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A Tribute to Barry Sullivan

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Years from now, when the scribes update the history of Lewis Hall, let one chapter be about the integrity of Barry Sullivan and his commitment to public interest work. Let that history tell of the many ways, official and unofficial, in which Barry tried to bring out the best in those who were lucky enough to cross his path. *We learned* from this man – and from his example.

Joan M. Shaughnessy*

One of the first things Barry Sullivan did when he became dean was to send each member of the incoming first year class a copy of Edward Levi's *An Introduction to Legal Reasoning*⁷³ to read for orientation. He wanted to be sure that Washington and Lee students would be challenged academically from the day they entered Lewis Hall. That gesture exemplified one of Barry's greatest strengths as dean – he valued intellectual inquiry and encouraged it in every aspect of law school life.

Barry himself has a ravenous appetite for ideas and learning, as any glimpse of his home or office bookshelves will reveal. He is as at home with history and literature as he is with law. He brings to mind the great nineteenth century advocates who could quote the classics at will to illustrate a point of argument. His writings and speeches during his years as dean were enlivened by grace notes from Yeats and Augustine, Shakespeare and Tocqueville. In this, I think, Barry is much like the mentor and beloved friend he describes in his tribute to Judge John Minor Wisdom.⁷⁴ In that essay, Barry wrote,

Judges and lawyers must bring to bear upon their cases the fullness of their learning, and that learning must be equal to the task. Judges must perceive issues, not as isolated ephemera, but as parts of the larger context – the greater whole – of history. They must at least strive for that panoramic view, transcending time and place, which is both the aim of liberal learning and the source of moral courage.⁷⁵

Barry also has a born-teacher's love of sharing learning with others. One of the spring semester tasks that occupied me when I served as Barry's associate dean was preparation of the class schedule for the following year. Briefing the dean on unfilled teaching assignments often resulted in a wistful tug of

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73. EDWARD LEVI, *AN INTRODUCTION TO LEGAL REASONING* (1949).

74. Barry Sullivan, *Honest Muse: John Minor Wisdom and the Uses of History*, 60 *TULANE L. REV.* 314 (1985).

75. *Id.* at 355.

war – no sooner would I mention the need to fill a writing section of Civil Procedure, to develop a new course in Alternative Dispute Resolution, or to cover for a Constitutional Law professor on leave, than the Dean would volunteer to take on the teaching assignment. If I hadn't yanked away the temptation, I am sure that Barry would have taken on a full teaching load every semester.

Another of Barry's strengths as dean was his devotion to our profession and its values. He came to our deanship with a resume full of distinguished pro bono service – on behalf of AIDS victims, criminal defendants, and others. During his tenure as dean, he spoke and wrote often of the obligation of the profession to supply legal services to those who needed them. One of his favorite stories is the one he tells of John Randolph Tucker's representation of the Haymarket anarchists – unpopular clients by any measure.

During his deanship, Barry strove to keep professional values central to our mission. He worked with our faculty, with state and national bar leaders and with judges on innovative ethics programs. He was also a staunch supporter of our clinical programs. He recognized their great value in instilling professionalism in our students and in providing needed legal services to the community. Barry's own description of professional commitment describes what he sought as dean for Washington and Lee and its students.

Our profession is one that is peculiarly concerned with the interaction between the world of the mind and the world of problems to be solved. It is essential to the profession, and to society, that we recognize that the public's business is our own, and that we nurture in ourselves those qualities necessary to that recognition.⁷⁶

Washington and Lee was immensely fortunate to attract as its Dean a man who exemplifies the finest ideals of the academy and of the legal profession and who worked mightily to bring them to life in Lewis Hall. His work, his values, and his example have enriched us all.



76. Barry Sullivan, *Professions of Law*, 9 GEO. J. LEGAL ETHICS 1235, 1299 (1996).