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Jesse H. Choper

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Bill Lockhart— Colleague, Mentor, Friend

By JESSE H. CHOPER*

Bill Lockhart is truly an extraordinary man, not because his achievements have been so numerous and diverse—though they have—and not because his accomplishments carry a distinct mark of excellence and eminence—though they do. He is unusual because his professional attributes combine multiple gifts and powers rarely coalesced in a single human being. And only those familiar with Bill's deep devotion to his family and profound dedication to his faith can fully comprehend how remarkable a person he is.

I first met Bill Lockhart in December of 1959. As a third year law student at the University of Pennsylvania, I had come to the annual meeting of the Association of American Law Schools in St. Louis to seek a teaching job. In those days, the annual meeting was held between Christmas and New Years; since there was no separate weekend designated for interviews of prospective law teachers, the annual meeting also served as the hiring hall (or "meat market" as it was often called) for those law schools with openings.

William B. Lockhart, whose seminal articles on the constitutionality of state taxation of interstate commerce and the regulation of obscenity had often been cited in my casebooks and other materials—I can not now honestly recall whether I had yet read any—was then the Dean of the University of Minnesota Law School. I would estimate that I was the subject of about 15 interviewing session during my day and a half in St. Louis. Many were memorable for a variety of reasons, but none so impressive as the ones with the Minnesota delegation, led by Dean Lockhart.

Bill projected an intellectual liveliness and personal warmth, a feeling of hearty cordiality and total informality that characterized the institution and appealed greatly to beginners and more seasoned teachers alike. When I received a letter several days later — hand typed by him and signed "Bill"—asking me to come to Minneapolis

* Earl Warren Professor of Public Law, University of California at Berkeley (Boalt Hall).

for additional interviews with the faculty, I knew where I wanted to teach.

Bill Lockhart was not the only reason that I eventually accepted Minnesota's offer to join the faculty, but there was none more influential. Two years later, when Bill invited Yale Kamisar and me to join him in the publication of teaching materials in constitutional law, another long and rewarding association began. Bill was the ideal collaborator, encouraging us to develop our own notions regardless of his immense expertise in the area, irrespective of the fact that he had already prepared a full and refined set of materials over a number of years, and despite our being riders on the coattails of his contract with the publisher. He gave us our sway over those segments of the book that were assigned as our primary responsibility and was genuinely eager to receive our comments on his portions. But all having been said and done, he was the man of wisdom in the field. His adroit perceptions and penetrating judgments marked the entire project. Beyond this, his ability to get the job done throughout the drudgery of annual supplements and burden of frequent revisions has never ceased to be amazing. Then and now, he has always been ahead of the deadline, whether this has meant completing the supplement manuscript each year on his hideaway island in northern Minnesota (no telephone there for many years, messages reaching him by boat) or doing a thoroughgoing revision while simultaneously performing his many other duties.

During my years at Minnesota, Bill was an absolutely superb dean. As Professor Kamisar and I detailed in the *Minnesota Law Review* more than twenty years ago, "the plain fact is that virtually every aspect of Bill's deanship was a triumph, all bearing the imprint of his individual talent, vigor and style."¹ Even more remarkable, however, in addition to his heroic decanal efforts and ongoing commitment to classroom teaching and constitutional law scholarship, Bill also served as president of the Association of American Law Schools, as chairman of the United States Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, and as a member of the Council of the American Law Institute (among other activities).

In our tribute in 1972, Professor Kamisar and I wrote that "Bill's retirement as dean signifies an end of an era for Minnesota." In her tribute in these pages, Dean Mary Kay Kane makes a similar observation: "The retirement of Professor William B. Lockhart from Hastings

1. Jesse H. Choper & Yale Kamisar, *Dean Lockhart, The Man*, 56 MINN. L. REV. 992, 994 (1972).

and from active law teaching marks the end of an era.” But pursuant to Dean Kane’s noting that “Bill Lockhart’s ‘official’ retirement . . . does not really mean that he will stop caring about or being involved in some way with the law,” I am pleased to report that Bill is already committed to continuing work on the next edition of our constitutional law casebook just as soon as he completes the building of his new retirement home in Utah.

Quite a guy.

