

1-1-2017

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Greg Hobbs, Fred Cheever Dedication, DU Water Law Review, 20 U. Denv. Water L. Rev. [viii] (2017).

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Fred Cheever Dedication, DU Water Law Review

Fred Cheever Dedication, DU Water Law Review

by Greg Hobbs

There's always a risk when you take to the waters. Maybe not enough to float your boat. Maybe a bank-ripping torrent scouring out your woody vegetation.

As this issue goes to press, we celebrate Faculty Advisor Fred Cheever, lover of the lands, the waters, and the peoples of the West. In this twentieth year of the *Water Law Review's* existence, he stands atop our masthead. In addition to being Faculty Advisor, we name him scholar, colleague, counselor, friend.

We grieve for his wife, Mary, and his beloved daughters, Elizabeth and Laurel. When the joy of a family Dinosaur National Monument whitewater adventure turns tragic, shall we curse the river that takes him?

We know well enough of Fred and his family to say "Never!"

Each of us will recall the day and hour we learned of Fred going before us. My wife, Bobbie, and I were walking to breakfast past Emily Dickinson's Amherst home when we received Professor Cai's startling message the day of our granddaughter Shannon's graduation from Northampton High.

There's nothing coincidental about congruency. Fred from the heritage of a New England writing family. Fred written into the horizon of each new western day as we reflect on him.

Alone and in a Circumstance (No. 1167, 1870) Emily writes "If any take my property/
According to the Law/ The statute is my Learned Friend/ But what redress can be/ For an offense
nor here nor there/ So not set in Equity—/ That larceny of time and mind/ The marrow of the
Day/ By spider, or forbid it Lord/ That I should specify."

Emily's brother, father, and grandfather were lawyers. Through them she found, nonetheless, going beyond the law requires entering into the natural world and stretching mortality's limitations, "Untenable to Logic/ But possibly the one —." *The things we thought we should do* (No. 1293, 1874).

May Fred Cheever's voice continue to sound high and clear within our watersheds.

Fred Cheever

His light is on.

You can see him in the dawn
when western snow-packed peaks awake

When rivulets gather strength
in forested watersheds

And run

Out of the public domain
into his office

Singing of books, incoming messages
and students checking in

For example, Roosevelt, Pinchot,
followed by his favorite characteristic

Pronunciation . . . (pause) . . .“Right?”

As, by way of commentary and open invitation
for further discussion, he grins

Embracing the lands, the peoples, the creatures
of the West so completely you might say,

By right of appropriation, they thoroughly
possessed him

As though the river were ever calling him “home.”

(for Mary, Elizabeth, Laurel and Fred’s Very Many Students)

Greg Hobbs 6/15/2017
Co-Director, Environmental & Natural Resources
Program, DU Law

Citations are to Thomas H. Johnson, Editor, *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson* (Little, Brown and Company, Third Printing 1960).



Photo, Fred Cheever and Patty Limerick with students of Justice Hobbs’ Colorado Legal History Class, February 23, 2016