

1997

# Dan F. Henke—Quiet, Competent, and Indispensable

James R. McCall

*UC Hastings College of the Law*, [mccallj@uchastings.edu](mailto:mccallj@uchastings.edu)

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## Recommended Citation

James R. McCall, *Dan F. Henke—Quiet, Competent, and Indispensable*, 48 *Hastings L.J.* 1087 (1997).

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**Author:** James R. McCall  
**Source:** Hastings Law Journal  
**Citation:** 48 Hastings L.J. 1087 (1997).  
**Title:** *Dan F. Henke — Quiet, Competent, and Indispensable*

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## *Tribute*

### Dan F. Henke—Quiet, Competent, and Indispensable

by  
JAMES R. MCCALL\*

Congratulations to the *Hastings Law Journal* for recognizing the importance of the law library to the legal profession and academy with the publication of this issue. As a student, I took the law library at Harvard for granted; and as a practitioner I gave little thought to the Alameda County Law Library, even though I spent considerable time there during the 1960s. As a student and practitioner, I was hardly unique in being essentially oblivious to the particular library relevant to my professional life except when its hours of operation—actually hours of non-operation—caused me personal inconvenience.

When I became a law school teacher, I quickly became educated in both the importance of the library and in the difficulty of operating one to serve the needs of student and faculty scholars and practitioners. There are the usual staffing and administrative decisions that must be made in all organizations, as well as crucial decisions on acquisition policy and technological improvements. The faculty is aware of such things because of the inescapably intimate relationship between producing new books and articles and being familiar with existing books and articles. Scholarship is basically a process of accretion. Therefore, the core of the endeavor, being the existing work of judges and commentators, must be at the hand of the writer seeking to add something of value to it.

When I became a law school teacher, I also met Dan Henke. I cannot recall the exact occasion of my meeting the man who is responsible for the Hastings Law Library. I do know, however, that it was during my first month as an assistant professor at Hastings, that being June 1971. There were virtually no other faculty on the premises at the time. The members of the Sixty Five Club, and there were almost no other pro-

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\* Professor of Law, Hastings College of the Law. B.A., 1958, Pomona College; J.D., 1962, Harvard Law School.

fessors outside the Sixty Five Club in those days, did not work at the College during the summer. Accordingly, Dan was one of the few fellow academics on the premises during my first weeks on the faculty; and we soon met and became friends.

As I recall, in the summer of 1971, Dan had been the librarian for the College for only a year. As I also recall it, Dan, like myself, was one of Dean Marvin Anderson's hiring choices. Marv had a vision for Hastings and a management style that moved things steadily toward that vision, but neither the vision nor the movement was always clear, at least to very junior faculty members. At any rate, Dean Anderson pretty much made the College's personnel decisions in those long ago days, and he had hired Dan away from a position as Librarian at Boalt Hall to manage the Hastings collection. More importantly, Dan also had been hired away from Boalt to help guide Hastings through what, it is now clear, was to be the metamorphosis of the College into a major national law school.

In the early 1970s, the College's only truly distinguishing feature was the Sixty Five Club and the marvelous senior faculty who were its members. In terms of physical plant and supporting services, Hastings was, to be blunt, woefully inadequate. The addition of the 200 McAllister Street building in 1980 would change that for all time, but in 1971 it was hard to see how it would come to pass. Marvin Anderson, bless him, made it come to pass; but without Dan Henke, the central physical component of the Hastings community experience would have been something less than it is. Upon completion of 200 McAllister, the new law library was revealed as what it was and remains, the jewel in the College's crown. For over fifteen years, the Hastings Law Library has been a great source of pride for everyone connected with the College. Dan Henke planned it, played a key role in keeping the facility he planned from being significantly changed during the endless appropriations process, saw that it was built according to his plan, and ran it flawlessly for the first dozen years of its existence.

Almost every other feature of Hastings life, including, God knows, the performance of the faculty, has been the subject of sometimes justified criticism from time to time during that twelve year period. During that time, however, absolutely no one who dealt with the library or its staff had anything negative to say. The assistance the faculty receives from the Hastings library has been, and continues to be, superb. Visiting faculty often comment on the helpful nature of our librarians and almost everyone on the permanent faculty has stories to tell of how their professional lives have been aided by services the library routinely performs. Dan Henke's management and supervision of the library staff established a level of day in, day out performance that is remarkable. One of the highest compliments that is given to Professor and Librarian Jennifer Par-

rish is that the standards Dan established have been maintained under her leadership. She had a hard act to follow.

In the twenty plus years Dan and I served together on the faculty he managed to avoid the rapids caused by the inevitable politics of academic life and was a quiet but steadfast friend to all of his colleagues. I felt close to him for several reasons. He was only twelve years older than I, and on a faculty almost exclusively consisting of men of my father's age and older, Dan was almost a contemporary. We lived in the same Contra Costa County suburb, and I found his advice about such things as schools and schoolteachers to be invariably correct. His children chose college and, later, graduate school and occupations, about a decade before mine reached those inevitable crossroads. As is the case with all parents, I was unprepared for those times of decision when they came. However, I was less unprepared for them than would have been the case had I not discussed Dan's experiences at the time his children made those eventful choices.

Dan and I also shared a healthy interest in politics, sports, and the usual subjects of faculty and law school world gossip. We also shared a special interest in my writing on the life and career of Roger Traynor, the acclaimed Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court during the 1960s. Upon his retirement from the court, Justice Traynor became a member of the Hastings Sixty Five Club and a mutual friend of Dan's and mine. At the time of Roger's death in 1983 and thereafter, Mrs. Traynor relied heavily upon Dan's counsel and support.

Dan and his wife Shirley, a friend of the McCall family in her own right, were mainstays at Hastings faculty functions for decades. Their presence is still greatly missed. I specially recall with great fondness a party the Henkes hosted at their home almost twenty years ago. The guests were a large number of faculty and almost all of the library staff, including the part time student workers. Lots of beer, barbecued spare-ribs (Dan is a transplanted Texan), and social chat in the Henkes' back yard. It was a great evening, and, looking back on it, one of the few times the faculty and other people on the Hastings staff have gotten together for informal good times during my career at the College. I did not think of it at the time or since, but it was an egalitarian occasion, hosted by a manager who cared about the people he supervised as individuals. That aspect of Dan's personality, while not remarked upon, was known by all of the many people who composed the Hastings library staff during Dan's twenty years at the College.

Dan Henke as a colleague and a librarian, was quiet, caring, and supremely competent. The role he played over two decades of service, was indispensable to the development of Hastings College of the Law.

