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Echo: Words Spoken In Memory Of James Beaver

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better education than had he not been here from the beginning. We had, and we have lost, a valuable educator and colleague.

Thomas Holdych
Professor of Law
Seattle University School of Law

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ECHO:
WORDS SPOKEN IN MEMORY OF JAMES BEAVER

I think it appropriate for me to begin with a brief recitation of the facts: Professor Beaver was born in the Midwest, he graduated first in his class at the University of Chicago School of Law; he spoke several languages, and he was a connoisseur of fine art, classical music, and conservative politics.

And yet, people still liked him.

Why? Because what matters are not the honors and achievements bestowed, but rather the spirit or essence of the person. Part of the reason I liked him was that he was different—perhaps one might even say eccentric. He was reminiscent of a captivating Dickens character like Pickwick or Micawber. He may have been white but he was not plain vanilla.

Maybe more importantly, he was different and he didn't try to hide that difference. He was a very content man. He seemed happy with so many parts of his life; but what struck me most was how much he loved his job.

There are two major components to being a law school professor: teaching and publishing. He enjoyed both components of the job and excelled at them as well. Teaching, of course, is merely another performance art, so his musical training prepared him well for the task. And while his publishing legacy is nearly complete, the legacy of his teaching is only beginning: two of the most recently elected State Supreme Court justices were students of Professor Beaver. So was a Vice-President of the United States, numerous law professors, television personalities, and thousands of equally successful but lesser known acolytes with more on the way.

As for publishing, Professor Beaver was born to write scholarly works. The truth is, he even spoke like a law review article, complete with footnotes.

It might be because I did much of my work with Professor Beaver on the phone, but one of the characteristics that I will always remember him for is the way he spoke. Part of it was the voice itself: deep and resonant, like a movement in the base clef on a grand piano. A fortissimo movement.

Something like:

"Kelly, Jim Beaver.

The *New York Times* quotes William Raspberry, syndicated columnist for the *Washington Post*, as saying that 'the purpose of laws from time immemorial has been to promote the interactivity of people.' *New York Times*, January 8, 1996, at A4. I believe the case to be, in fact, quite the *contrary*. That is, that the purpose of laws from time immemorial has been to *discourage* the interactivity of people (*e.g.*, the laws governing murder, theft, and other trespasses to chattels). What I need is an example, preferably from the Code of Hammurabi (circa 1750 BC), or perhaps even the Code of Justinian (also known as the *Codex Justinianus* or *Corpus Juris Civilis*). Justinian I, of course, being Byzantine emperor from 527 to 565, Anno Domini."

The man was born to write law reviews.

I think the only thing he disliked about his chosen occupation was the giving and grading of tests. But he even excelled at that—or more accurately, at avoiding that task as nearly as possible. At least, I think that's a fair assumption to be made of somebody who once had students take a multiple-choice test on mark-sense forms.

One could argue that Professor Beaver was the embodiment of the school that was the University of Puget Sound School of Law. Within his milieu, he was a living legend.

It is sad that the next generations of students will take a course called Admiralty instead of "Beaver on Boats."

And that the valuable and time-tested Beaverlines for Evidence and Conflicts will fall into disuse.

More importantly, who now will open their home to every student to teach us that there is more to a life than understanding its laws?

Kelly Kunsch
Reference Librarian
Seattle University School of Law

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