

5-15-1997

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William Rehnquist

Sandra Day O'Connor

Ronald M. George

Armand Arabian

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Recommended Citation

William Rehnquist, Sandra Day O'Connor, Ronald M. George, and Armand Arabian *Tribute to Dean Ronald F. Phillips*, 24 Pepp. L. Rev. 4 (1997)

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/plr/vol24/iss4/1>

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Tribute to Dean Ronald F. Phillips

Others more intimately involved in legal education than I can testify more knowledgeably than I to Ron Phillips' success as Dean of the Pepperdine University School of Law during his remarkably long tenure in that office. Certainly the growth in eminence and recognition of the Law School during that period of time must be due in no small part to his efforts to attract top faculty and students. I taught a summer course at the Law School in 1986 and was impressed both with the calibre of the faculty and of the students.

But a lasting impression I carried away from my experience that summer was what wonderful people Ron and Jamie Phillips were. They extended every possible courtesy to my wife and me, and we came to think of ourselves not merely as their guests, but as their good friends. They showed us warm friendship that went far beyond mere courtesy, and I shall always remember them for this.

William Rehnquist
Chief Justice
United States Supreme Court

As you step down after twenty-seven years as Dean of the Pepperdine School of Law, one can only think of your years there with awe. You have given the Law School its rightful place in the Sun. The quality of life for the law students is superb—a fine faculty, a supportive and caring administration, and a magnificent setting. You have brought many intelligent and interesting people there to speak to and interact with the students. You and your beloved wife were a “dream team.”

Few people survive and thrive in the difficult position of Dean of a law school for more than a few years. Your long service is evidence of your own personal qualities of cheerful disposition, optimism, caring, and energy. You leave big shoes to fill.

May your future years bring you a chance to share what you have learned with others so they may follow your splendid example.

Sandra Day O'Connor
Associate Justice
United States Supreme Court

It would be difficult to find a parallel at any law school to the contributions made by Dean Ronald F. Phillips to the Pepperdine University School of Law. His leadership, his inspiration, and his dedication to the school have been truly exceptional.

As important as his contributions as a teacher and scholar has been the example set by his spiritual and moral leadership. More than any other individual, he has been responsible for that element of the Pepperdine experience for which the school is renowned.

I am grateful for the experience I have had in being able to work with him as a member of the Board of Visitors of the School of Law and am pleased that although he is concluding his work as Dean, Pepperdine's students, faculty, and administration will have the continued benefit of his service in other capacities. I wish him continued personal satisfaction in all his future endeavors.

Ronald M. George
Chief Justice
Supreme Court of California

The Spirit and the Soul

An institution of higher learning is blessed when it has a leader who establishes policy and selects the paths which lead to exceptional performance of its faculty, staff, and assembly of students.

Pepperdine University School of Law found in Dean Ronald F. Phillips the perfect man for twenty-seven of its seasons.

He administered well that legal temple on the hill, insuring that it was more than ivy and a view.

He governed the body which transfused the spirit of decency and propriety to all who would serve the jealous mistress of the scales and the sword.

His philosophy ordered the observation of blindfolded fairness and impartiality to all whose lives lawyers touch and influence.

Those who would earn the law's best rewards will, in days to come, remember fondly their gentle Dean of compassion, whose velvet glove gave assurance and strength in times of doubt and fear. That mental recall will be a lasting legacy to the man and to the blessings of his soul.

Well done thou faithful servant and God's embrace for all your tomorrows.

**Armand Arabian
Associate Justice (Retired)
Supreme Court of California**

What a rare privilege you have had to play the central role in the founding of one of America's premier law schools. From the selection of faculty and the construction of facilities, to the nature of the student body we attract, it all has the Phillips touch.

Among the many things I admire about you is the fact that you maintain high standards in all you do. Whether it be making sure that things are done right or dealing with matters of integrity, your values and personal commitment always shine through. I hope to emulate that in my own life.

My affection for your family, I hope, is known to you, and my appreciation for you as a colleague and a Christian brother is deep felt.

Sincerely,
Andrew K. Benton
Executive Vice President
Pepperdine University

Dean Ronald F. Phillips—A Tribute

Contemplation of the achievements of Ron Phillips during the last twenty-seven years in building the Pepperdine University School of Law can only be described as “awe-inspiring.” Without a background in law teaching or experience in the intricacies of law school academic politics, Dean Phillips—astutely directing the efforts of many hardworking individuals involved in the great law school enterprise—has presided over the creation of a first-rate school.

To be sure, the Law School’s physical facilities are impressive—a testimony to a felicitous location and wise planning, to say nothing of a proudly self-confessed fastidiousness for physical decorum—but it is the soul, the ethos, the heart of a profoundly “serving” professional institution that is the most significant monument to his work.

Stephen Gillers, a prominent professor and legal ethicist at New York University, was quoted in the *Los Angeles Times*, upon the announcement that Judge Kenneth W. Starr is to be the new Dean of the School of Law, as saying that he could not “recall [an] instance in which such a ‘world-class’ practicing lawyer was brought in to be a law school dean, a position usually filled from the faculty ranks.” It is certainly not that Malibu is “Baghdad on the Beach,” or mere serendipitous happenstance, that a legal figure as significant as Ken Starr would be interested in serving as the Dean of this Law School. On the contrary, the School’s location might even be seen as a detriment in building a first-rank academic institution, and it is surely the solid foundation that Dean Phillips, with the help of others, has built which will make possible an even more prestigious law school, with the appropriate nurturing and leading of people like Judge Starr. Without the incumbent’s work, the recruitment of the new Dean would have been impossible.

When one considers that the average tenure for most American law school deans is four to six years, Dean Phillips’ accomplishments are all the more remarkable.

Serving *de novo* as a law school dean is a difficult enough task, but “starting a school from scratch” is all the more daunting. There were major decisions to be made—shall we remain in Orange County, for example?—contributions to be solicited for a new law school which might never really get off the ground, faculty to be hired, staff to be recruited, a Christian mission to be promoted, and on and on until one’s head swims at the thought of it all. Somehow, with the help of his good wife, Jamie, Ron Phillips was able to do all these things, at the same time being a successful father, contributing member of the community, and church member and leader. And he did this for twenty-seven years!

As one who was already involved in legal education at the time Pepperdine Law School began, I was casually acquainted with Ron

Phillips and his work, but it was not until I seriously began to consider coming to Pepperdine to teach in the mid-1980s that the astonishing amount of work that he had done, and his incredible successes came more vividly to my attention. None of this *just happens*—this Law School was built “on the sweat of Ron Phillips’ brow.”

It has been my great privilege also to share another portion of Dean Phillips’ life, *i.e.*, his role as a churchman. He and I have served together as elders of the Malibu Church of Christ, where our somewhat unequal roles as dean/professor gave way to a relationship of peers and shepherds of the Christians in the Malibu church. Since in my hierarchy of life’s things to do, and without doubt in his as well, Christian work is even more significant than work as a law school dean, my observations of him there are perhaps even more meaningful. Ron Phillips brought to his role as a shepherd of God’s flock compassion, empathy, industry, love of the members of the church, and a realistic, hard-headed approach to decision-making that served his fellow Christians well. And, one has only to observe Dean Phillips’ work with the school to conclude that “rule one on page one,” for him, was always to maintain the Christian mission of the Law School, in the context of a rigorous, yet sensitive and caring, academic atmosphere.

All of us are looking forward to the splendid work that Ron Phillips will do in fund-raising for the university in the days to come, and so it is a great joy to realize that he will not be retiring but will continue to be a vital member of the larger Pepperdine and School of Law community. I began my law school teaching career well over thirty years ago, and in that time there are only two or three people that I have encountered in legal education who could legitimately be characterized as “giants.” Ron Phillips is one of them, and every member of the Pepperdine School of Law community, past, present, and future, owes (or will owe) him a huge debt of gratitude. Nothing in the world is so pleasant as to observe a life well-lived, and all of us who have worked with Ron Phillips, or watched him work, have been beneficiaries of that great privilege.

W. Harold Bigham
Professor of Law
Pepperdine University School of Law

Thank you for your invitation to pay tribute to Dean Ronald F. Phillips for his twenty-seven years of service as Dean of the Pepperdine University School of Law. Although I could write many words in praise of Ron Phillips, I will only comment on those attributes of his character and service that come immediately to mind.

When I think of Ron Phillips and his contribution to legal education, I think of vision, discipline, order, and commitment. Ron's *vision* of a law school of distinction at a time when the School was an unaccredited, store-front operation was the foundation for what should stand as one of the great achievements of American legal education in the 20th century. Ron's vision came to a reality in large part because of the extraordinary *discipline* to which he subjected his life and the life of the School. Paying attention to business every day, every year, and every decade was the price paid for excellence. Closely allied was Ron's sense of *order*. The details, and Ron's insistence upon excellence and diligence in dealing with each one of them, have been the building blocks of this great school. Finally, Ron's *commitment* to the highest standards of professional, ethical and Christian behavior have been incarnated in the school he loves. Ron is not merely a professional or a technician. Rather, he is a man made in God's image who is convinced that he is doing God's good work.

Thomas G. Bost
Latham & Watkins

For the past twenty-seven years, you have given your energy, talents, and wisdom to Pepperdine, and for this you are deserving of high praise and commendation.

As a result of your leadership, Pepperdine Law School has attained an outstanding reputation and continues to make a meaningful contribution to our legal system and to our society.

In addition, you have served all of the people of California by serving as a distinguished member of the Commission of Uniform State Laws. You have been a dedicated member and have carried out your duties in an exemplary manner.

I look forward to our continued relationship and friendship.

Please accept my congratulations on your past achievements and my best wishes for a future filled with good health and happiness.

Sincerely,
George Deukmejian
Governor of California
1983-1991

Ronald F. Phillips—A “Neat” Dean

Several years ago I was on the “roast” program for an informal dinner honoring Ron Phillips. I placed a small picture of him by the word “neat” in my desk dictionary. I planned to include in my remarks a reference to the effect that when I looked up the word “neat” in the dictionary I found a picture of Ron Phillips. Due to some circumstance that I do not recall, the dinner was canceled, but the picture of Ron is still in my dictionary opposite the word “neat.”

My theme for these comments is Ron Phillips as a “neat” law school dean. In his welcoming remarks to incoming first-year law school students, he sometimes shows them his “neatest camper” badge he won as a young boy at a summer camp. “Inside” faculty humor at the law school often involves the Dean’s appreciation for “neatness”—which includes cleanliness and orderliness. We sometimes say “a neat law school is a great law school.” Pepperdine University School of Law is a great law school, but its greatness is not limited to the impeccable housekeeping and neatness of the Odell McConnell Law Center.

But back to the dictionary. The word “neat” has its origins in words meaning “to shine” and “beautiful.” The beautiful and functional law school building is due in a major way to the dreams and demanding standards that constantly guided Ron Phillips in the design and construction of the building.

There are many other words used in the dictionary in regard to “neat.” We find “precise and systematic” and “marked by skill and ingenuity.” All of these words and concepts seem to fit the Herculean efforts of Dean Phillips in leading the School of Law from a small and little known school located in rented quarters to a nationally recognized and accredited law school housed in what many knowledgeable persons regard as the most beautiful and functional law school building in the nation.

In addition to his skill and ingenuity, the hard and constant efforts of Ron Phillips made possible the remarkable progress of the School of Law. It is easy to take for granted the school’s present prestige and achievements. I was privileged to serve for several years as Assistant and Associate Dean, both when the school was in Orange County and in Malibu. Because of this experience, I was an intimate witness to the infatigable labors of Dean Phillips as he worked to advance the law school. His was not an easy assignment. It was difficult and must have seemed impossible to many. The mediocre and ordinary were never accepted as goals by Dean Phillips.

Another definition of “neat” is “manifesting care.” He cared. He cared about the students and he cared that each year be a milestone in the development of the school. This unending care and his diligent efforts made the school move forward. Of course, in this progression there

were difficulties and obstacles at times, but I never discerned discouragement or pessimism on his part. Each problem was used as a special challenge to continue the school's forward momentum. I have always believed that his deep recognition and appreciation of the Mission of the University and its importance to the work of the law school played an important role in his constant remarkable optimism.

The dictionary includes a slang definition of "neat." "Fine or admirable." That fits, also. His high character and deep-seated Christian faith have provided a lasting influence on law students—both past and present. He is a man who has constantly demonstrated his profound sense of priorities: God, his family, and the School of Law.

These comments about Dean Phillips and his contributions to the School of Law must include his late wife, Jamie. They were full partners in the dreams and efforts that resulted in the growth and progress of the School of Law.

The Odell McConnell Law Center will continue to serve as a reminder of the efforts and dedication of Ron and Jamie Phillips. More importantly, the lives of those whom they touched and influenced during Ron's years as Dean will provide an even more lasting indication of their fulfilled mission for the School of Law. These lives will touch other lives and these will touch others. By this continuum, the character, dedication, and diligence of Ron and Jamie Phillips will be at work in future decades and future centuries, long after those who honor them today are but memories.

Wayne Estes
Professor of Law
Pepperdine University School of Law

In everyone's life there are those people who are so special that they actually alter your existence. About these people you can actually say that without them and their influence you would not be the same.

In each life time I believe only a few such individuals bless our existence. For me, Ron Phillips is one of those unique people. A real life angel that, through example and sage advice, helps you to guide your life along the right course.

At a crossroads in my life, I met Ron during an interview to be admitted into Pepperdine Law School. For me the interview was perfunctory because I had already been admitted and planned to go to the University of Southern California. But the influence of my wife, Patti, and some unexplained curiosity caused me to be there that day. By the time my hour lapsed with the Dean, I knew my course was forever diverted. It was clear where Pepperdine was going and that it had the right captain at the helm. It still amazes me that I would voluntarily go to a law school in a shopping center with no history and plenty of "maybe's" about its future. But I did. And I did only because of one man—Ron Phillips.

From that beginning Patti and I have developed a love affair for Pepperdine. It has influenced us—embraced us—surrounded us with warmth and affection. Always we remember that at the center of that relationship is Dean Ron Phillips. We continue to orbit around the quiet strength and obvious stability that defines this great man.

I regret that time commitments on both our parts have not allowed me to spend more time with him. He is probably not aware of how often I think of him or how many times I handle situations by first asking myself how he would do it.

When I told Patti I was attempting to put in words my feelings for Ron she sat quietly for a few moments.

"Just tell him how we *really* feel," she advised.

"What's that?" I asked.

". . . that we love him."

We do.

Terry M. Giles
Giles Enterprises

In my sixteen years of friendship with Ron Phillips, I have always known him to be a man of solid integrity. There has never been one moment that he has not displayed his belief in God, his love and devotion to his family, his commitment to Pepperdine School of Law, and his genuine concern for every student, professor, and staff member.

Integrity is defined in *The American Heritage Dictionary* as: "1. Rigid adherence to a code or standard of values; probity. 2. The state of being unimpaired; soundness. 3. The quality or condition of being whole or undivided; completeness." In my mind, Ron Phillips and the word "integrity" are synonymous.

Ron Phillips exemplifies himself as a standard of values combined with a remarkable sense of character. His standard includes honor, honesty, kindness, ethics, and fairness. He is a standard of faith, righteousness, and godliness. And, yes, he is a standard of perfection and neatness. He is solid as a rock, never wavers from his convictions, and always makes every decision with the "big picture" in mind. Ron Phillips is truly a skilled, accomplished, and complete man.

I strongly believe that all things have a purpose. Ron and his wonderful and magnetic Jamie helped me realize that even the bad things that may happen in our lives make us stronger individuals. I know that because of their constant love and support, I am a better person, both personally and professionally. And, I am only one of literally thousands of people—teachers, students, graduates, and friends—who have been blessed by knowing them.

Although the Odell McConnell Law Center is a remarkable achievement, Ron and Jamie's influence is much greater than a building on a mountain. For who cannot walk into that law center or sit in a classroom without appreciating the countless hours that were spent in its development? Their influence is much greater than the impressive academic program or the accomplished faculty that teach in it. Their influence is much greater than the dignified speakers and dignitaries that have been drawn to the Malibu campus and various School of Law events.

Their influence encourages and inspires integrity in others, and it will ultimately be felt by millions of people. Their influence is because of the integrity of one man, Ronald F. Phillips. For this, I will be eternally grateful.

Cynthia F. Greer
Associate Dean, Institutional Advancement
Pepperdine University School of Law

I hold no man in higher regard than Ronald Phillips. No single person has done more to help define my career and professional aspirations. For nearly twenty-eight years, Ronald Phillips has been a guiding light for me. To count him as a friend is one of the greatest honors in my life.

I doubt that any man or woman who has served as the Dean of an American law school has had any greater or more profound impact on their institution than Dean Ronald F. Phillips. For me, he will always embody the spirit, ideals, and mission of Pepperdine University School of Law.

Maybe the most important tribute that can be paid to Dean Phillips is to simply take note of the family, friends, students, and colleagues who have always surrounded him. They are his legacy.

Ronald R. Helm
Class of 1976

Georges Jacques Denton, the Parisian lawyer who became France's Minister of Justice during the Revolution, admonished his people that "to conquer we have to dare, to dare again, always to dare." "Dare" is what Ronald F. Phillips has done for the last twenty-seven years.

He dared to take his family from the familiar mesquites of West Texas to the palms of Southern California in search of a law school not yet built. He dared to imagine that a quarter century of work, creativity and prayer could turn a Malibu hillside into a hall of professional and academic excellence and integrity. He dared to teach law students and lawyers to put first their obligations to their clients and the system, to live by the highest standards of professional conduct and never to forget the overarching responsibility of attorneys to better their community and society.

He dared again to accomplish his task without compromising either his faith or his family. From leading devotionals to coaching little league teams he dared to show academicians and practicing lawyers alike that intellectual excellence need not breed agnosticism, nor professional success cause an abdication of the responsibilities of spouse and parent.

Dean Phillips has always dared, through enormous accomplishments and bitter losses, to demonstrate through his life and work that a Texan can succeed in California and that a Christian can succeed in this world.

Perhaps, as founding Dean of Pepperdine Law School, Ron Phillips can best be described, as was his kindred spirit Abraham, as a man who dared to see a city whose builder and maker was God and whose foundations were abiding. Thank you Ron for seeing that vision and for making us all heirs of the dream that you brought to reality.

Oliver S. Howard
Gable Gotwals Mock Schwabe

A Thoroughly Christian Life—A Tribute to Ronald F. Phillips

To know Ron Phillips is to admire him; indeed, it is to be inspired and motivated by him. As Pepperdine's first full-time law dean, and presently the nation's longest serving one, Ron Phillips has given life—literally, his life—to shaping one of the finest law teaching institutions anywhere. As a recent report of the Association of American Law Schools put it well: "Dean Phillips personifies Pepperdine School of Law. The School's commitment to development of moral character as well as intellectual ability is inspired by the example he sets."

What are the elements of that example?

First, his is one of intellectual honesty and academic integrity. Virtually every law dean today understands the incompleteness, if not deceptiveness, of popular magazine rankings for professional schools. Administrative insiders know these spurious classifications often reflect little more than a surplus endowment or deep alumni base. Yet, few deans, save Ron Phillips, have had the intellectual courage or insight to ask without rancor or envy the only relevant question: what does the student actually receive; what is the quality of teaching?

From the start, Ron Phillips wisely decided that Pepperdine's first responsibility was to educate, train, and influence for good, the lives of each of its students. In this, the Dean, like Sir Thomas More in the 16th century, identified the true purpose and audience of a dedicated teacher. It may be recalled that a skeptical house guest once scoffed at More's advice that the visitor become a teacher. This fame-hungry young man, who would later achieve the earthly infamy of gaining the Attorney Generalship of Wales by means of perjury, brazenly responded—"if I were a teacher, who would know?" More responded in much the same way Dean Phillips encourages and directs his faculty—"Who would know? [Why] you, your pupils, your friends, God. Not a bad public, that."

Ron Phillips' example is one of professional accomplishment and excellence. His teachers do teach, and teach well. Graduating classes surmount difficult bar examinations in multiple jurisdictions at levels rivaling the most prestigious schools and enter the profession in important public and private posts around the country. Pepperdine Law School's history spans less than three decades, and yet, it regularly attracts members of the U.S. Supreme Court or other notable figures in the law to teach in its program. Senior professors publish innovative teaching materials and newer faculty with professional training from the likes of Harvard, Columbia, Chicago, are enlivened by Dean Phillips' student-centered approach.

The growing international reputation of the Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution is another salient part of the Phillips legacy. In an overly litigious age of declining community and civility, and even less for-

givenness, Ron Phillips has nourished a revolution of reconciliation in legal training. Through a comprehensive program of effective counseling, negotiation, and mediation, Pepperdine lawyers aim to resolve disputes, not prolong them.

That legal education at Pepperdine would turn toward the healing of human hurt, and not merely its compensation or retribution, may perhaps be expected from a law school with a Christian commitment. Pepperdine is after all a religiously-affiliated university. But as the sad account of more than one formerly religious, but now fallen, law school avers, a work of virtue takes more than religious affiliation, it takes a living faith. It takes Ron Phillips' kind of living faith that recognizes in Christ the unique revelation of God and His plan for the moral formation of the people created in His image.

Ron and Jamie Phillips understood in plain-spoken, Texas terms that "in order to produce a good lawyer, you must begin with a good person." God being the ultimate embodiment of goodness cannot be left out of the life of a young man or woman seeking to serve others in the trusted role of "counselor." And so, with little fanfare or ceremony, this loving couple would weekly open their home to law students and supply the comfort and confidence that resides solely in God's word. In song, in prayer, in Biblical reflection, the Phillipses became every Pepperdine student's extended family.

Jamie is gone now, yet her warmth and grace still inhabit the Phillips home and subtle aspects of the law building too numerous and too precious to list. These endearing qualities continue to welcome present-day Pepperdine students to understand anew that there can be no meaningful distinction between one's spiritual and professional life.

This is but a short, personal recollection of Ronald Phillips. An exhaustive history would fill many pages, exploring his commitment to the mastery of lawyering skills through the careful design of a required curriculum, his encouragement of public service through the Community Development Training Center, and his planning and oversight of the construction of a stunningly beautiful law school campus.

Certainly, some mention, too, would need to be made of Ron's often unanticipated use of humor—much of it at his own expense. These engaging witticisms surface naturally from him like tall grass on the prairie and fit as well in faculty meetings as public lecture. Many students, I know, cherish how their anxious first hours of law school were soothed by the patented Phillips transition from somber orienting words to light-hearted anecdote. Neophyte students exactly transcribing every syllable of their Dean would, without notice, find him

deftly moving from the high calling and duty of the law to the re-telling of how he won some coveted “green patch” as a boy back home. Smiles and laughter would soon hang upon the gentle southern voice of the Dean repeating his boyhood tale of mock achievement. In time, the memory of how he relieved the stress of those beginning moments would merge with abundant other examples of his kindness, a quality that is now synonymous with his name.

Recently reflecting upon the question—“What’s so great about Pepperdine?” the Dean, again with his own special mix of whimsy and sincerity, answered, “It relates to the four P’s. [And] I’m not talking about the vegetable, but the alphabetical letter.” He elaborated: “The things that are so great about Pepperdine are the people, the purpose, the programs, and the place.”

In truth, what has been so great about Pepperdine, and what will be irreplaceable, is a fifth “P”—Ronald F. Phillips. And notwithstanding his bittersweet retirement from the deanship—from a job well done—Ron Phillips will furnish through his continuing role as Vice-Chancellor, the example of how we must carry on. For the life of Dean Phillips is a thoroughly Christian life, and one that will forever instruct, as in the words of scripture to “Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be frightened by the size of the task, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. He will see to it that everything is finished correctly.”¹

What the Lord will finish correctly, Ron Phillips began reverently and superbly in His name.

Douglas W. Kmiec
Professor of Constitutional Law
University of Notre Dame

1. 1 *Chronicles* 28:20.

Reflections on Ron Phillips' Tenure as
Dean of the Pepperdine University School of Law:
"For Just Such a Time as This"

A picture in one of our publications of the young family, Ron and Jamie Phillips and their children, as they were when they joined the University, reminded me of how time changes things. Or, rather, how people can change things over time; because it would be difficult to describe how different was the University they joined from the one that today is becoming widely-known for the quality of its programs.

In fact, the School of Law to which Ron Phillips came as Dean was located in Orange County and had little more exposure to the legal community than had been gained locally. Nevertheless, Ron and Jamie decided to leave a place of security and a growing and prosperous law practice to take what must have seemed an enormous risk of leading a law school into a firm connection with the University and out of the confines of its local reputation to one of national visibility and undisputed quality.

Though my four years as Provost have coincided only with a few of Ron's twenty-seven years as Dean, my time and work have been made immeasurably richer for having been in association with him. And, though the time has been brief, I will propose some of the things I have observed as Ron Phillips' major contributions to our law school's development. To wit:

First, Ron Phillips understands the importance of the management of details. His administrative style bears witness to the truth that as one does the little things right, so will the larger things come into place. Though attracting a qualified and capable administrative team, Ron has led them in such a way that they knew his expectations in every area of possible concern for the School, from building maintenance to faculty hiring and student recruitment. This has resulted in a consistent position of quality and excellence in all the School of Law does, setting a standard for the rest of the University.

Second, it is difficult to imagine how a leader can maintain the kind of reputation for integrity over a twenty-seven year period that Ron Phillips has done. He is known by all for his personal moral standards, the value of his word, and his candor. Appropriateness, propriety, and rectitude are all adjectives that would generate agreement among the many people he has worked among through his tenure as Dean. Ron and Jamie have touched hundreds of students and faculty, who were in personal difficulty, with their words and actions of comfort, and they

have opened their home to groups of students who wished to study the Bible and share intimate worship experiences.

Third, he has never lost sight of what is most important in life. His commitment to home and family have been witnessed by all who know him. As important as he held his responsibility to the School of Law, there has never been any doubt that it was second to his family's welfare. In providing the rest of the University with this example, he has also shown how keeping this priority makes the rest of life and work fall into place.

Fourth, he has been an admirable advocate for the School's concerns in the University's budgeting and planning forums. When the committees meet, all leave the table knowing that Ron Phillips has the interest of the School of Law firmly in mind and feeling that he has pursued those interests to the limits.

Fifth, corollary to that, he is among those with the clearest understanding of the University's academic and spiritual mission. His work at the level of University councils has always shown his overall concern for the mission and programs of all the schools, not only his own. He has helped shape, not only a School of Law over the past twenty-seven years, but also a University.

Sixth, he has seen the value of forming associations among the most reputable legal minds in the land. Supreme Court justices know him by his first name and express their admiration of him. Practicing attorneys and judges understand and admire his motives and his work. He has attracted these same people to the school in advisory groups, as speakers at various forums, and as visiting professors. He has facilitated the annual arrival of giants of legal scholarship to share with students in such things as the Straus Distinguished Professorship program and summer teaching and learning opportunities. This has given the School of Law a level of visibility beyond that normally achieved by a school so young.

Seventh, he has worked as a part of the University's friend-making program to attract significant support for the construction of what must surely be the most beautiful law school building in the land and for a level of endowment that is quite respectable for a school of its age. He has been among the most active of University officers, not directly related by position to the advancement office of the institution, in attracting resources to the University.

Eighth, his approach to crises and problems is unfailingly calm and systematic. His counsel has been sought and valued by leaders all across the University. When I asked him recently how he could keep on smiling through the personal and institutional crises he has faced in his last year, he replied, "I can smile because I know God is ultimately in

control." This faith is seen in the way he conducts his life and his work with patience, persistence, optimism, and equanimity.

When I consider what changes have come, over time, to the Phillips family I am inspired by the way in which these people continue to be marked by their love and loyalty toward each other, even as I am saddened along with others by Jamie's passing.

When I consider the changes that have come to the School of Law and Pepperdine University over the past twenty-seven years, and think of Ron Phillips' role in all of that, I am reminded of the story of Esther in the Bible who, when approached by her uncle and asked to do a task in behalf of her people, which would put her at great personal risk, was encouraged by being told, "Who knows? Perhaps you have come . . . for just such a time as this."

Ron and Jamie Phillips came for a time that can never be repeated and, perhaps, is fully understood only by those who experienced it with them. They will be forever linked with "just such a time as this" whenever the story of Pepperdine University is told. Indeed, it will be possible to tell the story because people like Ron and Jamie gave of themselves, without reservation, to this time.

Steven S. Lemley, Provost
Pepperdine University

A Quiet Life

When introducing Dean Phillips at various law school and university events during my four years as his Associate Dean for Academics, I often said that when you look up “gentleman” in the dictionary you will see his picture. I also see his picture when I read this passage of Scripture: “Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.”² Ron Phillips leads a quiet life.

A quiet life is not an anonymous life, not when you are known and admired by Presidents, Supreme Court Justices, Governors, and folks from every walk of life. Dean Phillips has won the respect of outsiders. A quiet life is not a simple life, not when you successfully balance the roles of husband, father, grandfather, church elder, law school dean, university vice chancellor, and rabid Cowboys fan. A quiet life is not an unambitious life, not when you bring a no-name, unaccredited, night law school from one street beyond nowhere to Pepperdine’s current position—an excellent law school on the brink of greatness.

A quiet life is not an empty life, not when it is filled with the friendship and gratitude of the law school community, the love of his family, and his knowledge of God. A quiet life is not an ascetic life, not when it was consumed for more than forty years with a passionate love for Jamie, his full partner in everything. Jamie helped him meet the world. I see her picture when I read, “Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.”³

For twenty-seven years Dean Phillips minded his business and worked with his hands, his brain, and his heart, to help thousands of law students and, through them, hundreds of thousands of their clients. He helped the students by leading the development of this distinctive law school. He gave good advice to the hundreds of students who sought his opinion and counsel when they faced difficult choices in law school and in life. He helped their future clients by creating an atmosphere of trust and compassion for students and their problems. Every professor heard him say, countless times, “Law students will treat their clients the way their professors treat them.” We all believe that.

He never said, “Law professors will treat their students the way they are treated by the Dean,” but it is equally true. He treats us with respect and is an example of patience, forgiveness, and integrity. He keeps confidences, encourages our professional growth, and is unfail-

2. 1 *Thessalonians* 4:11-12 (NIV).

3. *Hebrews* 13:2 (NIV).

ingly generous. Dean Phillips, more than any other single person, is the reason why we have the best job in the world.

As University Vice Chancellor, Ron Phillips will continue to lead the law school's progress by attracting more resources to support its students and faculty. His service as Dean has made it great in the ways that money cannot buy.

Richardson R. Lynn
Associate Dean, Academics and Professor of Law
Pepperdine University School of Law

Tribute to the Dean

"Never does a man stand so tall as when he stoops to pick up litter in the hall," I once said about our diminutive Dean. I've always thought the comment captured him perfectly, but Dean Phillips was a little more sensitive about his height than I cared to acknowledge. He once told me that watching Family Feud he had discovered that he was of above average height—five foot eight inches. "That's interesting," I replied, "watching just one TV program, you discovered that you were of above average height and below average intelligence." In addition to my own original slant, I added the Dean's name to any joke I ever heard about vertically challenged people, e.g., Dean Phillips is so short, he has to pole vault into bed, or Dean Phillips walked into a disco to use the bathroom and won the limbo competition.

Although occasionally some of my comments got me temporarily removed from Jamie Phillips' party list, for the most part his vengeance was limited to replying in kind. After he accidentally dumped a full coke on me at McDonald's and I did not flinch or as much as pause in completing a sentence, he reported to an alumni group that I was so messy that I did not notice when a full coke was dumped on me. He also claimed that I had so much food on my ties that I had to store them in tupperware. Although I believe that it was then Associate Dean Charles Nelson who commented that the person who bought a used car from me got a good deal because it included two free meals on the front seat, the Dean repeated the story often enough to believe that he had the pride of authorship. (I often wonder how my career would have gone had I dumped the full coke on him. I think I could have been reasonably happy living in a trailer park, but I hope that I at least would have had a double wide.)

My earliest memory of the Dean is his having been able to convince Charles Nelson and General Duane Faw in 1971 to join the faculty of an unaccredited law school in a down-and-out strip mall on the seedy side of Santa Ana. Its close proximity to questionable Italian food seemed to be its most attractive feature. I always wondered how the Dean had convinced such successful, talented people to pitch their tent with his in undertaking such a dubious enterprise. It did not surprise me that he was able to convince me. I had few other prospects in any event. During our initial interview, his professing that it appeared perfectly normal to him for me to have a car trunk full of sporting equipment, including a full size volleyball net, was enough to win me over. (Why he hired someone who thought it relevant to a job interview to display the contents of the trunk of his car continues to be a mystery to me.) In short—there's that word again—we trusted him when he said that someday the law school would be a special place with a unique value-based vision of legal education. We believed him when he said that we

could make a difference by caring about our students. And beneath his shy, diffident manner, we saw a sense of fun that made us think that we would not want to work any place else.

In more than twenty-five years of law school teaching, I have never wavered from that initial view of him. In my book, except maybe for my six foot two inch father, he stands taller than any man I have ever known. And Jamie will always stand by his side.

Jim McGoldrick
Professor of Law
Pepperdine University School of Law

A Tribute to my Friend
Dean Ronald F. Phillips

When Dean Phillips contacted me in the Spring of 1978 to ask if I would be interested in teaching at Pepperdine Law School, I sought the advice of the partner whom I worked most closely with in my firm. Having gone to law school at The University of Oklahoma, the partner had a vision of a law school similar to my own. His response was, "I want you to decide where you will be most happy in the long run, so go out there, have dinner in the faculty club, look at the physical plant and decide whether you like teaching or practice better." So I came to California for the first time. Imagine my surprise when I saw a law school which housed its library and administrative and faculty offices in a small office building in a not very desirable part of Santa Ana. Imagine, further, my surprise when I found the classrooms were storefronts in a strip mall across the street. And imagine, finally, that the faculty club was a small room housing a coffee pot, an old plastic couch, and a plastic potted plant. What, you ask, would prompt someone to leave private practice for that?

The answer lies in understanding Dean Phillips. Never one to seek great personal wealth and not a person with a driving ambition for personal recognition, he nevertheless had a dream. His dream was to create a law school which would be not just a great academic institution, but an institution which would affirm that God is and that successful attorneys mirror God in their personal and professional life. To do that, he wanted people who shared his vision. Looking at the physical surroundings at that time made it very difficult for the rest of us to see into the distance as he did; yet, he knew that through personal effort and dedication, he could make his dream happen if he was surrounded by people who supported the goal. Undoubtedly, it was that shared vision which formed the basis for the wonderful collegial relationship we had in those days. One of the manifestations of God that Dean Phillips has always held above others is that of family. No one has ever doubted that, in the whole scheme of choices he had, his family came first. And he believed that a law school which affirmed the will of God also had to be a family. He made his own home a center for the social life of the law school, inviting students and faculty alike for dinner and conversation. Out of this we came to see ourselves engaged in the common enterprise of a family. We bought into the creation of the law school as a common cause to which we are all dedicated. It was that sense of common enterprise that caused us to sacrifice for the good of the family as a whole. It was that sense of enterprise which sustained us in the early days when none except Dean Phillips lived with the certainty that this would turn out to be a great law school.

Our time together has not always been easy, of course. There have been many occasions in our development as a school when the faculty have struggled with Dean Phillips. Perhaps we wanted to change the rules by which we operate or perhaps we wanted to initiate a new program. And we found Dean Phillips standing in the way. Over the years, however, we have all come to appreciate that the difference between us and the Dean was that he kept his eye on the vision, while we were dealing with the here and now. He saw our school twenty-five or thirty years in the future and asked the question, "Is this a good way to get there or are we doing something which might be good right now but hurt us in the long run?" Institutions like ours evolve over time as various interests struggle to make their viewpoint heard and accepted, or struggle for power, or struggle with values as they change. That struggle is, perhaps, why so many institutions of higher learning have abandoned the religious commitment which was their heritage, foundation, and roots. Dean Phillips has dedicated himself to the proposition that this institution will not just evolve. His view is of an institution which affirms an eternal principle and of a school which constantly asks the question, "Are we supporting that principle or are we damaging it?" He is not afraid to ask that question in the smallest of decisions and insists that it be considered in the larger decisions. The fact that Pepperdine remains strongly committed to its principle is an affirmation of Dean Phillips' tireless work and willingness to remain firm over the better part of three decades.

On a personal level, he has been a friend to all of us who have taught here. By that, I do not mean to imply that he has approved of everything we have done. There have been times when we have argued with him, when he has been disappointed by us, when he has expressed his displeasure with us, and when he has been angry with us. This is the life of friends. His friendship has taken the form of caring for each of us over the long term. He has supported us unwaveringly when he felt that we were in the right. He has rebuked us when we were wrong without taking pleasure in doing so. That is the love which friends give to each other. And we are grateful for it.

The average tenure of a dean in the United States now is somewhere between three and four years. Dean Phillips has been our dean for twenty-seven years, longer than any other serving dean in the country. While it may be that the turnover in deans has a beneficial effect of infusing new ideas into the development of an institution, it is also true that the guiding hand of a benevolent leader through the formative years of an institution provides a continuity which insures that the past is connected to the present and the future. This has been of special im-

portance to our school, providing an historical base against which our development and growth could be seen and measured. Institutions have a life of their own beyond the lives of any one of us. For that reason, the law school will endure and continue to grow as an institution. Whatever we are able to achieve in the future, however, will be based upon the wisdom, perseverance, tenacity, and devotion of Dean Phillips. That is our foundation now and for the future.

Charles Nelson
Professor of Law and Director of the Overseas Program
Pepperdine University School of Law

Tribute to Dean Ronald Phillips

I met Dean Ronald Phillips on the 20th day of August in 1979. This was the first day of classes, my first year of law school. After a short introduction by Professor Wayne Estes, the Dean and I visited for a few minutes. He welcomed me to Pepperdine, encouraged me to work hard, told me about the church that meets on campus and indicated that his door was always open to me. Knowing the number of students that make their way to the Dean's office everyday, I am sure he has no recollection of our meeting. That brief visit will live in my memory forever.

In the summer of 1980, I was contemplating transferring to another law school to complete my legal education. I was agonizing over the decision when the phone rang. Dean Phillips said that he heard I was thinking about transferring. He wanted to know if there was anything he could do to convince me to come back to Pepperdine. Because of his unique personal interest, I decided I would be returning to Malibu. Thus, I avoided making what would have been the biggest mistake of my life.

The events described above, while important to me, seem rather insignificant when one considers Dean Phillips' innumerable contributions to this law school. Countless lives have, however, been touched and changed because of a visit with or phone call from the Dean. His personal interest and concern for all of our graduates and students is genuine and sincere. It is one of his many extraordinary qualities that have become so much a part of the Pepperdine School of Law.

I am fortunate indeed to have received my legal education from the Pepperdine School of Law and an education in life from Dean Ronald Phillips. By example, the Dean has taught me compelling lessons in character and integrity. I better understand humility and compassion as a result of his teaching. I am a better husband and father because of the influence of the Dean and his late wife, Jamie. It has been a distinct honor and pleasure to serve in his administration for the past ten years. It has been a blessing from God to have him as my friend.

Steven Potts
Associate Dean, Administration
Pepperdine University School of Law

A Tribute

Ronald Phillips has a trophy, a distinction, a living honor, sparkling in his crown as he retires. It is Pepperdine University School of Law, a nationally recognized excellent law school that would be years away from that stature and recognition had it not been for Dean Phillips. He has given the school full devotion for twenty-seven years, and his talents have been exactly what were needed. To obtain recognition, eventually it must be deserved. Deans must work on both ends, and that is far easier to say than to do.

The dean must have character and integrity. He must know the world of scholarship. He must attract and discipline and encourage outstanding faculty. He must develop and lead effective administration. He must connect with other schools, with notables, and with benefactors. He must attract students, prospective and present and graduated. The list goes on, and Dean Phillips has it all. Almost to the end of his tenure, that dear Jamie added her electric charm to his leadership.

Pepperdine Law School will prosper and flourish after 1997 because of all of its strengths. The living honor continues for Dean Ronald Phillips.

Thomas M. Reavley
United States Circuit Judge

Dean Ronald F. Phillips
Dreamer, Builder, Educator

You look out over the railing of the Odell McConnell Law Center and see below you the ocean-washed, sun-kissed campus of Pepperdine University, resplendent with its modern Spanish-styled buildings of cream-colored stucco and red-tiled roofs. The splendor you see around you is rivaled only by the interior of the law school itself, with its dramatic open-plan atrium, spacious library, plush courtroom, well-conceived classrooms, convenient cafeteria, and more-than-ample offices for faculty and staff. What's more, every inch is as neat as a pin. Neat and clean. The kind of neatness and cleanness that could only happen at a law school whose dean is a former recipient of the Camp Klebit Cleanliness Award. Old habits die hard.

Of course, it is not the beauty of the physical plant, nor the state of its maintenance, that most reflect the contributions of Dean Ronald F. Phillips, whose tenure is ending after a quarter of a century as chief administrator of the Pepperdine University School of Law. But they do help to explain the law school's success. Attention to detail will always be one of the hallmarks of a Ron Phillips administration. No dream too large; no detail too small.

And what a dream! In order to fully appreciate even the physical facilities, much less the quantum leap in academic standing, one must take a mental trip to 12345 Westminster in Santa Ana, the original home of the law school. When Pepperdine University took over the Orange County School of Law—an unaccredited school with only a night program—classes met in a nondescript storefront building in a nondescript area of Orange County. When General Duane Faw (then retiring chief legal officer for the Marine Corps) approached the building to interview with Dean Phillips for a teaching position, he was so put off by the school's environment that he told his driver not to stop. Only his driver's insistence ("You've come this far . . .") led Faw to meet the young dean from Abilene and be drawn in by Phillips' vision of what the law school one day would become.

There were others, as well, who were attracted to the dream. Charles Nelson and Jim McGoldrick brought with them the promise of solid teaching and genuine scholarship. Others of us were assembled to fill in the gaps as best we could. In those first years, the entire faculty would go to lunch together—at first in one car; then, in two. The closeness of the young faculty in those early days set the tone for an unusual camaraderie among the faculty that continues even now. As circumstances

permitted, the Dean chose his faculty carefully—not only for their professional skills, but for their own visions.

If the next move for the law school was a considerable step up, it was not a likely progression. We found ourselves in nearby Anaheim—within view of the Matterhorn at Disneyland—occupying offices and adjoining warehouse space formerly used by a greeting card company. The executive office compound, even with a swimming pool to complete its CEO ambiance, reflected a similar leap in academic quality. The faculty continued to grow in both size and reputation. The library began to expand to the point of respectability. And the full-time day program was attracting a higher and higher caliber of student. Day in and day out, Dean Phillips tweaked the details, and the dream continued. If bar results were not always the most encouraging, accreditation was never in doubt. Whatever was needed was done. An even better library? Done. Higher faculty salaries? Done. A quality academic program? Done. Somehow—against considerable odds—whatever needed to be done was done.

The need for a permanent home for the law school led to an intense search throughout Orange County for some suitable site. Rumor here, talk there, but, in the end, no site was to be found. The decision was made to situate the law school on the Malibu campus, along with Seaver College. After years of planning and hard work, the Odell McConnell Law Center had finally become a reality.

With that move the law school never looked back—either to its humble physical beginnings or to its first fledgling attempts at academic quality. Together with the faculty, the Dean decided it was time to quit tuning “Fords” as best we could, and, instead to buy “Cadillacs.” The result was a leap in bar results, not to mention national respectability. The dream had become real. Pepperdine was no longer a second-class follower, but a first-class leader in legal education.

Yet, who ever would have guessed that the quiet, self-effacing, mild-mannered dean from Abilene could ever have pulled off such a dream? To the casual observer, it would be difficult to determine just what it was that had made the Dean’s dream come true. Was it his penchant for reading every speech, or his strict rules against food and drink in the classroom? Was it his knack for courting well-known judicial and political figures? Was it the respect which he garnered from potential donors? Was it his personal interest in individual students and graduates?

Two factors above all other stand out. One was the strength and encouragement of his lifelong companion, Jamie, whose recent sad passing could not have separated a closer team. No one who entered their home for faculty or student receptions, or for the weekly Bible

studies which they graciously hosted, will ever forget Jamie's extraordinary gift of hospitality.

First and foremost, however, was Dean Phillips' commitment to the Christian mission of both the university and the law school. If a Christian legal education was ever to be anything more than a curious oxymoron, it would take a dedication to the cause unparalleled in any other legal program. It has been Dean Phillips' unique sense of a higher calling which has led the law school to its present success. Such a calling meant that, for the faculty, students would always come first—before pride of publication or wider professional commitments. Because students were to be top priority, so, too, would be our teaching. Likewise, Christian values, translated into an emphasis on personal ethics and professional responsibility, would become a predominant feature of Pepperdine's legal education. What other law school would dare proclaim that "the educational process cannot, with impunity, be separated from the divine process"—and mean it?

As Dean Phillips moves into his new role as Vice Chancellor for the university, we on the faculty wish him well, and extend to him our deepest gratitude, not only for dreaming the dream, but for making such an ambitious and noble dream come true.

F. LaGard Smith
Professor of Law
Pepperdine University School of Law

Go West

A Tribute to Dean Phillips

Taking a page from Horace Greeley, the young lawyer Ron Phillips headed west. But the motivating reason for his leaving the high plains of Texas for the western edge of the Pacific Rim was far nobler than fortune-finding or claim-staking. This latter-day pioneer, with his remarkable and steadfast Jamie and beautiful family, was to serve as founding father of a law school with a special mission. And unlike Lot's wife, he never looked back.

He stood for a quarter century as both pillar and beacon. As pillar, his stewardship was sturdy, enduring, and rock-like in an age of rolling stones. He was the pivotal support, in a foundational sense, of a growing structure from humble pioneer beginnings in make-shift classrooms to a dynamic institution of ever-growing reputation. As beacon, his light was always shining, beckoning and calling us to high endeavors in the law.

Ron's leadership was of the purest kind, by quiet, powerful example. He reached out to others in a tireless way, inquiring as to their needs and welfare and building and nurturing them. His leadership was deep with a spiritual dimension. His sense of eternity lent a depth of perspective rare in the all too frequent rough-and-tumble world of law.

He also led through his legendary sense of humor. Dean Phillips was "out and about," accomplishing great things for the Law School, but all the while poking fun at himself. His annual presentations, demonstrating how he was just like the guest of honor (whomever the guest might be), evidenced a homespun graciousness and lightness of touch. His humor, and that marvelous, broad smile, made both the stranger and guest feel right at home.

The Bible that adorned his neat-as-a-pin office spoke volumes as to Ron's leadership. He drew upon it for strength, wisdom, and courage, especially as he faced the grave challenge of Jamie's illness. And once again, he was pillar and beacon, an inspiration in the way he lived his life: greatly—just as he had guided the destiny of the Law School. Their partnership in this life came to an end with grace and dignity, the very qualities that Ron Phillips embodied as Pepperdine Law School's founding Dean.

Kenneth W. Starr
Kirkland & Ellis

The expression: "The right person at the right place at the right time" is to be found in the manuscript more often than in the fact. The first time I met Dean Phillips, Pepperdine Law School was entering a metamorphic phase as to location, clientele, and its ambition toward full accreditation as the campus moved from Orange County to Malibu. Such a transition is the practical equivalent of opening a new school, an experience I have twice enjoyed at other universities. While this is the most exhilarating and rewarding period in which to be associated with legal education, it is also a precarious one. It is not the time for the consensus building, committee dawdling, flexible experimentation, etc., that may be appropriate at a later stage of development after the foundations, edifices, and hardware are in place. Rather, it is the point requiring leadership qualities that emphasize a vision focused on the structure that is to accommodate the infrastructure and a fixed intent to stay the course.

My initial estimate was that Dean Phillips possessed in good measure the necessary qualifications; an accurate (if embarrassingly foreshortened) guess it proved to be. Not only did he hold to the vision, but he stayed the course for a length of time that has become almost legendary in legal academic circles. Given the changes in job specification and concepts in the deaning business, it is doubtful if such a performance will soon, if ever, be duplicated.

Not only did he hold to the course in his own way, he embellished it with managerial skill and an engaging combination of modesty, wit, and dry humor. Add on an unswerving adherence to his own high standards and sense of values.

Once, upon hearing someone refer to the Dean as something of a square, I was moved to observe that I considered this a fine compliment with which I agreed. In my limited and old-fashioned vocabulary, the word "square" has no pejorative connotation—on the contrary, there is high praise in the expressions "on the square," "a square shooter," etc. Besides, a square peg is indispensable in filling a square hole.

We can all wish the Dean a long life in which to enjoy the results of a career of service and success.

Kenneth H. York
Distinguished Professor of Law, Emeritus
Pepperdine University School of Law

Dean Ronald Phillips — A Father Figure

Those of us who are about to declare Pepperdine Law our Alma Mater owe more than we can imagine to a man who, at this same time, is embarking on a new path. Dean Ronald Phillips, through his lifelong dedication to building the school that we so much love and cherish, has proven by example that the future does not belong to the fainthearted, but to the bold. At the time that most of us were born, Pepperdine University School of Law was but a mere fledgling among the nation's venerable law schools. Nevertheless, the young attorney from Texas was prepared for the overwhelming task that lay ahead. Who would have known then that we were destined to be a part of Dean Phillips' pioneering vision?

When we arrived in 1994, the doors to the Dean's home and office were wide open; he and his endearing wife Jamie welcomed us with warm hospitality. During our three-year sojourn at the School of Law, we came further to know our Dean as a man of honor, faith, integrity, and principle. He was like a father figure to many of us, instilling and imparting values that many have thought abandoned in the modern legal profession. Not surprisingly, beside this noble man stood a strong woman. It was with utmost sorrow that we mourned the loss of Jamie Phillips as she "passed from this life to be with her Lord."

As we graduate, it is with a sense of accomplishment, but also with a sense of mission. Although the School of Law has achieved so much in so little time, it is but still beginning. This year's graduating class will add 253 more Pepperdine lawyers to our nation's legal field, and the conduct of each of us will reflect upon the institution to which Dean Phillips gave so much of his life. So, today, we make a promise to always uphold the principles upon which Dean Phillips built Pepperdine University School of Law.

The Class of 1997

A Tribute to Jamie Phillips

by Ronald F. Phillips

I would not dare to even attempt to describe or capture in words the essence of Jamie. Those who are not acquainted with her would feel certain that I was guilty of gross exaggeration, while her family and friends would resent the magnitude of my vast understatement. I will, though, mention some of her attributes.

Jamie was always looking for an excuse to have a party, and that was a fact which our grandchildren picked up on very early in life. They were always expecting a party, and they were rarely disappointed. Wherever Jamie was, there was always good food and lots of laughter.

She liked to amuse herself by being a bit outrageous at times, just in order to get some kind of reaction from those she considered to be overly "stuffy." Jamie was always bigger than life. She was a true original, and one for which I have never seen even a mediocre copy or reproduction. She was never dull and, certainly, never lukewarm about anything.

Some of the descriptive words that she brings to mind are: remarkable, tireless, enthusiastic, energetic, joyful, hospitable, generous, talented, artistic, and transparent. With Jamie, there were never any hidden agendas. You always knew exactly where she stood on any issue.

She loved nature and took unusual delight in all forms of God's creation—plant and animal life, the mountains, the ocean—everything. She had a magic touch with animals and a green thumb when it came to plants. Sunshine gave her energy and fed her soul.

Jamie was like a mother to the world. She understood and knew exactly how to make everyone comfortable, content, at ease and happy. It did not matter whether it was a newborn baby, a toddler or teenager, a college or law student, a busy professional, or a governor, Supreme Court justice or whoever. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why she was such an extraordinary hostess and that was also an important factor in why she was such a wonderful mother, grandmother, wife, and friend. There was always a long list of people who looked to her for approval, encouragement, support and guidance. Because of that, she lived her life differently than if she had been living it for herself. Yet, she never felt sorry for herself, and she certainly was no whiner. Her friends crossed the lines of race, color, religious background, age, social standing, affluence, power or lack of it, national prominence or anonymity, etc. A visit to our home by a repair person, for example, would invariably end up with another person who had taken on the status of friend.

Jamie was in awe of how much influence she had over others and sometimes joked to me that she could have become a benevolent dictator if she had chosen to do so. What she did do, however, was make an indelible imprint upon hundreds and perhaps thousands of lives.

In considering her choice for a career, she probably could have been pretty much anything she chose. She possessed great organizational skills, she was a passionate and most effective natural leader, and she invariably accomplished her objectives in a grand style. She decided early on that her most important contribution would be that of a supportive wife, a nurturing mother and grandmother, and a loyal friend to young and old alike. She was never too tired or too busy to drop whatever she was doing to immediately look after a child who needed or wanted her attention. She demonstrated through her life that being a full-time home manager is more demanding, requires more creativity, more stamina and certainly is more useful and rewarding than any other undertaking on the face of the earth.

For much of her life she invested significant portions of her time teaching children's and young people's Bible classes, ranging from infants through high school. She was never just a teacher, as marvelous as that is, but she was always a very special friend. For the last several years she has hosted a group of law school students who have met weekly in our home for a Bible study. She regularly prepared a dessert and drinks and she provided a sense of home away from home for hundreds of students.

Jamie's life work involved helping to form character, develop personalities, and build lives. She fully invested herself in babies, children, students, adults of all ages, and anyone who seemed to need her special attention. She had a strong sense of values when it came to raising children and often said, "We don't raise any victims in this family."

Another important part of her life revolved around Pepperdine University School of Law. From the time our work with the school began in 1970, she was an equal partner in all that has transpired. She played a most crucial role in defining our institution's special concern for our students, our faculty, our professional staff, our alumni, and our friends. She entertained constantly and tirelessly in behalf of the school, and considered the law school community as extended family.

Those of you who have been subjected to enduring my speeches have particular reason to be grateful to Jamie. Without her editorial involvement, they would have been even worse, because she wisely exerted her partnership position to always cut out the worst parts.

Over the years, I have received far too much recognition and attention for the development of the School of Law and Jamie has received far less than her fair share—but she wanted it that way. She never

needed the approval of others. She just did her thing in her own unique style.

Jamie was immensely spiritual and the vitality and the joy that characterized her very essence were reflections of her relationship with the Lord and her absolute confidence in each and every one of His marvelous promises. She truly cherished the cross of Jesus, and our home is filled with crosses—some made by family and friends and others she had collected. Special friends who have been spiritual partners with Jamie and with me over the years have much to say about Jamie's walk of faith.

I cannot speculate as to why it was time for Jamie to leave this life for her better eternal home, but I do have complete confidence that it is all right, even though I miss her more than words can convey, as do her family and friends around the world. I do not lay at God's feet the responsibility for each event in our lives. I believe that our Creator has set up laws of nature that often determine our experiences. He has given us free-will as to our conduct, and that means that people will sometimes do terrible things to one another, but also wonderful, God-like things as well.

I believe that God is all powerful and all knowing and that he does indeed answer prayer and intervene in the affairs of his creation. We will not know during this life why Jamie could not have been with us longer, but we do know that it was not because of any lack of prayers by hundreds of friends literally circling the globe. God knows best, and we do not know but what the laws of nature had determined that her option for life might have been that of an invalid confined to her bed. All of us who knew her recognize that that would not have been a good choice for Jamie. We cannot expect the Lord to overrule every law of nature that He has set in motion each time that we might petition for it. Rather, we know that we can trust the God who created us and the Son who died for us. We also know that anything which a child of His endures has been filtered through His divine love, and that He stands with us.

When my thoughts dwell on how much our family, friends and I will miss her, it seems overwhelming. But when I am able to stay focused on what she is now experiencing, I am thrilled and excited. No one could appreciate the beauties of heaven and the companionship of the Lord and the saints who have preceded us more than could Jamie.

How could one ever question the wisdom of a God who chose to create someone as uniquely wonderful and distinctive as Jamie? Per-

haps her spirit was just too big to be trapped any longer in the mortal shell which she inhabited.

I do not understand how I could have been so blessed as to be her life partner for almost forty all too short years. She gave me three remarkable children who married equally magnificent mates and who, together, gave us five truly wonderful, precious grandchildren—each of whom is an unparalleled gift from our Creator. She considered her children, their mates, and her grandchildren to be her crowning glory.

Jamie is a bright star whose light never dimmed, but which streaked to its new and better home in the more distant heavens—to the very visible presence of the Lord she loved and served and who blessed so many others through her life.

Jamie and I had an understanding that I would be the first in our immediate family to pass over to our eternal home. Our plans in that regard did not work out as we had intended. In hindsight, however, surely no one could be better suited to go on ahead and begin preparing the welcome celebration for the rest of us when we join her.