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ROBERT P. LAWRY: COLLEAGUE AND FRIEND

Jonathan L. Entin[†]

Bob Lawry was one of the first members of the faculty I met, and he has left an indelible impression that has profoundly shaped my own approach to academic life. Bob took me to dinner the night before my interview—I won't embarrass either of us by telling you the year, although interested readers shouldn't have much trouble tracking down that information—and my wife and I bought our house from him and Kathy a few months later. The food at that first dinner has faded into obscurity, but I still recall that the conversation covered an enormous variety of subjects about law, culture, higher education, and baseball.¹

I have much stronger memories about buying the house, and those memories reflect what a remarkable person Bob is. My wife and I came to Cleveland to find a new home. We spent nearly a week searching. Although his house was on the market (he and Kathy were moving a few blocks away) and he knew that we were looking, he never said a word to us lest we feel the slightest pressure to curry favor with a more senior colleague who would have a vote on my future. The first he knew of our interest was when we showed up with the realtor whom he had contacted to help us in our search, and his reaction was priceless: his jaw dropped. Carol and I liked the place

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¹ This is probably the place for the obligatory reference to Jacques Barzun: "Whoever would know the heart and mind of America had better learn baseball." JACQUES BARZUN, *GOD'S COUNTRY AND MINE* 159 (1954). I couldn't hit or catch a baseball if my life depended on it, but I've been a fan for years. Both Bob and Mel Durchslag, the other person at the dinner and a fellow contributor to this tribute, were serious players in their younger days. Bob was good enough to have received the Eastern Collegiate Athletic Association's Scholar-Athlete Award during his senior year of college.

immediately, so it didn't take long for us to make an offer that was quickly accepted.

Bob's handling of the real estate transaction exemplifies his sensitivity to ethical issues. He certainly wanted to sell the house, but he also refused to put a junior colleague into an awkward situation. As things turned out, he needn't have worried. We love the house and are delighted to have found it. I should add that nobody looking for tips on how to sell a house ought to use this experience as a guide. Although law professors were on both sides of this sale, it is difficult to imagine two less sophisticated parties. The walk-through was pretty amusing, too. Kathy is wonderfully handy; Bob isn't exactly mechanically inclined. Kathy correctly surmised that I'm not very handy, either, so she wisely ignored me and talked only to my wife about the practical aspects of the house.

Moving into the house that we have owned for more years than I should admit² marked the beginning of a long relationship with Bob. For some reason, junk mailers and others (including some former students) took a remarkably long time to discover that Bob didn't live in the house anymore. First as a dutiful and somewhat insecure assistant professor and later as a creature of habit, for the past (unspecified) number of years³ I have been delivering mail to Bob that has arrived at his former home. After a while, he gently suggested that I should recycle the stuff. Knowing that his main academic interest is ethics, however, I have continued to provide this service on the theory that he could decide for himself what to do with it. We don't agree about some larger questions, but junk mail delivery has probably generated our most sustained debates over the years.

To be fair, Bob has impressed me in many serious ways as a colleague and mentor. He has read several of my manuscripts and invariably offered helpful suggestions, not all of which I have had the good sense to accept but many of which have substantially improved my scholarship. He has also provided me with a fair number of useful insights about teaching. Some of those resulted from his visits to my classes during the course of annual reviews when I was a junior faculty member, but others have come more recently in conversations about pedagogy and the mission of university-based law schools. But Bob's interest in teaching was more than conversational. During the nearly seven years when Erik Jensen and I served as co-editors of the *Journal of Legal Education*, we could always count on Bob to provide thoughtful reviews of manuscripts as part of our selection

² See *supra* text preceding note 1.

³ See *supra* note 2 and accompanying text.

process. Even before that, Bob chaired our law school's program on professionalism, an initiative that sought to introduce ethical considerations throughout the curriculum. Bob worked closely with me to develop problems exploring the place of ethics in various aspects of my first-year Property class. He and his task force undertook similar efforts with many colleagues, and their work was recognized by the American Bar Association when it honored the law school with one of its coveted Gambrell Awards for innovative programming in professionalism.

Beyond his innate sense of decency, Bob's eclectic intellectual and professional interests have especially impressed me. I came to the law by a roundabout path, having set out originally to be a social scientist. Bob took a more direct route to our profession, but he has always seen the big picture. He reads widely in philosophy and literature as well as in the law, and his academic writings cover a broad range. Beyond that, he is an active poet. His teaching reflects his intellectual breadth. For many years he has taught Professional Responsibility and Jurisprudence to our students, and for a long time he also taught a wide-ranging introductory course to our first-year students. Meanwhile, he helped to found and for many years directed the university's Center for Professional Ethics, which under his leadership has sponsored more than 150 conferences, seminars, and forums. He also taught an interdisciplinary course on Ethics and the Professions to graduate and professional students from all over the university. Finally, at a stage of his career when most people don't want to undertake major new teaching challenges, a few years ago Bob decided to take up the first-year course in Criminal Law and has stimulated hundreds of students to think carefully about the nature of and justifications for punishment as well as many other challenging questions about how we deal with objectionable conduct.

Bob is retiring, but he isn't going to disappear. He will have a chance to travel and to enjoy his grandchildren, but he has promised to remain engaged with the law school and the university. He has helped to shape our school as an institution and to acculturate newcomers to the legal academic calling. I am sure that he will continue to do so even in retirement and that his contributions will persist for years to come.

