changed the name to Wexler, Weisman, Forman & Shapiro. And lo' and behold, the firm took off like gangbusters. We were highly successful.

We also had a fortunate development in the pension law. Congress had developed the ability of employers to create pension funds and profit sharing funds. A lot of states committed lawyers to incorporate it. We did both. We incorporated the firm, and we created pension, profit-sharing plans. Considering that our practices were flourishing, these were very fortunate developments, and enabled us to move ahead very successfully. This was I guess during the '70s, that there were some other things that occurred which helped the firm. In 1970, that was the year of the Penn Central bankruptcy. The petition for the Penn Central reorganization was filed one of the large firms in the city, the Dechert firm, had represented the Pennsylvania Railroad for many years. But they had no bankruptcy expertise in that firm. A week later, some of my friends at that firm called me and asked if I would become special counsel for that firm for the Railroad. We thought about it for a little while before I accepted that position. Because, as special counsel for the debtor, the work could only last about a year, under the law at that time. The trustees would have to be appointed for the reorganization. But my partners and I decided that the publicity and the experience that would we get by acting as special counsel for the Railroad for even a year would be invaluable. And that turned out to be right. The Railroad sent out a letter to the 80,000 shareholders saying that they had engaged the law firm of Wexler, Weisman, Forman & Shapiro as special counsel. That was invaluable publicity.

Also, during this period, Congress was working on a comprehensive of the Bankruptcy Code. The work was unfinished until 1978. But in the early '70s, and as a member of the National Bankruptcy Congress, I was very active in that work. I testified before Congress on at least two occasions in connection with that reform. There was another development in the business world during that period. This was the period of acquisitions and mergers. Companies were getting bigger every year. Personally, I never favored that movement toward bigness. But it was considered to be progress. The result was that the bigger business in the country were getting even bigger –

JD: Forming conglomerates.

LF: A lot of conglomerates. But what happened was that when they got into trouble, the bankruptcies were bigger. And the large law firms suddenly realized: here was a field which they had overlooked. They suddenly started to develop bankruptcy departments. We were, as boutique law firms went, fairly substantial. We were now up to 20, 22 lawyers. That was considered to be a fairly big size for a boutique firm. But we had handicaps, because when it came to handling the big bankruptcies, we did not have the talent and the expertise of the other fields of law. We didn't have tax lawyers, we didn't have labor lawyers, we didn't have anti-trust lawyers, whereas the larger firms in the city and in the country, had all that talent. So they were better equipped to handle the bigger bankruptcies than we were. The big firms, however, needed the bankruptcy expertise. The best way, and the quickest way to get it, was to absorb a bankruptcy law firm. During this period, we received invitations from almost every large firm in the city to merge. We resisted that for a long time, mainly because the difference between a small firm and a large firm were the perks. The small firm was able to develop benefits for its members which you could not do in a large firms, where there were hundreds of lawyers and they all had to be treated equally and fairly.

Eventually, as we reached the 1980s, that if we were going to get anywhere in the bankruptcy field, we had to associate ourselves with a larger organization. We considered one or two of the big law firms. But Blank Rome was the most aggressive in soliciting us, and eventually their solicitation won out. We merged with them in 1984. At that time, it was one of the largest, if not the largest, mergers of law firms in the country.

JD: Over the course of this period of time, as you were developing your sizable reputation in the bankruptcy field, were you representing more creditors or debtors?

LF: We represented over the lifetime of our legal practice virtually every interest in a bankruptcy case. We represented debtors, creditors, landlords, trustees – you name it. We had experience in every phase. I would say that our practice prevalently on the creditors' side. For the longest period of time, we represented mostly security creditors.

JD: Outside of your actual practice of the law, you mentioned you were involved a lot of Congressional-related activities, especially as a member of the National Bankruptcy

Conference. You were a legislative consultant to the House of Representatives in relation to the 1978 Bankruptcy Reform Act. I was just curious about the experience of testifying before Congress.

LF: Testifying before Congress is a special experience. You're in Washington, which is a special place. You are in the capital of the country. You're being questioned by Senators and Congressmen, who usually don't know a great deal about the subject. So you have to be patient. You have to explain the technicalities of the subject carefully and persuasively. I enjoyed the experience. I remember one day I was testifying before a group of, I think, three Congressmen. One of them was actually a minister. But he had a teacher at a law school. I think he was a teacher at Boston College. For the life of me, I can't remember his name. He was a real gentleman. He asked me a very technical question. I said to him, 'That's a subject as to which you really need to have experience in the bankruptcy field in order to understand what the legislation is about. And he said to me in a rather stern voice, though not an unpleasant one, 'Sir,' he said, 'I spent many years teaching in a law school, and you can explain anything you want, I think I'll understand you.' From that point on I was very careful about what I said when I testified before Congress.

JD: Would you describe the political process, to develop bankruptcy reform, as a slow one, as a sluggish one? Or is it careful?

LF: It depends on the period of time. Back in 1938 when the Chandler Act was being considered, there were members of Congress who had some experience in bankruptcy, who were interested in the subject, and it was a little easier to get legislation considered. Today, on the other hand, a lot of legislation, not only in the bankruptcy field, but in many other fields, represents special interest legislation. These are matters which certain groups that are in the business world, they would like to see legislation, and have an influence over members of Congress because of their contributions to the political campaigns. The result is that you get legislation that is designed to help a special group, but is not necessarily in the public interest.

JD: One notable case that I actually studied in my bankruptcy course – I'm sure a lot of students have – is the United States v. Whiting Pools decision. This case is an example in which the courts relied on your Congressional testimony. What is your impression of that?

LF: I was very honored to have Justice Blackmun, who wrote that opinion, to refer to my testimony in one of the footnotes as a basis for what he was deciding in that case. I don't think that there are many witnesses who appeared before Congress who have had that distinction.

JD: Just to give the viewer of the tape some context, the testimony that he [Justice Blackmon] notes is testimony regarding the need for a provision in bankruptcy law authorizing the turnover of property of the debtor-in-possession of the secured creditors.

LF: That's right. What had happened was that during the process of developing the legislation, the young men who were doing the drafting had overlooked this provision. I realized it and called it to their attention, and was also called upon to testify as to the basis for that provision of the legislation.

JD: When we spoke a little earlier you mentioned perhaps one of your biggest accomplishments as a professional is your involvement with ALI-ABA – the American Law Institute and the American Bar Association.

LF: ALI-ABA was developed in the 1940s for the purpose of encouraging lawyers to continue with their education, even though they had finished their law school education. There was very few bar associations, or other organizations in the country, that was doing any real teaching of lawyers, back in the '40s and '50s. But ALI-ABA grew and it grew slowly. John Mulder, who was the first director unfortunately died at a young age. He was succeeded by Paul Waldman whom graduated law school a few years after I did and who is a good friend of mine. And he called me one day around 1970, I guess it was. He said, 'I'd like to have lunch with you.' I said, 'That's fine.' I said, 'What do you have in mind?' He said, 'I'd like to have you develop a course for lawyers in bankruptcy, maybe in the field of reorganization.' I said, 'How long of a course did you have in mind?' He said, 'Three days.' I said, '*Three days?* You're out of your mind. Do you realize how much work that would be?' He said, 'No.' So I took an envelope out of my pocket, and I started to write on the back of that envelope all the subjects that would have to be covered over those three days and how the program would look. And he just sat their patiently and when I finished, he said, 'Look, you just did it.' That envelope remained the blueprint for the first program in corporate organization that ever was produced for ALI-ABA. It consisted of a comparison of Chapter X and Chapter XI, which at that time - this was before the 1978 Code –

JD: Which sort of reformed XI –

LF: Right, and defined X and XI. I enlisted a faculty of ten of the outstanding scholars in the bankruptcy field for that three day program and produced the entire program. We must have had between 250 and 300 in attendance. It was one of the most successful things I ever accomplished; I think one of my proudest achievements in the field of teaching, although I did teach law school.

JD: Additional achievements, in addition to teaching, your involvement with ALI-ABA, is also your publication – you have a lot of publications to your credit – but ALI-ABA describes your Fundamentals of Bankruptcy law book as a “classic text.”

LF: That was a – what happened was, when the 1978 Code was finally adopted, it made so many changes in bankruptcy law, that it had to be re-taught. The faculty doing the teaching, which consisted mainly of five of us, we had vast notes and materials that we had accumulated in the teaching process. We used those notes and materials as the foundation for a handbook on bankruptcy law called Fundamentals of Bankruptcy. And that's how that came about. There are five authors. ALI-ABA has just decided that the

next edition is going to be revised by one other, so the five of us will no longer be on the book. But we originally produced the first four editions.

JD: And you received a special award of merit from ALI-ABA for Continuing Professional Education in the bankruptcy field.

LF: Yes. ALI-ABA every year has made awards for outstanding contributions in the field of Continuing Legal Education, and I received that award I think the first year that those awards were given.

JD: Another award, more recently that you won, is the 2002 Dennis Replansky Memorial Award, which was named after Mr. Replansky who unfortunately passed away. He was a good friend of your son's in fact.

LF: Yes. He was also a good friend of mine. He was instrumental in accomplishing the merger of the Wexler law firm with Blank Rome. He was a great lawyer who unfortunately died at a young age.

JD: Also, you were recently asked to speak before a group of Bankruptcy judges in Houston, Texas, quite recently.

LF: Not yet.

JD: Not yet.

LF: That's – I've been invited to be on a panel to talk about my career this October at the National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges.

JD: The Biddle Law Library at Penn Law School has been developing a bankruptcy archive that everyone is pretty excited about and you were instrumental in making sure that it actually got to Penn Law.

LF: Well, you have to go back to the American College of Bankruptcy. This is an organization that was developed a number of years ago, for the most part an honorary organization, to recognize the contribution of bankruptcy lawyers to the field of bankruptcy. I was already, I believe in my 70s when this organization was founded, and was made an emeritus member and also asked to become a scholar-in-residence, which meant that they wanted me to prolong an educational program with the organization. And I did. I conducted an educational program for three, four years, until I decided that I had had enough and suggested that they obtain another scholar-in-residence. They did, and he's doing a fine job.

During the course of my activity with the American College of Bankruptcy, a committee was organized to look for a place in one of the law where archives could be created so that material which was being developed by many of the scholars in this field would be preserved for the future and not get lost in their offices and in their files. As a

member of that committee, I listened to many suggestions of law schools where the archives would be located. None of them sounded as attractive to me as the Biddle Law Library at University of Pennsylvania, because Penn already had an archive for the Uniform Commercial Code. It seemed to me that their experience would make it an ideal place for a bankruptcy archive. I suggested that to the committee of the American College of Bankruptcy, and it was adopted. The committee – the chairman of the committee – came out to Penn, at my suggestion, and the then-library Elizabeth Kelly, and one thing led to another, and the next thing you know the American College of Bankruptcy archives became located at Penn.

JD: Lucky for us. I guess we have – we just don't have enough time to cover everything, every aspect of your life – the last, concluding question I think that's appropriate is the fact that your family has been with you, part of the way, in your profession and practice. Your granddaughter is now a member of the Law Review at Penn; your son Harvey is now a partner at Blank Rome and was earlier in his career and practice with you. What's it like to have your family as involved as they have been?

LF: Harvey has been a real, a real pleasure to me. I never encouraged him to become a lawyer. He selected the law on his own. He went to Villanova Law School. When he graduated, I think he did some teaching for a year or two. I never encouraged him to come into our law firm – the law firm at that time was the Wexler firm. But he came into the office one day and said he would like to join this firm, as I said the Wexler firm. And I said to him, go to Morris Wexler and ask him for a job, which he did. Of course, he had no trouble getting it. That was his beginning.

One of our greatest partners in Blank Rome has been Raymond Shapiro, who was also a young lawyer with the Wexler firm. When he started his practice at the Wexler firm, he spent many years under my tutelage. We became very close friends. Some years, when Harvey joined the law firm, I said to him, 'I don't want to have anything to do with you're work at the law firm. I want you to spend all your time working with Ray Shapiro.' And that's what we did. That way, we avoided any friction as a result of our family relationship, and he got the best teaching that any young lawyer could get. Harvey has worked harder than any young lawyer I've ever seen, and he has accomplished so much that I'm proud of, that I – I don't think I tell him enough.

Now his daughter, who graduated college as a geologist, spend seven years in that field, is graduating from law school. This is something that we're all very proud of. She is doing exceptionally well in law school. We're very happy to see her graduate, and look forward to her career in New York starting this fall.

JD: Thank you very much, Mr. Forman.