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IN PRAISE OF ROY

JOSEPH E. ULRICH*

I met Roy Steinheimer during my first dean search. Like the rest of my colleagues I was not sure what a dean looked like. Within ten minutes of meeting Roy, I knew what I was looking for. I was looking for Roy Steinheimer. I let my wife know of my discovery. She looked at me and said, "I know. I just met his wife, Jane. Jane is perfect, and he must be too." Time has proved us both right.

It is very hard to set out specifically what makes a great dean. Part of it must be the confidence that a real leader instills in his faculty. Roy gave that to us. During his tenure we always have been certain that the school was moving in the right direction, even if we weren't quite sure what direction that was. Roy had lots of good new ideas which he executed adroitly. Because he was so clearly competent, the confidence he displayed in us meant a lot.

Roy once described his view of his job as that of an expeditor. He told us that he would aid us in doing what we as a faculty wanted to do. He performed this function flawlessly. If you had a project for which you needed funds, personnel, or just encouragement, you could obtain these from The Dean.

An unspoken assumption underlying all of Roy's dealings with his faculty (and students as well) has been an absolute even handedness of treatment. Roy was always remarkably impartial. All members of the law school community knew that no matter what the controversy, or the mix of personalities, you could go to Roy and get a fair hearing. Beyond question this community-wide perception of neutrality has prevented many disputes which might easily have developed otherwise.

Any good administrator has a distinctive style. There was the British Raj and now Roy. Roy's style has become legendary. I will note two examples. There have been times when Roy has told members of the law school community that there was nothing he could do. To use his famous phrase, "my hands are tied." Most of us knew that Roy used those magic words for the same reason that a judge might employ a locution like "proximate cause" or "due process" to reach a desired result. This was his way of saying "no". The measure of Roy's majesty has been demonstrated by the fact that faculty and students alike accepted this pronouncement with good humor. The other trait worthy of mention was Roy's method of getting you to do what he wanted even if you didn't want to. We call this "being Royed." Roy is the master negotiator. I cannot think of any bargaining session which he ever lost. There may have

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been ties. When you came into his office on one of these occasions, Roy often would pull out the desk drawer at his right hand and look into it. I always assumed that he had a list in there with your weaknesses, and he was refreshing his memory. He knew how to play on your vanity. He would begin the conversation at some innocuous level, get you nodding and going along with him, and at some point he would slip in the crucial phrase. You would nod without thinking. Before you could retract, Roy would say, "yes, I can see why I have always trusted your judgment." What could you say? This happened even when you anticipated his moves and put your neck in a brace. With Roy, such sessions were an art form.

Jane and Roy were a marvelous team. In many ways Jane set the tone for the relationships among the entire faculty. Jane was a charming person. Even in difficult situations no one ever felt ill-at-ease around Jane. She was your friend if you needed it. I miss her a great deal.

In sum, this faculty has lived through a Golden Age. Roy has had the longest tenure of any law school dean in America. And we still want more. I am sorry that we cannot clone him. He was the right man for the job. It has been a pleasure to be here during Roy's reign.