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Dedication

ONE OF THE LAST BIG TIME DEANS

DEAN STEVEN P. FRANKINO*

THE *Villanova Law Review* requested that I write a few words in remembrance of Dean Reuschlein. As I thought of those syllables, “a few words,” I envisioned Harold—lips pursed, eyebrows raised—saying: “Steven, Steven, a *few* words will never do.” Modesty was not one of Harold’s failings.

The scope of my task is daunting. Harold lived all but six years of the twentieth century—and lived splendidly. It would be impossible for me to give his ninety-four years their due in this dedication. I will select a few of Harold’s accomplishments, which I can embroider with very personal reflections.

His biography is an American twentieth century saga. Nurtured in a Wisconsin German-French-Irish community, Harold was a part of the triumph of the American Roman Catholic community. He excelled at the University of Iowa, which continues to be one of our greatest state institutions. It is difficult to imagine Harold as corn fed and rural bred—but these are his roots.

From Iowa he went to Yale—a journey of cosmic and cultural distance. An accomplished organist and choir master, he worked his way through law school as the author of liturgical services in New York City churches. During this time, one of Harold’s distinctive characteristics emerged. The Yale faculty and administration noted his absences from law classes and school activities. Harold, in defense, cited his personal genius and need as the explanation for his noncompliance with Yale’s positive law.

Years later, however, he was an adamant advocate of prompt and full attendance by law students. When I was brash enough to challenge his administrative and educational positions—on the basis of his own experience—he dismissed my limited capacity, noting the indulgence of the exceptional few versus a school’s obligation to regulate and inform the less gifted. In my mind, understanding that exquisite dichotomy is the key to encompassing Harold—the natural law of natural selection.

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What a marvelous exercise appreciating Harold has been. His opus includes eight books, twenty-two scholarly articles and eight book reviews—published from 1934 to 1991—fifty-six years of scholarly productivity!

To appreciate Harold as I understood and loved him, I would like to review with you his unique burst of genius during the decade of the 1950s. In 1950, he authored *The Schools of Corporate Reform*, and in 1951, *Jurisprudence-Its American Prophets*. In 1952, Reuschlein, Seavy and Seavy on *Partnership and Unincorporated Business* entered the main steam of American law school curricula. His book, *Statutory Regulation of Insurers in Pennsylvania* was introduced by West Publishing Company in 1954. Note the dates—1950, 1951, 1952, 1954—four books. At the same time came his greatest work. In February 1953 he agreed with Father Francis X. McGuire, O.S.A. to launch the Villanova University School of Law. On September 13, 1953, the School opened—realized in a record seven months. The School received accreditation in the shortest period ever recorded.¹ It entered the elite academic world with membership in the Association of American Law Schools in its fourth year *and* was recognized by the Order of the Coif in its eighth year—the first church-related law school to be so honored.

J. Edward Collins summed up this incredible period:

In no small degree, the prompt accreditation of the School of Law, its early acceptance into membership in the Association of American Law Schools, its being the youngest and first church-related law school to be granted a chapter of the Order of the Coif, its being housed in short order in an attractive and functional new law building, and its remarkably early and steady acquisition of recognition in professional and community circles as a builder of quality lawyers was due to the presence, foresight and indomitable will of Dean Reuschlein. He never laid claim to being among the great teachers of the law, but few, if any students of his would deny his impact upon them and his great accomplishments for his and their School. He earned the respect and admiration of judges and prestigious practitioners who visited the School as lecturers, as participants in forums and seminars and as judges in the appellate court competitions.²

The first Reuschlein decade witnessed an explosion of talent, leadership and genius unique in American legal education. The next four decades added richness, resonance and relish to the Reuschlein years, but the unique explosion of Harold's genius—his books, his articles, the creation of a new law school recognized in record time, his national leadership

1. March 1954; HAROLD GILL REUSCHLEIN ET AL., *THE VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW* 16 (1991).

2. *Id.* at 49.

in accreditation and legal education administration—occurred in the 1950s.

When Harold retired from the Deanship to teach in Texas, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* noted that “Harold Gill Reuschlein may well be one of the last of the big-time deans.”³ We can only add, “Amen.”

On a personal level, Rosemarie, my wife, and I have known Harold since we were engaged. He attended our wedding, and was there for the births and baptisms of our children, witnessed the realizations of our careers and the maturing of our professional lives. Our lives have been, in large part, a product of Reuschlein largess.

How marvelous it has been to have shared Harold and his outrageous, provocative and encompassing persona for so long. Dear friend, you were a wonderful presence in our lives. You were an exacting, stiff-necked and challenging leader. It is difficult to say goodbye.

Herr Docketor, Docketor Reuschlein, auf Wiedersehen.

3. *Id.* at 51.

