A Tribute for Silas R. (Bob) Lyman I

Vicki Lawrence MacDougall, Oklahoma City University School of Law

Available at: http://works.bepress.com/vicki_macdougall/10/
A TRIBUTE FOR SILAS R. (BOB) LYMAN I

VICKI LAWRENCE MACDOUGALL

I first met Professor Lyman as a student in his evidence class. Bob Lyman was first and foremost a teacher. He struck an impressive pose at the podium with his Marine drill sergeant voice as he grilled his students over the fine points of the hearsay rule and its exceptions. In trial practice, he eagerly conveyed lessons he learned as a practicing attorney and prosecutor. His enthusiasm for both Evidence and Trial Practice was contagious to his students he so effectively taught. As any person devoted to teaching, Bob Lyman enjoyed students. His office usually was the snack bar where he would sit and converse with students about the law or current affairs over an ever-present cup of coffee. As a result, Bob Lyman made law professors seem a bit more human to his students and caused his students to remember him with greater fondness.

Of course, teaching at OCU is never without challenges. For example, the university, unbeknown to the law faculty, had rented furniture and plants for an inspection by the American Bar Association. The Law School had just moved into the Gold Star Building and the faculty was impressed by many of the accessories added to the decor in the Law School. However, as soon as the ABA inspection team left, the rental company was called. Professor Lyman was in the middle of an evidence lecture when the moving van literally came into his class and removed the podium from out from under him while he was teaching. Of course, Bob finished the class.

After I joined the faculty, my association with Bob Lyman changed to colleague and through the years close friend. Bob made many contributions to the Law School while he served as both Acting Dean and as a Law Professor. While Acting Dean, Bob helped insure the continued survival of the Law School at a very tumultuous time in the history of the Law School. Acting Dean Lyman was also very supportive of the creation of the Law Review, and during his tenure as Dean the School of Law saw the publication of the first issue of the Law Review. As a Professor, Bob Lyman's academic interests were on a

* Professor of Law, Oklahoma City University School of Law.

11
more practical note than traditional scholarship. He served as a reporter for the Oklahoma Civil Uniform Jury Instructions and authored a computer program, PC Objections, for use by attorneys during trial to formulate or respond to objections. Bob was instrumental in bringing technology to the Law School. He simply loved computers. My children's favorite “Bob Lyman story” deals with a computer. Bob had just gotten a new, big, fast computer. Boy, was he proud of that machine. He was also slightly upset when he discovered that one of his grandchildren had placed a chocolate chip cookie inside the CD-ROM drive of his computer.

Bob took his job seriously and cared deeply about the Law School, but he also enjoyed the camaraderie of his colleagues and a good practical joke. For Bob's fiftieth birthday, some faculty, including Professor Gibson and myself, filled Bob's office with balloons. Bob was, needless to say, surprised to open his office door to find it full of balloons from floor to ceiling. We were all surprised throughout the day as the humidity changed and balloons could be heard popping throughout the Gold Star Building.

Bob and I shared a lot of laughs and a lot of problems with each other through the years. Bob used to tease me about my “big brothers” on the faculty, of which he was one. Having lost my own big brother, Bob certainly helped fill a void in my life. He was always there to listen and offer advice or support. I will miss my friend.

The words that I would use to describe Bob Lyman would include marine, attorney, prosecutor, teacher, professor, and friend. However, the most descriptive would be “family man.” Bob Lyman once told me “you know me, I would do anything for my kids.” True words. Bob was devoted to his children and grandchildren, although to be honest he couldn't remember all of their birthdays. However, he did know each child and grandchild and shared in their victories and difficulties in life. Bob's life revolved around his family, including the heart of his family, Darlene. I think Bob would say to Darlene, his soul mate of almost fifty years, to continue to make memories, find humor in life, and enjoy the wonderful family you have created. My favorite Bob and Darlene story deals with their anniversary trip to Hawaii. Bob and Darlene saved for years to take a trip of a lifetime to Hawaii for their thirtieth anniversary. Meanwhile, at OCU the then-president of the university was contending that the law faculty made too much money, a clearly erroneous fact. Well, guess who Bob and Darlene ran into in the lobby of their luxury hotel on their once-in-a-lifetime trip to Hawaii? The President of OCU.
It is hard to say a final goodbye to a long-time friend. Instead of goodbye, I would like to envision Bob in a fishing boat with the sun in his face having a cup of coffee and a cough-free cigarette. The fish would be biting, but the big ones wouldn't be that easy to reel in. Later, Bob would gather friends and family who have gone before him to discuss current events and politics with yet another cup of coffee. But, the people gathered around wouldn't always agree with him or he wouldn't have any fun arguing his point of view. And of course, Bob would constantly be looking down to watch over and care for his family and Darlene. Goodbye, good friend.