

Winter 1-1-1983

My Thoughts About Our Dean

Lewis H. LaRue

Washington and Lee University School of Law, laruel@mac.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlycommons.law.wlu.edu/wlulr>



Part of the [Legal Biography Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Lewis H. LaRue, *My Thoughts About Our Dean*, 40 Wash. & Lee L. Rev. 3 (1983),
<https://scholarlycommons.law.wlu.edu/wlulr/vol40/iss1/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Washington and Lee Law Review at Washington & Lee University School of Law Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Washington and Lee Law Review by an authorized editor of Washington & Lee University School of Law Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact lawref@wlu.edu.

MY THOUGHTS ABOUT OUR DEAN

LEWIS H. LARUE*

It is hard for me to imagine what it will be like without Roy as the Dean. I was hired by Bob Huntley, but he wasn't able to hold down the job of being a Dean; they made him into the President, and we had to find a new Dean. That all happened rather quickly, and so even though Bob Huntley and Charlie Light (who claimed that he had the rare distinction of having succeeded his successor) did some deaning while I started teaching, still, it has been Roy who was the Dean for almost the entire time.

These years have been good years for me, and so "good" is associated with Roy in my mind. No one can know, and certainly not he nor I, exactly the share of credit that he can claim for the many good things that have happened; he has a share, but so do others, and it would be foolish to try to assign percentages and thus make an apportionment. Even though I know all of this, and know rationally that Roy is merely one of the many who helped achieve the many good things that we have seen, still the claims of the heart overwhelm these rational reservations. The claims of the heart are shaped by what it feels like to have lived through it all, and that feeling was shaped by an important fact, that it was Roy who was there in the middle of everything.

We lived through a lot, and in doing so we made choices and thus settled, by the placing of mortar and brick, the size of our classes, thus shaping the most important thing about our school. We began recruiting students from schools that had been unrepresented, except sporadically, among our studentry, and so the character of those whom I have taught began to change. New faculty were recruited, in part so as to expand the curriculum that we could offer, and in part by way of replacing those who had sustained the school through prior years, but who now began to retire.

As we lived through all of these changes, and I have mentioned only a few, Roy was there, a solid and calming presence. I could always count on Roy to listen; he always let you know where he stood, but he wanted to know where you stood; and then he was anxious to reconsider his position, and for you to reconsider your position. As Roy listened, persuaded us, and was persuaded himself in turn, he gave us something priceless: he gave us a unity, the sort of community that can only come from honest disagreement, honestly resolved.

Creating community is not a trick, and it can't be done through cleverness. The qualities that it takes cannot be faked. Most of all, it is

* Professor of Law, Washington and Lee University; A.B. 1959, Washington and Lee University; LL.B. 1962, Harvard University.

his total lack of puffery that makes and made Roy such an extraordinary human. I will remember him most for his honesty.

So we now put a punctuation mark into the flow of traditions and stories that are the memory of our school. Another deanship has ended. When I came, there were stories that were told to me about the fun that they had had, living through a rather different time. And now, I too shall have my stories, about what fun it was to live through the many changes that we have seen in my first fifteen years of teaching. In most of these stories, one of the central protagonists will surely be our Dean, and in these stories he will have many roles. Sometimes he will be Nestor, and be renowned for his sage wisdom; in other stories, he will appear as Odysseus, he of many turns; and at other times, he will be remembered as Agamemnon, the anax andron.