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Celebrating the Work and the Life of Bob Cochran

Paul L. Caron*

Bob Cochran embodies everything we hold dear at Pepperdine: a faith-fueled dedication to the well-being and success of our students—personally, professionally, and spiritually; a career-long commitment to ambitious and impactful scholarship, intertwining faith and law in the beautiful mosaic of his work; and a life-long devotion to faith and service. Generations of students have affectionately referred to Bob as “coach.” In truth, Bob acts as “coach” for all of us at Pepperdine Law—students, staff, faculty, and deans alike. We are all better scholars, teachers, workers, servants, and people because of his presence among us.¹

This festschrift honors Bob’s scholarly work. And properly so. As a member of the faculty, I greatly respected Bob’s scholarship. Since becoming Dean, my respect has grown as I have gained a greater appreciation of Bob’s work. All of the metrics used to measure legal scholarship attest to the influence of his work. To take but one example, Bob’s h-index is 18, which is among the highest on our faculty.² Bob’s faith pervades his work, as does his fostering of a scholarly community through, among other things, the eighteen Nootbaar conferences he has led and the books he has edited that have emerged from those conferences.

Bob’s influence at Pepperdine extends far beyond his scholarly work. Bob is beloved by his students. As Dean, I have the privilege of reading the faculty’s student evaluations, and Bob’s evaluations are replete with comments such as these:

* Duane and Kelly Roberts Dean and Professor of Law, Pepperdine Caruso School of Law.

1. FESTSCHRIFT PROGRAM 4 (Nootbaar Inst. On Law, Religion, & Ethics ed., 2019), <https://law.pepperdine.edu/nootbaar-institute/annual-conference/content/festschrift.webprogram.pdf>.

2. *Robert F. Cochran Profile*, GOOGLE SCHOLAR, <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=Ob-hvPPIAAAAJ&hl=en> (last visited Jan. 29, 2020).

Coach Cochran lives out the ethics that he teaches us.

Coach Cochran is an amazing human being and professor. This class made me a better person. Words cannot do justice to the way you and this class have impacted me.

This course was the reason I came to Pepperdine. I learned so much more sitting in this class than I ever will in church. NO OTHER CLASS at this school teaches Christian ethics the way this course did.

But Bob's most important influence on students takes place outside of the classroom. Bob's faculty office was right next door to mine, and for four years I saw a steady stream of students visit him. Bob spends an incredible amount of time talking with students about school, life, and faith.

As a faculty member, Bob is admired, respected, and loved by his colleagues. Bob has become a dear friend of mine during my seven years at Pepperdine. When I joined the faculty, I formed a men's group that met weekly in my home to talk about faith and the good and not-so-good parts of our lives. Bob was the anchor of that group, and the more time we spent together, the more I grew to admire, respect, and love Bob.

Derek Muller writes that Bob will leave an enduring legacy in law, religion, and ethics.³ But he will leave an even greater legacy at Pepperdine in the lives of the many of us he has coached through the years. In a *New York Times* article, Michael Lewis wrote about Shane Battier, an NBA player whose teams always thrived even though his contributions to his team's success could not be fully measured by advanced analytics.⁴ In a blog post on Lewis' article, I asked *Who Is the Shane Battier of Your Faculty?*⁵ Bob Cochran is Pepperdine Caruso Law School's Shane Battier, and we will deeply miss this great and good man.

3. Derek Muller, *Celebrating the Work of Professor Bob Cochran: An Introduction*, 47 PEPP. L. REV. iii (2020).

4. Michael Lewis, *The No Stats All Star*, N.Y. TIMES (Feb. 13, 2009), <https://www.ny-times.com/2009/02/15/magazine/15Battier-t.html>.

5. Paul Caron, *Who Is the Shane Battier of Your Faculty?*, TAXPROF BLOG (Feb. 15, 2009), https://taxprof.typepad.com/taxprof_blog/2009/02/who-is-the-shane-battier-of-your-faculty.html.