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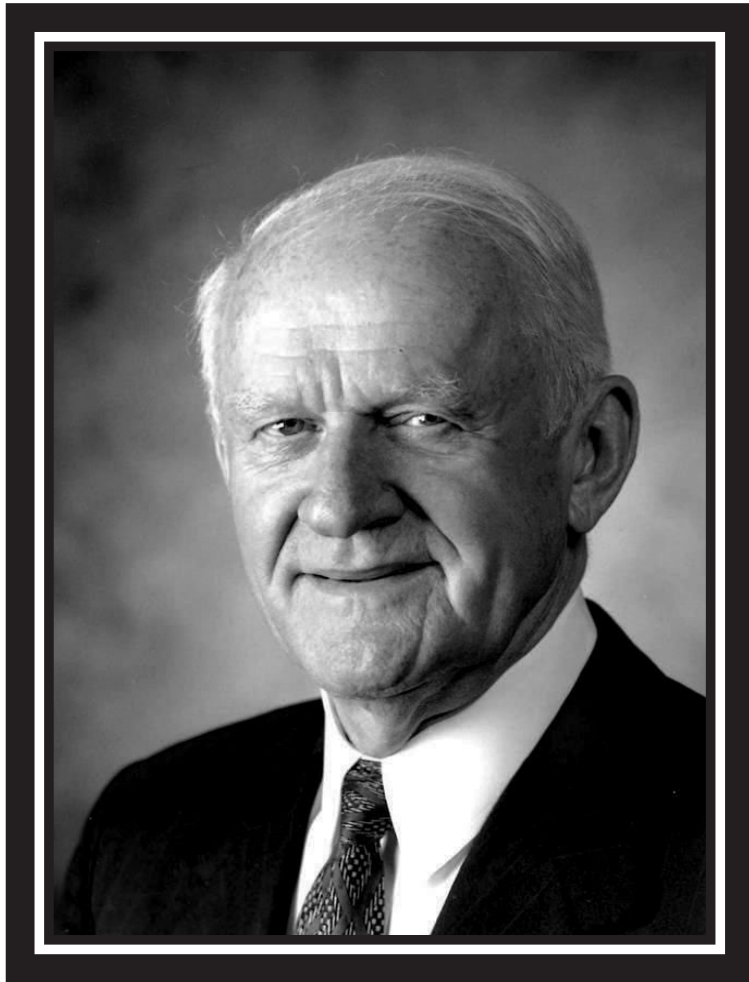
## William H. Bowen: A Tribute

### Authors

Lynn Foster, Joel E. Anderson, Byron M. Eiseman, John Gill, Chuck Goldner, Kenneth S. Gould, Charles E. Hathaway, James L. "Skip" Rutherford, and Bill Clinton

# WILLIAM H. BOWEN

1923-2014



## INTRODUCTION: A MAN OF MANY TALENTS

William H. Bowen—Bill Bowen—served as dean of our law school from 1995 to 1997. Although each dean is unique, deans are often classified according to their strengths and how they fit within the law school structure. Bill Bowen was an “external” dean. He did not come to us by way of academia, but straight from downtown Little Rock where he had served as a business leader for many years. He was not a scholar, but instead used his substantial community ties to benefit the law school. After his tenure as dean, he generously donated the largest private gift ever received by the law school, and in thanks the law school was named in his honor.

Who was Bill Bowen? He was born in Altheimer, Arkansas, in 1923. Altheimer is named for a German immigrant whose nephew, a highly successful lawyer, went on to not only found the Chicago law firm of Altheimer and Gray, but also to create a charitable foundation that would, sometimes with Bill’s assistance, come to benefit the law school, as well as many Arkansans.

Dean Bowen once told me that his earliest memory was standing on the porch of his family’s home and watching the oncoming waters of the Great Flood of 1927, which inundated a quarter of Arkansas. After reaching manhood he, like almost all other men of his generation, enlisted and served in the military in World War II. Bill was a fighter pilot, although he did not finish his training until after V-E day and close to the end of the war, which must have relieved his parents, as the war had already claimed the life of another of their sons.

Shakespeare said that a man plays many parts, and Dean Bowen played more than most. After the war, he served in the Naval Reserve, received a J.D. from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville and an LL.M. in tax from New York University, clerked for a U.S. Tax Court judge, served as an assistant U.S. attorney general, practiced with the Mehaffy, Smith and Williams firm (today the Friday firm), and served as president of the bank that later became First Commercial. These positions are only part of the picture. Besides serving as our dean, he had served as Governor Bill Clinton’s chief of staff during Clinton’s run for the presidency. The number of entities on whose boards he served or that he headed—the Chamber of Commerce, Urban Progress Association, Arkansas Arts Center, Pulaski County Bar Association, and the Arkansas Science and Technology Authority, just to name a few—were many. He cofounded Fifty for the Future, a driving force behind the creation of the Graduate School of Technology, which is now a part of UALR and whose old building the law school occupies today.

Bill's kind, genial manner was a mirror of his true personality. He could relate to anyone—I remember the afternoon that my son, then around seven years of age, was at the Law School and Bill, then around 70 years of age, showed him how to make a squirrel call with his hands.

Whatever role Bill played, uppermost in his intentions was always the advancement of Arkansas. Many times I have heard him laud “ABCers,” those people from other places who had come to call Arkansas their home. I remember a series of meetings with Dean Bowen where we brainstormed about how the Law School could help the Delta. Unfortunately, at the time we did not come up with a plan, but I am pleased to say that this coming summer a “traveling clinic” from the Law School will be touring several towns in that region, offering legal services in places where there are few or none. It is a lasting regret that I didn't have a chance to tell Bill about the clinic. He would have been most pleased.

We thank the contributors of the following, who took time to write their memorials and reminiscences, subject to a very short deadline. They are evidence of how Bill touched the lives of so many. Also included is then-President Clinton's address from the dedication of our school as the “William H. Bowen School of Law.”

At the time of this writing, his office on the fifth floor, which he visited on a regular basis until recently, still displays his name beside the door. In my mind's eye I can see him still, sitting erect behind his desk and welcoming a guest with a smile.

We will miss him.

*Lynn Foster*  
*Arkansas Bar Foundation Professor of Law*  
*UALR William H. Bowen School of Law*

## TRIBUTE TO BILL BOWEN

The first time I had a conversation with Bill Bowen, he was president of Commercial National Bank and I was a junior faculty member at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. I interviewed him in his office as part of a research project. We found common ground in his humble upbringing at Altheimer and mine at Swifton. A great-uncle of mine had been his childhood physician in Altheimer. A few days after that first meeting, I was surprised to receive a letter from him telling me that he had determined that I did not have any kind of account at Commercial National Bank. He urged me to correct that and listed all the CNB locations.

It was such a pleasure to get to know him better after he became a member of the UALR Board of Visitors. A very intelligent and competitive man, he was always good humored, articulate, and frank. I always enjoyed a conversation with him. Always a gentleman, he had a presence about him that I admired. I do not recall ever receiving a second letter from him, but from time to time I did receive short, hand-written notes on a news clipping or something else he had read.

In a remarkable turn of events, two decades after we first talked in his office, he ended up reporting to me when I was UALR Provost and he was Dean of the UALR School of Law. He was fascinated by Academe and enjoyed the opportunity to see it and learn about it from the inside. Although business leaders sometimes take a skeptical view of universities and how they operate, I assume we passed the Bill Bowen test.

I am proud and grateful that over many years Bill Bowen gave generously of his time and resources to this university. Our law school bears his name, which is fitting and powerful recognition of his importance to the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

*Joel E. Anderson*  
*Chancellor, University of Arkansas at Little Rock*

MY TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM HARVEY “BILL” BOWEN: MENTOR,  
LAW PARTNER AND FRIEND

In March 1964, I was sitting in the efficiency apartment that my wife, Carol, and I occupied in New York City where I was a student pursuing a Master of Laws in Taxation degree from New York University and was meditating on future employment. Carol grew up in Northwest Arkansas while I grew up in East Tennessee, and we hoped to find employment somewhere in between. By chance, I sent out several letters of inquiry including one to the Little Rock firm of Smith, Williams, Friday & Bowen (now Friday, Eldredge & Clark). Soon afterwards I received a response from Bill Bowen who suggested that he come to New York for an interview in early April.

You could say that “The rest is history,” but there was an interesting development. On the evening Bill was to visit with me, I had a class under Professor Gerald Wallace, the founder of the NYU tax program and a former professor of Bill’s in 1949. We agreed to meet after my class, but when Professor Wallace came to class he had a well-dressed stranger with him whom he soon introduced to me as Bill Bowen. As Bill was about to depart from the classroom following the introduction, Professor Wallace said “Bowen, you sit in the back of the class and maybe you’ll learn something new.” Without hesitating, Bill headed to the back of the room and soon afterwards Professor Wallace began an interrogation of me sitting on the front row. He thoroughly enjoyed his advantageous position for some fifty minutes until the class ended. It felt like I had been in a sweatbox, and left me wondering if I had just blown my employment opportunity. After class, I found out that Bill sat down for about three minutes and was gone. Professor Wallace obviously had a bit of fun at my expense and then proceeded to give me a good recommendation. Then it was safe to say “The rest is history.”

On September 10, 1964, I reported for work at the firm and began a relationship with Bill that lasted over a half century both as lawyers practicing together until 1971 and thereafter as friends. He was my mentor from the start and taught me daily how to deal with people, an art that he had fully developed. Bill wasted no time involving me with one of his leading clients, the Arkansas Bankers Association. On my second day at work he invited me to go with him to visit with (he preferred “visit with” to “meet with”) an Association Committee composed of former bank presidents and discuss some proposed banking legislation. He handed me a draft of the bill on the way to the visit and I read it as best I could as we walked the alleys of downtown Little Rock (he preferred alleys to sidewalks) to the “visiting” place. About ten minutes into the meeting, he excused himself for thirty minutes to deal with an unexpected matter, but assured the Committee that I

could respond to any questions they might have. Fortunately the Committee members were considerate of a young lawyer and all went well, but there was a lesson learned: the Boy Scout motto “Be Prepared” had a very important application to the law practice.

Bill was an excellent communicator and very knowledgeable regarding tax law, but we had a communication problem when discussing the Internal Revenue Code. When Bill attended NYU, the Code of 1939 was in effect. Shortly after he graduated, Congress enacted the 1954 Code, which I had learned, but Bill had been too busy to focus on it. The Code sections had been renumbered and many substantially revised. Thus, when one of us referred to a Code section it was as if we were speaking to each other in different languages.

Seven years after I began my law firm experience, William J. Smith, the managing partner of the firm, called a meeting of all partners one afternoon at which time it was announced that Bill was leaving to become president of Commercial National Bank. It was truly a bombshell and left me wondering what life would be like without my great mentor. Looking back, his departure was a fantastic opportunity, namely getting a leadership role at the firm at any early age and still having the ability to share experiences with him during the forty-three years that followed.

Bill was not a simple person in any respect, other than driving his Oldsmobiles until they would no longer run. Instead he was multi-faceted and well-rounded. The persons I found him to be are as follows:

1. Bill Bowen, the lawyer. Following his graduation from the University of Arkansas School of Law, Bill continued his academic career by attending NYU. Afterwards he became a clerk to Judge Bolon B. Turner of the U.S. Tax Court, a native Arkansan. His next job was employment with the Tax Division of the Department of Justice traveling around the country winning tax cases for the government many of which appeared to be losers. His successes distinguished him in the eyes of his immediate superior, Charles Mehaffy, who happened to be the brother of Pat Mehaffy, the original managing partner of our firm then known as Mehaffy, Smith & Williams. Charles Mehaffy contacted his brother, Pat, and told him the firm needed to hire a boy named Bowen from Altheimer who was the brightest star in tax litigation matters for the government. Bill reported to work in 1954 and soon began his legendary career in Arkansas. He became a name partner in 1962 and was one of the most successful lawyers in the state. On separate occasions he successfully represented two Hot Springs lawyers accused of criminal tax evasion and several well-known Arkansas families in civil tax disputes. In each instance, criminal and civil, the jury was out only a few minutes and Bill was established as one of Arkansas’s foremost tax practitioners and litigators. One of my most memorable experiences with Bill was my first trip to St. Louis to present oral arguments on a tax case that we had



won in Federal District Court and the government had appealed to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals. Bill could do things off the seat of his pants better than anyone I have ever known, and he had focused very little on our presentation. On the way to the courthouse he advised me that I was to make the leadoff argument and then he would summarize our position. When asked by the presiding judge of a three-judge panel who would be making the taxpayer's argument he proceeded to say I would go first and that he would follow. Chief Judge Martin Van Oosterhout, the presider, pointed out that normally only one attorney would make the argument, but acceded to Bill's request. I took the first twenty minutes of the allotted thirty and then Bill took over. The bell rang at the twenty-nine minute mark indicating our time was almost up. Bill, with no hesitation, quickly advised the Court that he had some very important points yet to share with the Court and that he would likely need a few extra minutes. After the Chief Judge glanced at his fellow panelists, he shrugged his shoulders and said "Very well, Mr. Bowen." Bill was never inhibited in making a request or taking an action that he believed would benefit his client.

2. Bill Bowen, the banker. In 1971 Bill left the law firm to become president of Commercial National Bank with the understanding that he would soon become its CEO. Upon his promotion to CEO, he soon created a National Advisory Board composed of native Arkansans who had enjoyed successful careers elsewhere and later proposed a merger of Commercial with First National Bank that was consummated in 1983 with Bill emerging as the CEO of the successor institution known as First Commercial Bank. Following the merger, Bill became the architect and engineer of the state's largest banking system as First Commercial, under Bill's guidance, began an acquisition of banks in several of the major cities of Arkansas. Bill guided First Commercial until 1990 when he stepped down a few years before First Commercial was acquired by Regions Bank of Birmingham. One of the best stories about Bill's tenure at First Commercial was his hiring of former Governor Frank White who had defeated Bill Clinton for governor in 1980. On the date of the announcement of Frank's hiring, then Governor Clinton was speaking at a meeting of the Greater Little Rock Chamber of Commerce. During his address, Governor Clinton could not resist noting the new employer-employee relationship and commented that the thirty-story First Commercial Building might not be large enough to house the egos of both Bowen and White.

3. Bill Bowen, the justice. In early 2010 at the age of eighty-six years, Bill was named by Governor Mike Beebe to serve as a justice on the Arkansas Supreme Court to complete the unexpired term of Justice Annabelle Imber Tuck who had earlier resigned. Justice Bowen was soon assigned his first case by Chief Justice Jim Hannah and given a stack of briefs and supporting documents that in his eyes appeared to be at least two feet tall. Jus-

time Bowen did not sleep well for a few nights as he fretted over “What have I gotten myself into?” A health issue arose and Bill decided that he needed to let someone younger, but likely less wise, assume his position on the Court.

4. Bill Bowen, the churchman. Bill was a devout Methodist from his early childhood until his death. During the last sixty years of his life, he was a pillar of Little Rock’s First United Methodist Church where his involvement included serving as the teacher of the Bill Bowen Sunday School Class (later the Bowen-Cabe Class) for twenty-five years. Bill was a regular attendee and was present for both Sunday School and church service on November 9, three days before his demise. He was very close to the pastors of the church over the years and stayed in touch with them by phone and letters giving them encouragement and occasionally a little constructive guidance on how to do their job.

5. Bill Bowen, the politician. If ever there was a so-called “yellow-dog” Democrat, Bill fit the billing. He was truly (maybe terribly) loyal to the party and was supportive of its candidates and platforms over the years. When he went to vote in a general election he simply looked for the candidate with (D) beside the name. Bill would love to have been governor of Arkansas, but somehow the time was never right for him to seek the office. What a governor he would have been with his energy, insights, charisma and capacity! He and Bill Clinton were very similar personalities and I believe he saw himself as “almost governor” as he developed very close ties to Governor Clinton. It was one of the greatest days of his life when Governor Clinton named him as chief-of-staff while he pursued the presidency in 1992. In a roundabout way, Bill Bowen had become governor of Arkansas, a dream come true. As an example of his party loyalty, a few years ago Carol and I were vacationing in Avon, Colorado, a few miles from the Country Club of the Rockies where the Bowens had a vacation home. One morning we decided to take a jeep ride out into the hinterlands. We were joined by a couple, Tom and Betty, from Oklahoma City and as we shared information about ourselves and noted that we were from Little Rock, Tom quickly inquired “Do you know a guy named Bill Bowen?” After acknowledging that we did, Tom mentioned that he was the immediate past president of the Country Club, which had an all Republican membership sans Bill. He further related that he was amazed that Bill continued to be a member considering the heckling he received from the other members about his party affiliation. No matter the cost, Bill was not going to switch his party loyalty.

6. Bill Bowen, the educator. Anyone who spent any time observing Bill received a tuition-free education. As a lawyer, he knew how to manage, persuade, convince and even charm opposing counsel. With clients, he was *poetry in motion* as he sold himself to the many who flocked to him with legal problems believing he was the very best. His personal attributes out-

weighed his knowledge of the law, which was not inconsiderable, but he was not the type to spend many hours reading the law. Instead he relied on his amazing basic instincts to quickly and accurately analyze legal issues. His tax partners in the law firm enjoyed chiding him because when he needed to cite a tax case, he almost always cited *Ox Fibre Brush Company v. Commissioner*<sup>1</sup> regardless of the issue. Perhaps his foremost educational experience was serving as dean of the UALR School of Law from 1995-1997. Following his deanship, the school became the UALR William H. Bowen School of Law recognizing the contributions of Dean Bowen.

7. Bill Bowen, the athlete. In high school Bill was the quarterback (Can you imagine him playing any other position?) for the Altheimer Red Devils, a six-man football team. As an adult, he took up tennis as his major sport and his incredible competitive spirit made him an exceptional player as his opponents, including hard-hitting John Brummett, discovered. On a couple of occasions he made it to the senior men's finals in the Country Club of Little Rock annual tennis tournament only to discover that one of two people to whom he would never want to lose would be his opponent. The finals were never played, probably by mutual agreement.

8. Bill Bowen, the defender of our country. On August 2, 1943, Bill was called to active duty and joined the U.S. Navy ultimately being trained as a fighter pilot. Prior to completing his tour of duty during the spring of 1946, Bill became known as the Kamikaze Kid although he sometimes had trouble keeping the plane he piloted under control and never left the United States.

9. Bill Bowen, the friend. With few exceptions, if any, everyone who had the pleasure of meeting Bill wanted to be his friend. His personality was both winsome and magnetic as he exuded his charisma. It was commonly said that if Bill boarded a city bus in downtown Little Rock and rode it to Park Plaza Mall he would know everyone on the bus by name, where they grew up, and their political affiliation. When he exited the bus all would likely remark "There goes my friend, Bill Bowen." Bill had many prestigious friends but he also had friends from all walks of life.

10. Bill Bowen, the family man. Bill had the good fortune of meeting Connie Wanasek, the love of his life, while he was a law student at the University of Arkansas. They soon were married and became the proud parents of three children who have produced nine grandchildren who in turn have parented six great grandchildren. Daughter, Cynthia Blanchard, and her family are in the banking business in Russellville, son, Scott, is an orthopedic surgeon in Little Rock and daughter, Patty Barker, earned a law degree and has been a significant contributor to several non-profit organizations.

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1. 8 B.T.A. 422 (B.T.A. 1927).

11. Bill Bowen, the author. Bill's most noteworthy publication was his autobiography, *The Boy from Alzheimer*, which was published in 2006 and dedicated to wife, Connie, and children, Cynthia, Scott and Patty. A couple of friends had undertaken similar authorships and Bill was not about to let them get one up on him. His research was meticulous and thorough and his recall of events in his life was exceptional. While he was working on the book, I grew to expect three or four calls a week to help with details on cases that we had handled together. Needless to say, Bill was not inhibited when he felt the urge to call upon one of his mentees like Barnett Grace and me.

12. Bill Bowen, the wordsmith. Always trying to be a better, more erudite person, Bill religiously added three new words to his vocabulary daily. He first made sure that he understood the definition and then would begin his daily dictation using all of his new words as often as possible. He likely left many of his addressees in a quandary when they were faced with comprehending his message chock-full of rarely used words. He would also integrate his expanded vocabulary into his conversations and speeches.

13. Bill Bowen, the leader and public servant. In each organization that was fortunate enough to have Bill as a member, he rapidly rose to the top. Organizations of which he was not a member saw fit to honor him for his leadership when making annual awards. Many invited him to be involved on their boards, but he tried to accept only as many invitations as he thought time would permit. Included in his involvements were president of the Greater Little Rock Chamber of Commerce, president of the Pulaski County Bar Association, member of the Federal Advisory Council to the Federal Reserve, member of the Arkansas Business Hall of Fame, selection as businessman of the year by the Little Rock Rotary Club 99, named as Top Manager of the Year by the Arkansas Chapter of Sales and Marketing Executives International and the list goes on and on. When Bill had an observation on how our state, county and city could be better, he never felt constrained to withhold his constructive ideas and well-reasoned opinions.

14. Bill Bowen, the incomparable personality. Anyone who ever met Bill found him exceptionally engaging and few ever forgot his name. He could introduce himself as "Bill Bowen" in such a manner that his name would stick and then after a few words he was connected with you. The words that could be used to describe this incredible man are exhaustive in number. They would include the following among others: astute, competitive, ambitious, controlling, talented, impressionable, influential, personable, energetic, aggressive, charismatic, informed, intelligent, industrious, passionate, unforgettable, optimistic, judicious, gentlemanly, and honorable.

When I joined Bill and his helper, DeAngelo Mabry, for lunch on October 30, 2014, at our usual lunch spot, Restaurant Forty Two at the Clinton Presidential Library, little did I realize that this would be my last visit with

the man who saw fit to offer me a job and became my mentor and friend for over half a century, as well as the most unforgettable person in my professional life. When he had finished his usual lunch drinking his tomato basil soup and eating a few French fries doused in tomato catsup, he then announced it was time for his afternoon siesta. As we departed from our lunch he did not say “Good bye,” but said “See you next time,” the departing words of an optimist who believed his relationships were everlasting.

*Byron M. Eiseman*  
*Partner, Friday, Eldredge & Clark*

## BILL BOWEN: A MEMBER OF THE GREATEST GENERATION

The Greatest Generation is revered because of people like Bill Bowen. Knowing him up close as I did, I understand why America blossomed in the Bill Bowen era. Much has been said about the country boy from Altheimer, but what is overlooked is that Bill was a people person. When you have a people person as your Sunday schoolteacher, you learn a lot about religion. That he requested memorials to his church speaks volumes about the faith and interest for others that guided his success.

Over the decades I knew him, my fondest memory is the day not long ago that he accepted my invitation for lunch at Gill Ragon Owen, P.A. to show our appreciation of him for the many fine lawyers in the firm who were educated at the William H. Bowen School of Law. Bill loved every minute of it—seeing the results of his generosity in the comradery of young lawyers and regaling lawyer stories from an astonishing career. He was still teaching right there in our conference room.

There are many ways to measure success, but the most important in my judgment is giving to others. The world is better than Bill found it because his resources gave young people a chance to enter a profession dedicated to serving others. You see, his gift keeps giving. That is greatness for generations to come.

*John Gill*  
*Shareholder and Director, Gill Ragon Owen, P.A.*

## BILL BOWEN: ABB, ABC, AATW

ABB. ABC. AATW. Dean William H. Bowen once told me that I was an ABC. I must admit I was somewhat confused because, when I was growing up, “ABC” referred to the “already been chewed” gum that you offered to someone on the school playground. Bill, in his always gracious way, explained that I was an Arkansan by choice. In reflecting on Bill’s life and his many contributions and achievements, I realized that he can be described by two acronyms: ABB, as he was definitely an Arkansan by birth, and AATW, as he was most certainly Arkansan all the way. Dean Bowen did what he did because he loved his state and its people. Bill’s agreement to serve as dean of the UALR School of Law at the request of then-Chancellor Charles Hathaway exemplifies his devotion to both the law and to the state.

To understand the last sentence, you need to know two things: Bill graduated from the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville School of Law, and Bill’s name graces the University of Arkansas at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law. By the way, Bill resisted the naming of the UALR law school in his honor after he retired as dean—he did not believe he merited that recognition. It required several conversations with the then-dean and then-associate dean of the law school to convince Bill how appropriate it was. But back to why Bill accepting the appointment as dean of the UALR law school shows his love of the law and of the state of Arkansas. In 1995 it was widely held in our state that the two Arkansas law schools were not just rivals but, in fact, were unfriendly rivals. Bill recognized how that misconception was damaging legal education in his native state. I am confident Bill had multiple reasons for accepting the appointment as dean, but I know that he appreciated the symbolic value of a highly successful (my words, not his) graduate of the law school in Fayetteville devoting time and energy to the success of both law schools. As with all things Bill undertook, he was successful. His tenure laid the groundwork for a new working relationship between the sibling law schools, a working relationship that resulted in the betterment of both schools.

What of Dean Bowen’s belief that he did not merit having our school named in his honor? Any person with even a passing knowledge of Bill’s life knows that merit is simply not an issue. Bill was a successful, professional, and ethical lawyer; Bill was a successful, professional, and ethical banker; Bill was a successful, professional, and ethical educator in both legal education and education for bankers; Bill was a successful, professional, and ethical public servant. And Bill was a passionate believer in the importance of the rule of law. Bill’s life work represents the absolute best one can hope for from a life in the law.

Seventeen years have passed since Bill retired as dean of our school. But zero weeks passed in his continuing interest in and devotion to our school and to the law. Bill would call me, and my successors as dean, on a regular basis to check up on the school and see what he could do to help the school continue its constant improvement. I welcomed those calls—the calls always started by Dean Bowen saying, “Chuck, this is your good friend Bill Bowen.” He sure had that right—Bill was a good friend to the law school and to me personally. I miss those calls and Bill’s friendship. But I find comfort in the fact that Bill’s life will have a continuing positive impact on this school, on legal education, and on the state of Arkansas.

*Chuck Goldner  
Dean Emeritus and Professor of Law  
UALR William H. Bowen School of Law*



## TRIBUTE TO DEAN BILL BOWEN

Would that we all could lead as rich and full a life as Bill Bowen's. To paraphrase a popular 1980s song, Bill did it all and, to his immense credit, as his life evolved he continuously learned from and built upon the seminal experiences from having "done it all." Although in his early years the way stations in that evolution must not have appeared transformative, Bill's character of empathetic and compassionate concern for persons whose educational and developmental opportunities were less than his clearly can be traced to early events and circumstances in his life that at the time probably did not seem developmentally significant. To prove my point, let me cite a few of those early events and circumstances in Bill's life that were reflected in his essential character:

The 1918 influenza pandemic that claimed the lives of nearly seven thousand Arkansans, including his only sister; the epic 1927 Mississippi River flood that covered nearly fifteen percent of Arkansas in water, forced his family to move for two weeks to the second floor of the Alzheimer school house, and caused momentous social and political upheaval for all levels of society, especially for the poor;<sup>2</sup> the prolonged drought that followed the 1927 flood, destroying the economy of the delta farming community in which Bill grew up, including almost all of his father's farming and business interests. But, perhaps most significantly, Bill, as a forced witness to the impact of the state's Jim Crow laws on African American citizens of his community during those formative years in Alzheimer, developed a life-long empathy and compassion for those who suffered discrimination and lack of educational and job opportunities because of their race.

As chair of the dean search committee that interviewed Bill for the deanship of what is now the UALR William H. Bowen School of Law, I had the opportunity to witness Bill's empathy and compassion in action during several luncheon meetings with Bill. On those occasions Bill inevitably would be greeted by a number of people of wealth and influence in the community who were also dining at the restaurant. However, he would not entertain those greetings until he had spoken with the members of the serving staff in the restaurant buffet line, addressing each by name and generally also asking about their children, also by name. Only then would he turn to recognize and greet the other people dining at the restaurant.

Of course, anyone familiar with the Bowen School of Law knows that Bill most generously also demonstrated his empathy and compassion by

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2. Don't believe me? Read the monumental story of the flood in John Barry's *Rising Tide*, a real page-turner.

funding the Bowen Scholars program. Bowen Scholars receive a full tuition scholarship and are selected based on merit, need, and what they can offer to the student body. The gift was the largest in the history of the law school.

President Clinton delivered the keynote address at the 1999 ceremony naming the law school after Bill Bowen. Developed from those early events and circumstances in Altheimer, Bill's empathy and compassion were reflected in the statement as part of his remarks that he took great pride that a significant percentage of the student body was African American. It was my great privilege to have served as a faculty member with Bill Bowen as my dean.

*Kenneth S. Gould  
Emeritus Professor of Law  
UALR William H. Bowen School of Law*

## IN MEMORIAM

One of the most touching tributes to Bill Bowen and one that spoke to the breadth of the people he touched occurred the Wednesday after his funeral. As members of the Wise Old Goats, a long-time luncheon club of retired leaders of central Arkansas, entered the dining room set aside for them at the Little Rock Club, they saw a place had been set for Bill Bowen in his usual place with a rolled, black napkin and his standard Bloody Mary. The waiter who had known Bill Bowen for some fifteen years had taken it upon himself to set this place for Bill. It spoke to the fact that Bill touched the lives of all who knew him, from waiters to Presidents.

Bill was a loyal member of this luncheon club and attended regularly. It always brought me joy to enter the dining room and be greeted by him, sitting erectly in his usual place. In the past year though he grew exceedingly frail, his mind remained alert. Just when you might think he was not listening to the speaker, he would come forward with a cogent remark or question—always on the mark.

Bill Bowen was one of two persons most involved in recruiting me as the Chancellor of UALR. At that time he was essentially chief of staff for Governor Bill Clinton. He became convinced for reasons unclear to me that my past experience made me ideal for this position. He pursued me with all his persistent Southern charm, spending time with me when I first visited and then telephoning me after I returned home to continue his charm offensive and answer any questions I might have concerning Little Rock and Arkansas. He was a man of vision and he wanted me to understand that vision.

When I accepted the position and came to Little Rock in late February 2003 he immediately set up a series of five breakfast meetings for me with all of the leading members of the business and government community. These meetings with many of importance in the community were extremely valuable as they provided me the opportunity to understand the strengths and challenges faced by the region and allowed me to speak to a vision I had of UALR as a metropolitan university, an educational institution that could be a part of the community and not apart from the community.

He never missed an opportunity to thank people and to make them feel better. As I entered my second year as chancellor he wrote a letter to my parents expressing very kind thoughts about me. They treasured this letter from someone they did not know. I never knew how Bill got the address of my parents.

Bill was always available as a sounding board through the years and would prove very valuable to me time and time again. When the resignation of the Dean of the Law School occurred, I felt that Bill could serve ideally as an interim Dean while the Law School took the time necessary to find a

permanent dean. He graciously accepted the appointment for two years. It was during this period I finally convinced him to write his autobiography. Just this past week an acquaintance mentioned to me he was reading the book and how much he was learning not only about Bill but also about Arkansas.

He would eventually make a large gift to the law school, the most significant gift the university had received to that date. It was most fitting that the law school be named in his honor.

Bill Bowen added Dr. Mary Lowe Good to a national advisory panel to advise him on economic development issues relevant to Arkansas. Through the activity of this panel I came to know Mary Good, and she became the founding Dean of UALR's Donaghey College of Engineering and Information Technology. Again, the hand and mind of Bill Bowen played a continuing role in the development of the university.

He succeeded in every facet of the various careers he pursued—lawyer, banker, or dean. However, his greatest gift was making others feel good with his ever-present Southern charm. He was my friend and my life is better for him having been a part of it.

*Charles E. Hathaway  
Chancellor Emeritus and Donaghey Distinguished Professor  
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## BILL BOWEN: ONE OF HIS FAVORITE WORDS WAS “WE”

William H. Bowen, for whom the Bowen School of Law at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock is named, devoted a significant portion of his life's work attempting to elevate Arkansas's image and stature. Raised in the Arkansas Delta, Bowen loved his home state and was proud of the many contributions of its citizens and its native daughters and sons who lived elsewhere. At the same time, however, he was often frustrated with those whom he believed lacked vision, displayed prejudice, had a poor work ethic and who were contented with the status quo. Bowen, whose “to do” list was extensive and whose energy level was exhaustive, was not easily satisfied. A force for decades in law, banking, politics and education, Bowen never hesitated to use his vast influence and network to help shape state policies and opinions. He encouraged others to do the same.

Bowen second-guessed some (including himself) about what happened at Little Rock Central High School in 1957 noting the personal inhumanity as well as the long term economic and image wounds. He agonized about Little Rock's inability to recruit Federal Express. He cringed when Arkansans were described as “Arkies” finding the term backward. He grimaced about the book “On A Slow Train Through Arkansas.” However, one of his favorite words was “we.” He thought it was beneficial for Arkansas's future to reconnect with those who had left. In 1971 Bowen organized Commercial National Bank's National Advisory Board to produce a “critical mass of innovative ideas” for Arkansas. The National Advisory Board consisted largely of native Arkansans who had left the state and had achieved notable personal and professional success—Bowen was intrigued by those who moved elsewhere to thrive. According to the National Advisory Board's inaugural 1971 report, “[t]hey join the Arkansas members in an abiding affection for their native state and a willingness—if shown a way—to share their experience and expertise in helping Arkansas achieve a quality of life and economic well being that incorporates the best of their collective wisdom.” Bowen showed them the way.

From 1971 to 1998 Bowen convened the group annually to address and elevate key state issues and to circulate published reports about them. Over the years the Arkansas members included Charles Murphy, Helen and Sam Walton, Mack McLarty, Jack Stephens and Don Tyson—among others. John Johnson, publisher of *Ebony* and *Jet* Magazines, was the first African American to join in 1986. Dr. Mary Good became the first woman in 1987. Maya Angelou was added in 1992 and Ernie Green, the first African American to graduate from Little Rock Central High School, began participating in 1993. Topics addressed included state long-range planning, tourism, economic development, education, highways, and technology (copies of these

reports are available through the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies at the Central Arkansas Library in downtown Little Rock).

On October 16, 1998, Kemmons Wilson, the founder of Holiday Inns, moved that the National Advisory Board be disbanded because Regions Bank (formerly Commercial National Bank) was then part of a regional—not a state—financial operation. The group’s final report was “Streamlining Arkansas State Government.” At this point Bowen was already navigating at higher levels. His friend and former Arkansas Governor, Bill Clinton, was now in his second term in the White House. Through two presidential campaigns and six years in the White House, Arkansas’s national outreach and connections had far exceeded Bowen’s expectations and the “Boy from Altheimer” loved it. Like others in the late 1990’s, he focused his attention on the building of Clinton’s Presidential Library and the University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service. Having issued reports on economic development, education and tourism, Bowen quickly understood what this investment could mean to the state (though because of the proximity of the UALR law school, he favored Little Rock’s MacArthur Park as the location).

Always the visionary, Bowen saw the Clinton Family, the Walton Family, Clinton and Walton Foundation supporters and the Bowen School’s and Clinton School’s national and international graduates, in partnership with the state’s business, civic and educational leaders and their connections, collectively functioning as Arkansas’s ongoing National Advisory Board. Technology he knew would help make that possible.

In the twilight years, Bowen was an ardent supporter for remodeling and renaming the Little Rock National Airport the Bill and Hillary Clinton National Airport. Clinton National in his eyes was a major gateway for s National Advisory Board. It was also much more welcoming than the image of that slow train through Arkansas that he had tried to derail for a lifetime.

*James L. “Skip” Rutherford, III  
Dean, University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service*

REMARKS BY PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON AT THE WILLIAM H.  
BOWEN LAW SCHOOL DEDICATION

Thank you very much, Derrick, and thank you for your great speech. Mack, thank you for being here. I must say, when Mack was speaking, he was laying it on so thick, I had to lean over and pinch Bill to make sure he was still breathing. (Laughter.)

I said, Bowen, are you still alive? Is this is a eulogy? And he said, I guess if Mack ever does run for office, I'll have to support him now. (Laughter.) Chairman May, Dr. Sugg, Dr. Hathaway, Dean Smith, thank you for your wonderful comments. To all the elected officials and former officials who are here—Secretary Slater, Senator Lambert, General Pryor, Senator Bumpers, Congressman Berry, Mayor Dailey. To Bill and Connie and your wonderful family and to all of you here who are responsible for this, I want to thank you on behalf of Hillary and myself for naming this law school for Bill Bowen.

I was looking out in this audience today. There are hundreds of people I know by first name in this audience. I counted over 20 people who were members of one or more of my administrations as governor in some form or another, and many lawyers here whom I have admired since I was a very young man. But as a person who's spent most of his life in politics, it's somehow reassuring to me to know that this law school is being named for a brilliant man who spent the last 30 years trying to avoid practicing law. (Laughter.) And seemed to me to have succeeded in an outstanding fashion. (Laughter.)

Senator and Mrs. Pryor, it's nice to see you. I didn't see you all over there. But I want to say that by the time Bill Bowen agreed basically to make it possible for me to run for president—and I say that in all sincerity—I was profoundly concerned about what would happen if I were to undertake a campaign in 1991, and I wanted to know that the office would continue to operate and that things would go well, and that if I needed to make a decision or come home, somebody with enough sense to know would tell me and get me on a plane forthwith.

I'd known Bill Bowen for a long time by then. By then, for a better part of two decades, he had been a friend of mine, an advisor, a supporter and a banker. I remember, I had been attorney general about two months when the Arkansas Jaycees named me one of the outstanding young men of the year; I knew I didn't deserve it and I found out later that Bill Bowen and Mack McLarty got it done. So I'm still trying to live up to it. And, unfortunately, I outgrew the title before I lived up to it. (Laughter.)

By the time 1991 rolled around, there was only one thing Bill Bowen hadn't done for me: He hadn't actually been a full-time member of our ad-

ministration. And so I asked him to become the chief of staff, as Mack said. He actually took about an hour to agree, and that's a long time for Bowen. You know how he makes decisions. (Laughter.) But after all, I was asking him to turn his entire life upside down. But he did it. And he performed in an absolutely superb way.

From the time I set foot outside Arkansas to seek the presidency, I knew that the state and the State House would be in good hands. I never worried about whether decisions would be made in a timely fashion, whether anything that should be done was being done, whether there was some problem that should be brought to my attention that wasn't. I never worried about any of that.

And so I can honestly say, my friend, Bill, if it hadn't been for you, I could not have done it. And I hope you're proud of what has happened in America for the last eight years. Because your decision to be a selfless public servant made it all possible, and I thank you for that. (Applause.)

One of the things that bothers me is that people in elected office sometimes get all the credit for what so many people do. So I hope you'll think about that tonight, Bill. More than 21 million people with new jobs, longest economic expansion in history. Today, my staff gave me -- just before I came up here -- today's economic report shows that in the first quarter of the 21st century, our economy grew at a rate of 5.4 percent. That means for the last year, our growth rate has been the highest it's been in over 15 years. And that's an astonishing thing.

And I'd also like to tell you that I think my life with you in Arkansas had something to do with the economic policies we put in place up there. Somebody asked me the other day, when we passed the longest economic expansion in history, and everybody was celebrating, they said, "Well, what was the major contribution you made to the new economic policy, Mr. President?" And I said, "Arithmetic." (Laughter.) I brought arithmetic to Washington.

And you're all laughing, but you're going to be asked to decide this year whether to continue arithmetic, or return to some other theory, and I think we now have evidence with both, and I hope that arithmetic will prevail. (Applause.) And I thank you, Bill Bowen, for what you did to make it possible.

I'd also like to thank you as the President for your service to America in World War II, for flying the Hellcats and Wildcats, for waging freedom's fight. I'd like to thank you as a former Governor, for always being there for the cause of the education of our children, and for the economic development for people and places who were left behind in the 1980s. Places like Althemier and Hope.

And I'd like to thank you, too, for being willing to come back and help out this law school. And for the role you all had in deciding to build this



building here around the old university building, to make a contribution at once to tomorrow's lawyers and to historic preservation, and to the character of the McArthur Park Area, which is so important to me and to so many others in this audience.

You could have done something else with the last couple of years of your life. And no one would have been able to criticize you. You could have decided that after succeeding as a lawyer, a banker, a public servant and a public citizen, you didn't need to prove that you could succeed as a law school dean. But it is true that of all the people I know, no one embodies the continuing energy and imagination for tomorrow any better than you do. So I wasn't surprised when you agreed not to grow old, but to help the young. (Laughter.)

I told somebody one time that Bill Bowen made me look absolutely passive—(laughter)—and that I didn't believe anybody could possibly be as aggressive as he was and still be likeable—(laughter)—but he managed to do it. And I think today answers the question why. Because I always had the feeling that whatever he was pushing for was something that was going to be good for everybody else, too. And through a long and rich life, it's always been true.

Thank you Connie, for your friendship. I thank all the members of the Bowen family, for loving him and keeping the rough edges sanded, and giving him the anchor that every person needs. But most of all, Bill, I thank you for being my friend, for being a good citizen, for being a good man, and for being a very powerful example.

Ladies and gentlemen, our honoree, Bill Bowen. (Applause.)

*President Bill Clinton*

*Text provided by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library*