Tribute to Professor Sidney I. Picker Jr.

Michael P. Scharf†

A Tribute to an Institution Builder and Leader in Global Legal Education

CWRU School of law lost a treasured emeritus faculty member on April 28, 2020, with the passing of Sidney I. Picker Jr. And I lost a dear friend. I write this tribute both as Dean of the Law School and as the professor who was brought in to replace Sid when he retired from the faculty nineteen years ago. In his thirty-two years as a law professor, Sid left an indelible mark on Case Western Reserve University School of Law and its graduates.

Sid told me how he had hailed from a family of film producers. He joked that he was considered the "Black Sheep" of his clan because his passion lay outside of Hollywood, in the world of international law. Prior to joining the CWRU Law faculty in 1969, Sid served on the staff of the United States Trade Representative during the "Kennedy Round" of GATT Trade Negotiations and later in the General Counsel's office of the Export-Import Bank of the United States. From D.C. his path led to Cleveland.

Soon after obtaining tenure here, in 1976 Sid founded and served as the initial U.S. director and advisory board chair of the Canada-U.S. Law Institute (CUSLI), which is jointly operated by Case Western Reserve University and the University of Western Ontario. The story of how Sid convinced the Canadian and U.S. governments to provide funding for the creation of CUSLI is the stuff of legends. In 2013, the Institute established an annual award in Sid's name, given to individuals in recognition of outstanding contributions to support the advancement of the Institute and Canada-US relations. In 2019, one of Sid's favorite students, Francois-Philippe Champagne ('94), was appointed Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs.

In addition to establishing the Canada-U.S. Law Institute forty-four years ago, Sid also served as the first director of the Frederick K. Cox International Law Center, established in 1991 with a $3 million endowment from the Gund Foundation. The Cox Center is the hub of

† Dean of the Law School and Joseph C. Hostetler-BakerHostetler Professor of Law.

our international law program, which now includes CUSLI, the Institute for Global Security Law and Policy, the War Crimes Research Office, the Yemen Accountability Project, an endowed lecture series, a foreign policy talk radio program on NPR, three award winning international law moot court teams, the Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law, and the Canada-US Law Journal.

In addition to his activities at the law school, Sid had wide-ranging experiences in the field of international law. He served on the first NAFTA Chapter 20 dispute resolution panel in a case brought by the United States against Canada in 1996. In 1995 he served as a consultant to The World Bank on Russian legal education as part of a World Bank legal reform loan to Russia. He also served on the boards of such nonprofit organizations as the Washington-based SALS ("Southern African Legal Services") Foundation and ACSUS ("Association for Canadian Studies in the United States").

Sid was a member of the first American Bar Association (ABA) international trade visits to the Soviet Union in 1973 and to the People's Republic of China in 1979. He was awarded two Fulbright Grants to Australia, in 1968 and 1985, to teach and research on Pacific Basin trade and on East-West Trade. He served as scholar in residence at the Legal Resources Centre in South Africa in 1980 and he has taught and lectured at Westminster University in London, Universidad Gama Filjo in Brazil, and at the law faculties of St. Petersburg State University, Novgorod State University and Volgograd State University, all in Russia.

Sid was responsible for bringing the first U.S. Supreme Court and Canadian Supreme Court justices to CWRU Law School (Justice Potter Stewart and Brian Dixon, respectively, in 1980); the first International Court of Justice U.S. and Russian judges to the Law School (Judge Stephen Schwebel and Judge Vladlen Vereshchetin, respectively); and he organized the first National Security Law course to be taught at the law school by the then-sitting General Counsel of the CIA, Elizabeth Rindskopf, who commuted weekly from Washington to Cleveland.

In his later years, Sid and his wife, Professor Jane Picker, established the Russian-United States Legal Education Foundation (RUSLEF), which has to date brought over thirty Russian law students to CWRU, and hundreds to a consortium of other law schools. A three-page story about the Pickers' work with RUSLEF appears in the Law School's 2019 Alumni Magazine, "In Brief."

After retiring in 2001, Sid and Jane moved to Sanibel Island, Florida, where they continued to run and expand the RUSLEF program. In the recent alumni magazine article, Sid summed up what he considered the importance of the project: "In two or three generations, the Russian practice of law will be much different than the way it is today. It's gradual change, student by student, person by person."

In 2002, in recognition of his pathbreaking work on behalf of Russian legal education, Sid together with his wife, Jane, were awarded Honorary Doctorates of Law by St. Petersburg State University, St. Petersburg, Russia. They are the only Americans to be awarded such degrees and the only husband and wife of any nationality to be awarded such degrees in the almost 300-year history of the venerable university, which was founded by Peter the Great.

When I joined the faculty of our law school in 2002 and took over the directorship of the Cox International Law Center, Sid reached out to provide mentorship and advice. He cared deeply about the future of the institutions he had created and wanted to make sure that I was able to build upon his successes. In countless conversations during his visits to Cleveland, over the phone, and at his new home in Sanibel Island, Sid shared his wisdom about how to get things done at the law school and his ideas about future initiatives for the Cox Center and Canada-US Law Institute.

Diminutive in physical stature, Sid was a Titan in the field that he loved. I never could attempt to fill Sid's shoes, but he made it easy to stand upon his broad shoulders. And building on Sid's foundation, in the past few years, the Law School's International Law program has attained a top ten ranking.[1]

1. *See Top Law School: International Law*, PreLaw Mag., Winter 2020, at 51.