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**Dedication: Robert Bernard Yegge**

**Keywords**

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## **Dedication: Robert Bernard Yegge**

My friend, Robert B. Yegge, has been a splendid Dean of the College of Law, University of Denver, for twelve years. He is now leaving the academic world and reentering the private practice of law. I note that occasion by observing that to me Bob Yegge truly is a renaissance man, having myriad interests and abilities. He is a consummate author, a mellow wise man, a concerned humanitarian, an efficient administrator, a knowledgeable publicist, an effective fund-raiser, a scholarly legal educator, and a devoted and principled lawyer. Throughout his deanship, he particularly reveled in intellectual challenge and innovation. The fine arts have been a life-long obsession with him. Among the variety of arts and humanities organizations that he has served, he has been most deeply involved with the Colorado Council on the Arts and Humanities, serving for more than ten years as its chairman. From afar, it certainly has seemed to me that this delightful lawyer has been always truly in love with life and its many mysteries.

The Law Center at the University of Denver is only one of many institutions which has profited from his energy and ability, but to me it is the one which remains the largest in his heart. When he became the dean of its law school, his plans for it then are well set forth in a statement he later made:

A law center is a place where people learn and study the law all of their lives. At the University of Denver, the Law Center contains a College of Law to teach the fundamental principles of law. It is a place conducive for research and experimentation to keep our legal system operative and current and to strive toward an understanding of the fabric of justice. It is a place for continuing the education of professionals, housing organizations interested in law and the administration of justice, and providing the community a place to find respect for and comfort in the law. In sum, it provides a showcase for demonstrating the contribution which lawyers make to the well-being of today's society.

Twelve years later, the Denver Law Center has in the main reached the initial goals set for it by Bob Yegge. Yet, throughout those twelve years of achievement, that hard-driving and demanding leader established himself with fellow Denver faculty and students as a man of unbounded energy, keen insight, high legal scholarship, and warm friendship. Truly, his acco-

lades and honors as a law school dean defy specific enumeration. Twelve years ago, Bob Yegge, writing in the *American Bar Journal* with foresight and remarkable anticipation, said:

Already, the importance of individual rights is a focus of major legal attention, which has become even more specific in the criminal area. In 1976, the specificity of similar legal concerns promises to be more, rather than less, intense. Hence, the importance, availability and use of education in 1976 will significantly affect the practice of law. With changes occurring incrementally, lawyers will be more concerned with future developments—they will become explorers, not merely archaeologists.

The implication of the crystal ball for legal education seems too clear to elaborate. In summary, it means an admixture of specialized training, an exposure to disciplines not heretofore thought of as important to the lawyer—a liberal legal education with chosen intensity of specialization; in other words, a legal curriculum of the order, but not the substance, as at present offered at the leading liberal arts colleges. Whether the law schools will attempt all of these educational tasks will be left to the unpredictable policy decisions of the leaders in legal education.

As a legal educator, Dean Yegge clearly is, and has been, a leading participant in the explorer category—he is not, and never has been, merely a legal archaeologist.

Throughout his decanal career, Bob Yegge has approached the law with an unparalleled zest and continuous quest for academic excellence. He has provided in the Denver College of Law a calmness and sincere appreciation for law and lawyers in all those who worked with him—and he has inculcated in them well the dogma that legal education must be an admixture of specialized preparation.

The integration of law and the social sciences is one of the issues that Dean Yegge has over the years pioneered in legal education. He designed and directed the Social Science Methods in Legal Education Program at the College of Law for the Law and Society Association and the Association of American Law Schools since 1967. And he was the first President, serving in that capacity from 1965 through 1972, of the Law and Society Association.

As a legal educator, Bob Yegge was a perfectionist. He set often impossible standards for himself, and he was never really satisfied with anything that he, or anyone else in the law school, did. He was sometimes hard to work for or with—but

he, with those others he brought to Denver, made a national reputation for the Denver Law Center. During his long tenure as dean, he exhibited a thoroughgoing pragmatism yet a firm and continuing commitment to the principle of academic excellence. It seems to me that he as dean displayed there in a most unique way both imagination and perserverance.

As a lawyer, he has believed that a humble man who tried his best could enlist the support of others and succeed, regardless of moments of adversity. He has been optimistic—trusting in the inherent good of all men—and he has always been convinced that right would ultimately prevail. He carries with him a love for the common man and a feeling that equality and justice are abiding principles that a lawyer must strive to promote. He is compassionate and understanding, conscientious, and fairminded. He, unlike many other people, has not been locked to any single opinion or idea—reason always prevailed. In the face of tremendous demands on his personal time, he still on an almost daily basis has rendered far-reaching service of state and national impact to the legal profession.

While he has had during the period that I have known him well the greatest possible respect and admiration for the practicing bar, he has, nevertheless, led multiple efforts to improve the structure of the legal profession, and the ways, means and methods it traditionally has utilized to deliver its services. Indeed, he has not been hesitant when the organized bar was unable or unwilling to correct abuses to point out what he felt was a self-serving attitude of ignoring the public interest.

Perhaps it is fair, if it is ever fair for one person to be so singled out, to assert that Bob Yegge in my opinion has been a principle force in the present substantially enhanced use of paraprofessionals by the practicing bar. Certainly, his writings and his speeches demonstrate very clearly his early interest in paralegals. More than ten years ago he wrote:

Almost every lawyer has a speciality. And, if we are honest with ourselves, almost every lawyer has his incompetencies. Furthermore, there are subprofessionals, not lawyers, who can handle certain legal-related problems with efficiency at least equal to that of lawyers. The title insurance companies competently prepare title opinions in the form of title commitments; insurance adjusters are experts at negotiation and settlement; professional estate planners have in-depth knowledge of tax and legal rules and regulations and sound advice. In fact, some of those subpro-

fessional specialists have greater competence in their areas than some general practitioners.

Bob Yegge's first book on the subject was called *New Careers in Law*, published in 1969, under a grant from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. That volume was followed with *New Careers in Law II*, a 1972 American Bar Association publication. Both were splendid—and each in turn contributed to the movement toward paralegals. To my own knowledge he was an effective leader of the American Bar Association Special Committee on Legal Assistants from 1970 through 1976. His interest in paralegals led to his repeated endeavors to assist in the creation of the new profession of professional court manager. Indeed, I was his colleague in 1970 as a founding trustee of the Institute for Court Management; while I have been long gone from the Institute for Court Management, he continues to so serve as one of its leaders. He was the motivating force behind the Master of Science in Judicial Administration Degree Program at the University of Denver College of Law in 1971, the first of its kind in the nation. Legal specialization, too, has always been an area of deep concern for him. He has written extensively on the subject in a variety of journals, chapters and books, and in his Dean's Reports.

Minority legal education is something that Bob Yegge believes to be of deep and profound importance. In 1967 he began at the University of Denver College of Law the first minority summer preparatory program (primarily for Chicanos), under a grant from the Ford Foundation, which not surprisingly to me turned out to be the model which precipitated the Council on Legal Education Opportunity (the joint endeavor of the American Bar Association and Association of American Law Schools), and the model of the training programs which CLEO has since annually sponsored. He was a member of the Board of Trustees of the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund from 1970 through 1976 and he served as its first Vice Chairman from 1974 through 1976. In addition, he served as Chairman of the Colorado Migrant Council from 1965 through 1970 and as Colorado Chairman of the Campaign for the United Negro College Fund.

Continuing legal education is an item of professional business that Bob Yegge believes is most critical to the practicing bar. Accordingly, he caused to be established as early as 1965

a major continuing legal education program for the State of Colorado under the auspices of the University of Denver College of Law. Further, he established at the Denver College of Law several national continuing legal education programs, such as the Transportation Law Institute for the Motor Carrier Lawyers Association.

Verily, Bob Yegge has loved the law in all of its ramifications all of his professional life—perhaps, indeed, for all of his life. I for one am convinced that Bob Yegge gave to the College of Law of the University of Denver even more than he received. In pursuing his destiny over the past twelve years as a law school dean, Bob Yegge can stand as an example of dedication for the many who know him well. On balance, he has been one of the truly innovative legal administrators of this sturdy and robust land of mountains and plains. It is indeed rare for any one man to have combined in him the charm, intellect, ability, personality, integrity, and academic courage with which he is endowed. With all of his achievements as a law professor, law dean, and practicing lawyer, he still is a compassionate, warm, and lovable human being.

Dean Robert B. Yegge had a long and illustrious tenure at the University of Denver. He obviously continues to cherish its College of Law and all of its people. Without a scintilla of doubt, he is a devoted servant and a noble son of Colorado. It is a singular honor for me to participate in honoring a man who has performed professionally in such an exemplary way.

*Chesterfield Smith*  
*Former President*  
*American Bar Association*