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Hail Bill Beaney

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FOREWORD

HAIL BILL BEANEY

ROBERT B. YEGGE[†]

Professor William M. Beaney: What is the constitutional significance of *Marbury v. Madison*?

Student: Establish the independence of the judiciary.

Professor Beaney: Elaborate . . .

When: 1956

Where: Course in Constitutional Law, Princeton University, arguably one of the toughest courses in the curriculum.

Student: Robert B. Yegge

Teaching Materials: *American Constitution Law* by William Beaney and the legendary Alpheus T. Mason, now in its 7th edition.

And so began my admiration of Bill Beaney, some forty-seven years ago.

I am not the only admirer of Bill Beaney. Several other recognizable names took the same course: George Will, Donald Rumsfeld, Richard Perle, and many others.

The son of a borne Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania coalminer, Beaney went to Harvard for his undergraduate degree and PhD in political science. He then gained a law degree at the University of Michigan. His undergraduate studies were interrupted by his service in the infantry in World War II where he was wounded in action. Convalescing, he was a defender and prosecutor in military courts martial.

Beaney joined the Princeton faculty in 1949, rising to occupy the Cromwell Professorship of Law in 1964.

Bill Beaney had an exemplary career and tenure at Princeton. It was my personal pleasure to continue to stay in touch with Beaney and his charming wife Pat from my graduate days until he surprised me in 1968 by accepting an appointment to the University of Denver College of Law faculty, requiring him to resign his professorship at Princeton and begin teaching law students at DU.

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Many have asked why Beaney left his comfortable and venerable position at Princeton. His answer, at least to me, was that he always wanted to teach at a law school—not a traditional law school—a law school that seriously integrated law and the social sciences. Beaney insisted that Denver was the one place that was doing just that. Indeed, the University of Denver College of Law was one of four Russell Sage Foundation Centers for the Study of Law and Society (University of California Berkeley, University of Wisconsin, and Northwestern University being the other three), but Denver was the only university in which the program was in the law school—all others were in related disciplines, mostly sociology.

The appointment of Beaney to the University of Denver faculty was a giant step for establishing the University of Denver College of Law as a major academic player in the law of society movement. He had been preceded by Professor Gresham Sykes, also at Princeton, and followed by James Wallace and Wilbert E. Moore, both also from Princeton. With the team of interdisciplinary scholars assembled, each with impeccable credentials, the reputation of the University of Denver College of Law as a major player in the law and society movement was assured.

A personal antidote: after the “raids” of the Princeton faculty, I was at an occasion with then President Robert F. Goheen of Princeton who asked me simply, “Whom else are you going to steal from me?”

When the College of Law established its first professorial chair—the William Delaney, Jr. Professor of Law—he was destined to hold the position, after the initial incumbency of Thompson G. Marsh.

Beaney brought a particular perspective to his teaching of law students. He was a recognized and credentialed political scientist, having served as President of the American Political Science Association, and he was a carefully trained law person. With his experience teaching Princeton undergraduates, his recognized scholarship and distinction in the field of political science and as a man of the wriest honor, he brought special experience and flavor to his University of Denver College of Law classes.

Bill was not just a teacher and respected scholar. He was always on the policy committee, and always its chairman. He also twice served as acting dean.

From 1968 until his retirement in 1989, students at the College of Law were privileged to study under Bill Beaney. His legacy is remembered and cherished by hundreds of law students whose lives he touched.

Few law schools in the United States can boast a more illustrious scholar and teacher than Bill Beaney. We are proud that he elected to serve the majority of his career with our law students and that he shared his wit and wisdom with faculty, alumni, members of the bar, and stu-

dents. Incidentally, Bill was singularly honored by the Colorado legal profession by his election as a fellow of the Colorado Bar Foundation, notwithstanding his lack of practice and his absence from formal admission to practice before the Colorado Supreme Court.

Let us salute and hail Bill Beaney, a colleague, a friend, a mentor, and one of the most enthusiastic vocal supporters of the University of Denver College of Law as we read the pages to follow.

