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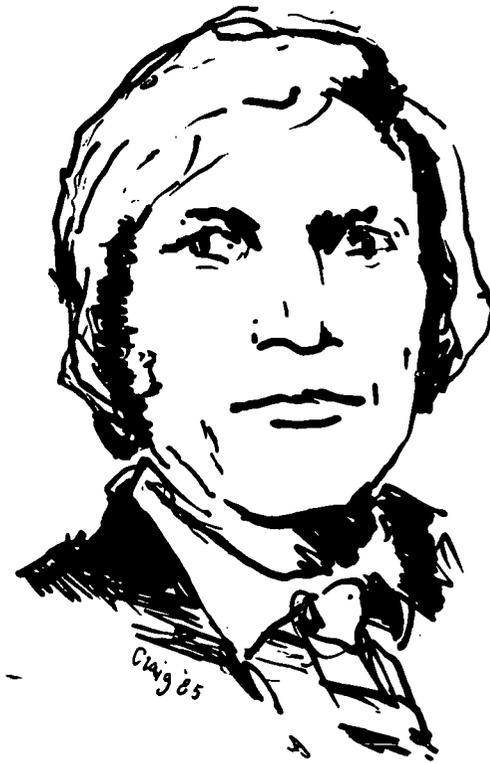
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Tribute to Dean Daniel S. Hoffman

# TRIBUTE TO DEAN DANIEL S. HOFFMAN

JAMES L. WINOKUR\*



It is a special privilege for me to participate in the *Denver University Law Review's* Dedication to Dean Emeritus Daniel S. Hoffman. In addition to being my Dean for several years, Dan has been a dear friend and personal mentor. His counsel and his example have enriched me immeasurably, as they have profoundly enhanced this College of Law.

As I look back to meeting Dan Hoffman at the beginning of his Deanship in 1978, I recall how immediately my expectations and preconceptions—derived from his impressive credentials and accomplishments—dissolved in the face of his commanding and charismatic presence. Dan's style and rhythm can be swiftly distracting. And yet, part of Dan's special ability for making his ideas work is that he himself is rarely distracted by styles and rhythms. More than once I have left a meeting with him feeling more upbeat, but needing to carefully replay the meeting's exchanges to fully understand and appreciate exactly how the specific problems we addressed had been transformed. I soon real-

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\* Professor of Law, University of Denver. The portrait of Dan Hoffman was drawn by Denver artist Craig Welch.

ized that such meetings with Dan looked even better in “slow motion replay.” Dan’s effectiveness was a result of careful preparation, close attention to detail, and the ability to keep values and priorities straight amid shifting arguments and changing facts.

I recall this perception now because my effort to assess Dan Hoffman’s Deanship requires analogous reflection to grasp the breadth of his influence. My first impulse is to describe Dan’s leadership in terms of his personal style—a “breath of fresh air.” This style is most immediately reflected in the contrast between our dingy old downtown law center and the beautiful new Lowell Thomas Law Building, with its skylights, its spacious “Student Street” and its glorious, vibrant colors. I remember the student-published *Denver Law Forum* welcoming “Dean Dan,” and the sudden emergence of the Spring Revue, the Student Bar Association Art Show (complete with live music!), and the excitement of the Barristers’ Cup moot court intramurals. Each of these new College of Law institutions picked up on the special style of our new Dean, and each improved the school.

Dan’s accomplishments as Dean, however, reach far beyond these few improvements, to a host of developments on which a quality law school must rest. Sorting carefully back through the accomplishments of Dan’s tenure as Dean, his energetic style and contagious enthusiasm are grounded in an even more impressive context of careful planning and building. Dan’s tireless, methodical, substantive groundwork in positioning our College of Law for a strong future stands together with his personal flare and charisma as fundamental components of his legacy. In honoring Dan, it is essential to recount the breadth and quality of that extensive groundwork.

The most obvious aspect of Dan Hoffman’s groundwork is the most tangible—making our magnificent new Law Center a reality. From the first opportunity to acquire our new campus, Dan (with major contributions by Professors Bill Beaney, John Carver, Al Coco, and Associate Dean Jack Hanley) led the process by which the College of Law became the University of Denver’s prime occupant here, with new and renovated facilities equal to or better than many of America’s finest law schools. Additionally, our new facilities and campus are designed to allow further development that promises to change legal education in this region and elsewhere. Dan’s development of the Inns of Court concept—a law center incorporating public interest legal institutions, practicing attorneys, convention facilities for legal meetings and conferences, and technologically advanced academic and library facilities—has attracted national interest from legal educators and institutions.

Dan Hoffman’s role in developing the new law school facilities demonstrated his wide array of personal abilities. Dan repeatedly blended his visionary Inns of Court concept with meticulous attention to detail. Throughout the building of the Lowell Thomas Law Building and relocation from downtown Denver, he combined a strength of personality with a grace and personal sensitivity that allowed those working

with him, including the University Administration and Trustees, builders, and financiers to comfortably support the project. When the College of Law was threatened, first with a demand that it be fully housed in the existing Colorado Women's College buildings, and later with a 95 percent reduction in the furnishings and equipment budget, Dan successfully pressed for the new Lowell Thomas Law Building, substantially equipped, which conformed closely to the original Inns of Court law center plan.

The development of the new College of Law facility, impressive as it is, is only part of Dan Hoffman's contributions to the College of Law as Dean. In many respects, his intangible contributions are of even greater import. Dan was, and to this day remains, an advocate *par excellence* for the College of Law in a range of settings. Dan Hoffman impressed upon our graduates the crucial role of Alumni responsibility in developing and maintaining an excellent law school. Alumni support for the College of Law is, consequently, stronger than ever. The Colorado Bar exhibits an improving respect for, and involvement in, the College of Law. Dan was also a strong advocate within the University. The College of Law enjoys a status of academic pre-eminence among University of Denver's colleges and departments. Dan kept the law school integrally involved with and supportive of the University while retaining the University Administration's assistance regarding College of Law needs. It is no accident that the College of Law and the University were able and willing to attract a new Dean of the stature and ambition of Yale Law School Deputy Dean Ed Dauer in the wake of Dan Hoffman's leadership.

Dan Hoffman's achievements as an "outside Dean"—developing the new law center facility, and building new and improved relations with Alumni, the practicing Bar, and the University Administration and Trustees—are complemented by his major internal accomplishments, all ultimately in the service of improving the quality of our students' legal education. In 1978, when he assumed the helm of a school sometimes thought to be academically permissive, Dan sounded a different note. In his first orientation address to students, he emphasized his own particular and peculiar work ethic by suggesting that students having difficulty meeting the challenge of law school should make more time for study by sleeping only four hours per night! Those remarks signaled a new, more disciplined era in which graduation requirements and academic standards were raised.

Dan paid special attention to the development of legal writing and research skills, particularly for first-year law students. Before Dan's arrival at the College of Law, existing writing courses were optional, and some students graduated with no training in legal writing. Additionally, the skills-oriented writing courses faced substantial budgetary and administrative obstacles. Dan Hoffman, in concert with a Faculty committee, quickly addressed these problems and clarified his own commitment to a strong legal writing program. Early in his tenure, a Legal Research

and Writing Program was implemented for all first-year law students. Dan recruited former Colorado Supreme Court Chief Justice Edward E. Pringle to administer this new, required course. In keeping with this new emphasis, additional writing requirements have been incorporated in other courses and several professors have elected to use take-home essay exams or written exercises which require careful reflection upon and analysis of complex legal problems.

The Hoffman administration (including Associate Deans John Reese and Jim Wallace, and Registrar Irmgard Vragel) further improved our law students' experience by implementing a series of tighter academic policies. The security of anonymity in grading is now assured. Grading deadlines are applied more strictly. The Faculty evaluation process is more regularly administered, with results withheld until Faculty members have submitted grades, and the results then conveniently and widely disseminated. Perhaps more important than these reforms is the development of a stronger adjunct faculty. Not only are qualified practitioners carefully identified and recruited to make their unique teaching abilities available to law students, but as adjunct Faculty they are more actively evaluated and kept abreast of emerging changes in academic policies and standards.

Dan Hoffman also led the reorganization of the Advocacy Skills Program. The most fundamental development in Advocacy Skills occurred at the very beginning of Dan's Deanship, when our clinical staff attorney positions were incorporated into the tenured faculty. By changing the status of our clinical Faculty members, assigning them classroom courses in addition to their Student Law Office responsibilities, and requiring scholarly writing of them, the University of Denver's traditional leadership in clinical law training has been greatly enhanced. Faculty status and faculty-level compensation have allowed the College of Law to attract clinicians with strong credentials and serious academic ambitions who have responded with innovative classroom teaching and outstanding scholarship.

In strengthening the College's Advocacy Skills Program, Dan has also supported the moot court, client counseling, and mock trial programs. With Dan's encouragement, in 1985 this school is a national leader in intermural student competitions. Since 1978, teams from the College of Law's Barristers' Cup Program for Excellence in Appellate Advocacy, the Jessup International Law Program, the Client Counseling, and Mock Trial Programs have captured regional championships and placed very high in national competitions.

Especially in the early years of his Deanship, Dan Hoffman worked effectively to build a stronger, more productive faculty. Our faculty recruitment efforts became more aggressive and produced a new generation of professors around whom our College of Law can be built. Thus, the period from 1978 to 1984 under Dean Hoffman saw the addition, as permanent Faculty, of Professors Sandra Blackstone (formerly Deputy Director for Energy and Mineral Resources, Bureau of Land Manage-

ment, United States Department of the Interior, and a Denver University Law Alumna); Jerome Borison (CPA and JD, with Master of Laws from New York University's tax program); Thomas Crandall (nationally recognized scholar in commercial law, with law teaching experience at North Carolina, Buffalo, Gonzaga and, for 1985-86, a visitorship at the University of Texas); William Creech (hired from the Master of Taxation Faculty of New York University); Paul Stephen Dempsey (Director of our Transportation Law Program, and a nationally recognized authority and government advisor on issues of transportation and other industrial regulation); Robert Hardaway (Order of Coif graduate of New York University and widely-experienced Colorado litigator, now assigned to our Advocacy Skills Program); Sheila Hyatt (former Missouri Assistant Attorney General, recognized for important research in "Litigating the Rights of Handicapped Children to an Appropriate Education," now assigned to our Advocacy Skills Program); Stephen Pepper (educated at Stanford and Yale, and emerging as a scholar of substantial national impact in Church-State constitutional issues); George W. Pring (*cum laude* graduate of both Harvard and Michigan, Environmental Defense Fund Regional Counsel, and nationally recognized as a leading pro-environmental litigator); Edward E. Pringle (former Colorado Supreme Court Chief Justice); Edward J. Roche (JD, CPA, Comment Editor of the *University of Chicago Law Review* and former advisor to the United States Treasury Department's Office of Tax Legislative Counsel); G. Kellam Scott (nationally recognized advocate and analyst of federal assistance to minority-owned small businesses); and John Soma (widely recognized author and speaker on emerging issues of computers and the law, former trial attorney and Chief Administrative Officer of the United States Justice Department's Anti-trust Division).

Enhancing his efforts to strengthen our Faculty, Dan played a significant role in revamping tenure and promotion policies and recently instituted substantial release-time opportunities to encourage Faculty scholarship. Hughes Foundation grants and sabbatical leaves to facilitate and encourage research were also encouraged by the Hoffman administration.

Each of Dan Hoffman's contributions has made the University of Denver College of Law a more attractive school for Students and Faculty. These many contributions present Dean Designate, Ed Dauer, the Faculty, and Staff with new and realistic opportunities to move the University of Denver College of Law forward into the ranks of excellent, nationally respected law schools.

Many of us who worked with Dan during his six progressive years look back on that period with appreciation for more than the new law center facilities, the improved, rigorous curriculum, and the strong, new faculty additions. For Dan's Deanship has—more than *anything* else—reflected an extraordinary regard and respect for the dignity of each person. As we debated the issues that confronted an improving law school, and argued the most delicate and painful of policies and contro-

versies, Dan steadfastly anchored our efforts with his respect for the individual that has characterized his entire career. When the inevitable personal frictions arose during Dan's tenure, he repeatedly reminded each of us the other's perspectives and concerns. When a colleague confronted a personal crisis, professional or otherwise, Dan was quick to offer encouragement, and often assistance and advice. On a Faculty and Staff of varied personalities and styles, it is an extraordinary commentary that so very many of us view Dan Hoffman as a special, personal friend.

These perceptions of Dan Hoffman are the product of a code Dan vividly laid out for us in his first address to the Faculty, as a Dean candidate in early 1978. In the strongest possible language he said that, of his values and principles, he considered the most important to be personal loyalty and commitment. As Dean, Dan Hoffman consistently lived out this early commitment to us and the College of Law.

Dan Hoffman's tenure was a Deanship of personal grace; a Deanship of humanism; and a Deanship of healing. It has ultimately been a Deanship of friendship. When the Faculty and Staff searched for an appropriate gift to express their affection and regard for Dan's years as Dean, the traditional plaques, clocks and desk sets seemed to miss the essential spirit of this special leader. In the end, we chose a porcelain sculpture of four dolphins, playfully leaping from the ocean's surface. In selecting this gift, we tried to reflect tangibly the intangibles that have meant so much to us—the *intelligence*, the *energy*, the *grace*, and the *friendship* which we so deeply appreciate in our "Dean Dan."