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## Tribute to Professor Jonathan L. Entin

Fred D. Gray

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While we did not have the opportunity to write Jon Entin's employment contract, we did get to write his farewell song (along with Professor Andrew Pollis), which was performed at Jonathan's retirement party.<sup>2</sup>

Farewell to Ya<sup>3</sup>

They say Jon was a special sort,  
Who knew about the highest Court,  
And all about the U.S. Constitut-ya.  
He served as our Associate Dean,  
He's famous for that Cleve tour thing,  
And you don't want to clean his office, do ya?  
Farewell to ya. Farewell to ya. Farewell to ya. Farewell to ya.

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*Fred D. Gray*<sup>†</sup>

I never thought I would be writing a tribute to a law professor of the university where I was a student from September 1951 to June 1954. I was too busy studying hard with part-time jobs to pay for my legal education. My desire then was to complete my legal education, return to Alabama, pass the bar exam, become a lawyer, and use the law I studied and learned at this university to “destroy everything segregated I could find.”

During that time I did not know Jonathan Entin. We met years after we were both established in our careers—Jonathan Entin as a law

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2. Case Western Reserve University School of Law, *Retirement Song for Professors Jon Entin, Erik Jensen, and Ken Margolis*, YOUTUBE (June 27, 2016), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cCbDq1XYLA4> [<https://perma.cc/SR7B-8NSK>].

3. To be sung to the tune of Leonard Cohen's “Hallelujah.” There were also verses of the song dedicated to two other retiring long-time members of our faculty, Ken Margolis and Erik Jensen (who wrote one of the other Tributes in this volume).

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professor at CWRU School of Law and Fred D. Gray as a civil rights lawyer in Alabama. I, therefore, cannot speak about his professional accomplishments, his devotion to his students, how well he mentored them, or his relationship with his colleagues on the faculty.

I have known Jonathan for decades, but we would see each other only occasionally when our paths crossed in Ohio or Alabama for personal or professional reasons. So I am also not in a position to speak of his personal qualities as some of his closer friends can do. Instead, I will use this essay as an opportunity to thank Jonathan for the work he has done to keep me closer to the Case Western Reserve University law school community, as well as to promote the work I have done in my many years as a civil rights lawyer. I will also use it to thank him for what he did for minority students and, particularly, what he did to help members of the CWRU Chapter of Black Law Students Association (BLSA).

I am not sure either Jonathan or I remember the exact moment or circumstances of our first meeting, but we both know it was shortly after he joined the faculty at the law school in 1983. It may very well have been at a function in which I was invited by the CWRU Chapter of BLSA to speak. While I do not recall that Jonathan was an official faculty advisor, he was always interested in and worked with BLSA and other minority students on campus.

In 1986 I served as president of the National Bar Association. At the same time another alumnus of CWRU School of Law, William Falsgraf, became president of the American Bar Association. Jonathan may have played a role in writing the article that appeared in *In Brief*, a publication of Case Western Reserve University School of Law entitled, "Two Bar Presidents."<sup>1</sup> I also know Jonathan has a profound interest in civil rights, having served as a consultant for the Ohio Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights in 1996.

I understand that in several of his classes he has taught some of the civil rights cases I filed. All this may have served his profound interest in civil rights, and his interest and concern for minority students may have contributed toward his expressing to me in a tangible way his interest in my career and what I was trying to do in Alabama and across the nation.

Jonathan also recognized the importance of preserving civil rights history. He has visited and is a regular contributor to the Tuskegee Human and Civil Rights Multicultural Center in Tuskegee, Alabama. The mission of the museum is to educate the public on the contributions made by Native Americans, European Americans, and African Americans in fields of civil and human rights; serve as a permanent memorial for the men in the infamous Tuskegee Syphilis Study; and highlight the

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1 *Two Bar Presidents*, IN BRIEF (Law Alumni News Bulletin of Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio), Sept. 1985, at 9.

contributions made in the fields of civil and human rights in Macon County, Alabama.

Indeed, Jonathan even made efforts on my behalf beyond the walls of Case Western. He helped to nominate me for the ABA's Thurgood Marshall Award, which I received in 2004. He published an extremely positive review of my book in the *Journal of Legal Education* when it was first published,<sup>2</sup> and published a transcript of the interview he conducted with me on the occasion of the book's republication.<sup>3</sup> He recommended to the deans that the Law Review Annual Symposium in 2016 be, "In Honor of Fred Gray: Making Civil Rights Law from Rosa Parks to the 21st Century." And, I suspect he played no small role in nominating me for the Case Western Reserve University Distinguished Alumni Award that I received.

Anyone who knows Jonathan can tell you that he made all of these efforts on my behalf for no other reasons than to be sure that credit was given where he thought credit was due; to make sure that the record reflected reality; and that the history of the Civil Rights Movement would be just a little bit fuller and richer. Jonathan has an enduring fascination with history, with detail, and with the intricate relationships among events and actors. He also cares deeply about social justice and the role of social movements, past and present, in achieving positive social change.

Concluding, I did not know until recently that Jonathan Entin was retiring from the faculty of the law school. I know he will be sorely missed. May I take this opportunity to thank Jonathan for what he has done as a member of the faculty of this law school, particularly his interest in civil rights, his interest in the time he spent with minority students and, personally, thank him for his interest in helping me maintain a closer relationship to Case Western Reserve School of Law. Have a wonderful retirement.

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*B. Jessie Hill*<sup>†</sup>

For me—as for many of his colleagues—Jonathan Entin is almost synonymous with Case Western Reserve University School of Law. He has been the quintessential institutional citizen: often the first face you see when you arrive in the morning (especially if your grades were due

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- Jonathan L. Entin, *Book Review*, 48 J. LEGAL EDUC. 153 (1998) (reviewing FRED D. GRAY, *BUS RIDE TO JUSTICE* (1995)).
  - Jonathan L. Entin, *Bus Ride to Justice: A Conversation with Fred Gray*, 64 CASE W. RES. L. REV. 733 (2014).

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