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VANCE R. DITTMAN
A LAWYER'S LAW PR

BY THOMPSON G. MARS

In a day when it was believed that law was taught by well-educated lawyers who had law practice, Vance R. Dittman came to the Law School with the best possible qualifications. Yale, several years of really successful and fit York and Denver, and an independent income for him and his wife (also of Yale) freely.

It happened to be at that brief period within the center of the university campus at University, residential community six miles from the heart of downtown Denver that the Dittmans bought their home. The shadows of the ivory towers and the prospect of high salaries was over; he still had his home in University Park; he moved back downtown, where it had been for him it is now — near the courts and law offices.

In spite of this, the Dittmans developed and on the university campus broader and more than were enjoyed by other members of the university Senate. He was so informed on everything from literature to science. Many friends in so many different fields of person he was able to achieve to an unusual and cumulative synthesis of which so much has been written.

Withal, he remained a lawyer's lawyer, a law practitioner and evidence and civil procedure with the habit of a good lawyer. He compiled with annotations and citations that practically

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In a day when it was believed that law students should be taught by well-educated lawyers who had had years of successful law practice, Vance R. Dittman came to what was then the Denver Law School with the best possible qualifications: A.B., Yale, LL.B., Yale, several years of really successful and first class practice in New York and Denver, and an independent income which made it possible for him and his wife (also of Yale) freely to choose an academic life.

It happened to be at that brief period when the law school was in the center of the university campus at University Park, an attractive residential community six miles from the courts and law offices of downtown Denver that the Dittmans bought a home there in the shadows of the ivory towers and the prospect was pleasant.

Within two years, Vance was in the Navy, and when the war was over he still had his home in University Park, but the law school was back downtown, where it had been for half a century, and where it is now — near the courts and law offices.

In spite of this, the Dittmans developed in University Park and on the university campus broader and more intimate friendships than were enjoyed by other members of the faculty. Mrs. Dittman was President of the Women's Faculty Club, and Vance was President of the University Senate. He was so well educated and well informed on everything from literature to science and he had so many friends in so many different fields of learning, that in his person he was able to achieve to an unusual extent, that interdisciplinary synthesis of which so much has been written.

Withal, he remained a lawyer's law professor. He taught contracts and evidence and civil procedure with teaching loads that in the early years ranged from 15 to 20 hours per week, and yet, with the habit of a good lawyer, he complemented the casebooks with annotations and citations that practically constituted briefs. His

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students learned not only contracts, evidence, and civil procedure but also thoroughness and accuracy, which might be considered among the sine qua non of professional responsibility. Furthermore, he singlehandedly administered a program by which students were given academic credit for actual practice, under a special rule of the Supreme Court of Colorado. His supervision was close and exacting and the standards he set must have helped many of the school's graduates to set similarly high standards for themselves.

When teaching loads were diminished, Vance seemed to work harder than ever. He prepared his own materials for new courses in Civil Procedure; he collaborated with Harold Hurst in the preparation of a book on procedural due process in which every relevant discussion of the Supreme Court of the United States was considered; and he prepared a manual for use by the Denver Police Department when law enforcement officials first began to be aware of questions concerning the legality of their own procedures.

Recognition of him as Colorado's outstanding authority on civil procedure caused the West Publishing Company to request him to prepare a three-volume work on the *Colorado Rules of Civil Procedure*. With typical thoroughness, he refused to rely upon the digests, but instead, with the help of a student assistant, turned every page of the *Colorado Reports*. No case was overlooked. Nor was he content merely to express his own first opinion with respect to unclear and ambiguous language in the rules or in the opinions construing the rules. In such cases he would argue it out with some other member of the faculty who might have a different point of view. He even prepared the index for the *Colorado Rules of Procedure*. In order to meet the contract deadlines he worked early and late at the law school and even during the summers at his mountain home, Sky Meadow.

No wonder he is now retiring, years before the age limit. He has earned freedom, and again he is in a position to choose the life he wants.