Richard Fox†

Picker's Wise Advice for Beginners

I first met Sidney and Jane Picker at the start of my academic career in 1968, when I was a very junior staff member at Melbourne University Law School. They had arrived there as Visiting Professors on their first trip to Australia.

With Jan, my wife-to-be, we helped them explore the features of our city and its surrounds. Our outings together gelled into a friendship that has lasted over fifty years. We enjoyed their home hospitality in the USA and we reciprocated in our home on their return visits to Australia.

On their last trip to Australia, in 2015, they did me the great honour of arriving here in March when I celebrated my seventy-fifth birthday.

Sid's interests in international trade law that brought him to my law school was very different from mine in criminal law and procedure. Nonetheless, that original meeting with him had a profound influence on my life for two reasons that I wish to acknowledge publicly today.

First, Sid and Jane were older and more widely travelled than we two, who had never left Australia. One day on that first visit, Sidney suddenly declared: "Richard, I have concluded that this is a very strange country!" I demanded his reasons.

"Well," he explained, "You Aussies seem to be more British than the British with your deference to Royalty; your retention of the British flag as part of your own national flag; and the powerful urges your academics, graduate students and performers have to get out of Australia to spend time in the mother country."

"So what's wrong with that," I protested. "Look at the World map, Richard. Understand where you are in the world. You are part of Asia, not Europe. Not Britain. *Richard, you need to get to know your neighbours.*"

It was an eye-opening piece of advice. Sid and Jane were not just Americans representing their country, but were also citizens of the world, and they were diplomatically teaching me that, as an Australian, it was my responsibility to broaden my vision as well. And all that before *Globalisation* become a common word.

Thereafter, my overseas trips always prioritised opportunities for regional travel to meet people in India, Thailand, Japan, China and the like. In the course of my academic life, my wife and I travelled to over fifty-five countries.

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Second, While the Pickers were still in Melbourne on that first visit, I received news that I had been appointed to a position in Canada at the University of Toronto Law School. When Sidney learned that I and my newly wed wife were intending to fly directly *East* across the Pacific *to* Vancouver and then on to Toronto, Sidney offered a second life-changing piece of advice: "*Take the road less travelled by.*" "What do you mean?" I asked.

"Go in the opposite direction!" he said. "Go West via South Africa and the countries in the north: Rhodesia, Zambia, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. Then to England before reaching Canada." That advice, supported by Jane, was based on their own experiences. Our acting on it produced a memorable trip. A perfect start to our marriage.

And whilst we were in Canada, who else but Sidney Picker would have invited us to cross Lake Eire to visit Case Law School with its friendly staff and surrounding attractions.

It was he who also assisted in my attainment of a Fulbright Senior Scholar Award to become a visiting professor at Case in 1979 and 1995 when I taught Criminal Law in conjunction with inventive and helpful Professors like Lew Katz and Kevin McMunigal.

The advice Sidney gave me to take a broader view of my place in the world and to boldly grasp opportunities and to welcome the chance to be different, is something I have diligently shared with my thousands of law students during fifty years of teaching and mentoring them.

Thus has the influence of Sidney Picker continued to spread, like ever widening ripples of his wisdom, across the hemispheres.

I am grateful for this opportunity to speak in his honour and Jane's.