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Aman Reflects on "Page-Turning" Opportunities Through his Indiana Law Tenure

Kenneth L. Turchi
Indiana University School of Law, kturchi@indiana.edu

Alfred Aman
Indiana University Maurer School of Law, aaman@indiana.edu

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AMAN REFLECTS ON “PAGE-TURNING” OPPORTUNITIES THROUGHOUT HIS INDIANA LAW TENURE

*After nearly 50 years of practicing, teaching, and administration, **Alfred C. (Fred) Aman, Jr.**, took emeritus status at the end of the 2019–2020 academic year. Earlier this fall, he visited with ergo editor Ken Turchi to reflect on his distinguished career.*



Ken Turchi: *You've had a distinguished career as a teacher and administrator, but you started out in private practice. Did you always want to be a law professor, or did you come to it circuitously?*

Fred Aman: I always thought that I might be a professor someday, because of some very inspiring teachers I had in college and law school. I so admired what they did and how they did it, I thought that someday I might be lucky enough to do that too. But I certainly was enjoying my practice, which was in Atlanta and Washington, DC [at Sutherland, Asbill & Brennan]. Carol [Greenhouse, my wife] and I met during my Atlanta years, and we lived in Washington, DC, when we were first married. I was at the firm, and Carol was working in a research firm as an anthropologist. Both of us had taught at local universities in Atlanta and the Washington area, as opportunity allowed — and both of us enjoyed those experiences enormously. We were settling into our new life in DC when we learned about openings at Cornell University in our fields. It seemed like too good a chance to pass up. We were extraordinarily fortunate that it worked out for us both. So that's how we both began. And we had a wonderful time at Cornell. I loved teaching, and I loved my research. I felt very honored and lucky to be there.

My interest in administration also had its roots at Cornell. Shortly after joining the Cornell Law faculty in 1977, I was asked to be a member of the University of Rochester's Trustees' Council. That group was a sub-unit of their Board of Trustees. I was a U of R alum, but the Trustees' Council introduced me to the university in a new way, and also gave me a good sense of how a university is administered. After serving on the Trustees' Council for a few years, I was asked to stand for a term as a voting trustee at Rochester. Those years of service had a big effect on me, because it was a little like going behind the scenes and seeing, in some detail, the sorts of issues that academic administrators face, and how an educational institution is run. It gave me quite a good sense, I thought, of the role of deans and the relationship of deans to university presidents and provosts. I became quite interested in that while still teaching full time and enjoying life in Ithaca and at Cornell. There were other experiences that deepened my interest in administration — sabbaticals in the very different academic settings of Cambridge (England) and a stint as an international program director while at Cornell.

When I applied to IU for the dean's position, there were a number of other schools that were also engaged in dean searches. But IU really stood out to me because of its academic stature and long history of interdisciplinary legal studies. Through my interviews with Indiana alumni, law faculty, students, and administrators at that time, I could see what an exciting institution it was. I was also struck by the interdisciplinary nature of the university overall, and that, too, interested me very much. During the interviewing process I met [then-Chancellor] Ken Gros Louis — a remarkable person who had a gift for making people feel comfortable. I felt very fortunate to serve as dean under Ken — not only enjoying a nice rapport with him, but also benefiting from his unique combination of wisdom and enthusiasm. He was so responsive to new ideas, and was so principled in his dealings with people, no matter their station in life. And, of course, he could and did teach me so much about the university and its history. That came later, but even on first meeting, my impression of IU's distinctive character coupled with my overall impressions of the Law School made this seem like a leap well worth taking. And it was!

KT: *Dr. Gros Louis was young and dynamic when he came to Bloomington in the early '80s.*

FA: Yes. And he was so much fun to work with and so open-minded. And open to the Law School's sense of what our goals and hopes were. It was almost like him saying, as he often did, "Okay, what do you want to do, and how do I help you?" And so I felt very com-

fortable working closely with him – the university was very supportive. Even through the tough times, with budgetary issues and things like that, we could always figure out ways to keep making progress.

KT: *Did you have any administrative responsibilities at Cornell?*

FA: Yes, I did. Many people – including academics – are surprised by how much administration is involved in a faculty member’s portfolio, especially after tenure. So my administrative portfolio did thicken with committee duties in and beyond the law school, all of which I found interesting and did for the most part with great pleasure. One of them was Cornell’s international law program. At that time, it was a very small version of [the Maurer School of Law] LLM and SJD program, and primarily involved international law and international students. I began to realize, intellectually, that there was no bright line between domestic and international law. We all were increasingly living our lives in a more global, interconnected world, and it became clear to me that this was a very exciting moment in time for law and legal education.

KT: *Was running that program what got you interested in globalization as an academic discipline?*

FA: Yes, I certainly began thinking about those questions more deeply then, and writing about them as well, and finding colleagues in law and other fields (at Cornell and elsewhere) who were thinking in those directions. At that time – it seems strange now – the word *globalization* was not widely in use. Even after I came to Indiana, it was not a common term, but a few years later, it became totally commonplace and the academic literature around globalization just mushroomed. I should add that the prominence of international studies programs at IU was an additional draw for me, when I was considering the move from Cornell. Tom Ehrlich, who had been an important and highly regarded international law scholar at Stanford Law School, had become president of IU and was very enthusiastic and supportive of such ideas and directions. And because I had germinating in my own mind this idea of what a global curriculum might look like or what globalization might turn out to be, I just felt instinctively that it was important that I be in a school and university where many people were also interested in such ideas and directions.

KT: *What were some of the biggest challenges that met you when you came to Indiana?*

FA: There certainly were some challenges, but let me start with the opportunities. We were embarked on a more interdisciplinary and global approach to law and legal education than many other schools, mainly because our law school was very much primed to do this by the range of faculty expertise and the Law School’s connections

to the rest of the university. At Indiana it has been so much easier than most places to work across disciplinary lines and for the Law School to link up with other schools such as SPEA, the Kelley School and various College of Arts and Sciences departments, too.

In those earliest days, I suppose the challenge I foresaw was fostering the potential for those conversations and helping strengthen the connections among faculty and other schools at IU that would benefit our students by opening up new opportunities for them — particularly joint degrees, study abroad, new journals, and so forth.

New ventures meant new funding demands, and I understood that this would be among my challenges. I knew from the start that fundraising would be a major challenge, but it was one that I welcomed. Along with the help and vision of Art Lotz, the Law School's assistant dean for development, we launched the Law School's first capital campaign — among other fundraising initiatives. I found this side of the deanship deeply gratifying as an opportunity to help spread the word about the unique strengths of the school, and, on a more personal front, to know and work closely with the school's most devoted graduates. I have so many vivid memories of my conversations with and the help so many of our alums provided — far too many to mention here. I knew, however, that there were (and are) exciting things going on here that I know are not happening elsewhere. In the 1990s, legal education generally was becoming more interdisciplinary and global in outlook, and I found it very interesting to think about our distinctiveness, how to get the message out, and how to fund it in a way that would maximize our community's potential.

As I think about it, that's where my work as a U[niversity] of R[ochester] trustee helped me so much. I had developed an understanding already of how important [fundraising] was. And, of course, competition was increasing across the board in relation to both faculty and student recruitment and support. We needed to improve funds for salaries — they were extremely low then. And although we had some scholarship funds, we needed more to accomplish our goals.

As I've mentioned, we undertook the very first independent capital campaign for our Law School shortly after I arrived as dean. We had been involved, as a school, in other university-wide campaigns in the past, but never for the Law School per se. We needed new money to attract students regardless of economic need. And we had very few chairs and professorships, which made it difficult to recruit and retain faculty. Student

scholarships and faculty chairs and professorships were our main fundraising goals. Thanks to strong alumni/ae support, that first campaign was successful – and deeply encouraging going forward. [Eleven chairs were endowed under Aman's leadership.]

KT: *You brought some faculty with you from Cornell. Is that right?*

FA: They did not come with me, but I like to think that my own move from Cornell to IU highlighted the attractions of IU for Cornellians – Susan Williams and David Williams were law school faculty there, and Aviva Orenstein [Dean of Students] and Hannah Buxbaum [Professor and IU Vice President for International Affairs] are law school alumnae.

KT: *And you certainly groomed some distinguished successors to your position and in other administrative positions, including [former dean and current IUB Provost] Lauren Robel.*

FA: Oh, it was fantastic working with Lauren. She could and did do so many things [as executive associate dean], many of which I couldn't do nearly as well. So we were a really great team – I hope she would agree! [She did. Robel found working with Aman a wonderful experience. “Fred is a fantastic colleague and human being,” she told *ergo*. “I am indebted to him for demonstrating how to lead with heart, humor, and deep integrity. I learned so much from working with him, and I use those lessons every day.”]

And of course, Lauren knew the school from the ground up, having been a student here and then having taught here as well. I think when you come to a school as dean from another school, you naturally bring with you some new perspectives and there are new ideas you can try. But at the same time, there is nothing better than to be so fortunate to work with someone who really knows the school inside out, someone who can say, “That’s a good idea, but it may be better to try it this way and not that way.”

KT: *She was just the person to have there to tell you how to get involved and where to go for help.*

FA: Yes, for sure. It was just great, great fun working with and learning from Lauren every day. It was enormously helpful to me and the school. I felt very lucky, indeed, to have had the chance to serve as dean with Lauren.

KT: *What else would you like the readers of *ergo* to know about your experience at the Law School?*

FA: I so appreciated the creative opportunities to make things happen institutionally for other people. That is the real and most important reason to become a dean – supporting others in their goals through what the institution makes possible, and then broadening those possibilities. I loved the intensity and creativity of administrative work, the mix of planning and serendipity. But I have equally loved my time here as a

teacher and as a scholar. I have been greatly supported and stimulated by the intellectuality of this wonderful Law School and university and by the excellent deans that I have had the chance to work with as a full time teacher and scholar—Lauren Robel and Austen Parrish, and Hannah Buxbaum as interim dean.

KT: *Anything else you would like to pass along?*

FA: Along those lines, I would add that throughout my time here, the administration and the staff writ large has been so important to the success of this school and to us all. The people here — faculty and students, administrators and staff exude a certain ethos of kindness, dedication, generosity and tolerance. This truly is what makes this Law School a very special place. I sensed this when I first came here in 1991 and although the school is very different in some ways, this ethos has never changed. I felt it was such a gift, and I remember thinking, “Man, don’t mess this up!”

KT: *Well, you didn't. You kept it going and you handed it off to Dean Robel, and she handed it off to Dean Buxbaum and Dean Parrish. And we have all been better off for it.*

FA: Thank you. My time [at the Law School] means so much to me. I feel very fortunate to have worked for a school that I believe in so deeply — giving it my all came naturally. I feel lucky to be able to say that.

Alfred C. (Fred) Aman, Jr.

Roscoe C. O'Byrne Professor of Law, 1998-2007; 2009- (Emeritus status in 2020)

Dean, IU Maurer School of Law, 1991-2002

Associate Professor and Professor of Law, Cornell Law School, 1977-1991



Areas of Expertise:

Administrative Law

Globalization and the Law

Transnational Law

Accomplishments while at Indiana Law:

- Helped establish the school's reputation as a leader in global and international scholarship.
- Co-founded the Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies, an interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed journal.
- Published numerous articles and treatises on administrative and transnational law.
- Expanded the breadth and depth of the faculty, adding a dozen distinguished scholars with expertise in labor, environmental, constitutional, public health, international, criminal, and evidence law.
- Led the school's first free-standing capital campaign, chaired by **Michael S. (Mickey) Maurer**, '67, raising over \$20 million for scholarships and programs.
- Raised funds to establish 11 faculty chairs and professorships.
- Established the Distinguished Service Award to recognize alumni who have demonstrated exceptional service to the community and the school.
- Endowed the Alfred C. Aman Chair in Administrative Law in 2020.

Other items of note:

Prof. Aman has a longstanding affiliation with the University of Rochester, his alma mater, where he serves as a life trustee. He is also an accomplished percussionist, having entertained at the school's annual commencement party each year and studied with such jazz luminaries as William Randy (Cozy) Cole.