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## Oliver Schroder, Jr.: Reflections on Our Reflection

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# Oliver Schroeder, Jr.: Reflections on Our Reflection

Institutions take their character from many sources, but most particularly from the men and women who help to build them. We are fortunate to have had as one of our guiding spirits over the past 36 years Professor Oliver Schroeder, a man whose contributions and caring helped to create our own unique blend of accomplishment and community. Although I have known him for only a year, I know his record and have some idea of what he has meant to this institution. Let me first review the record and then convey my impression of the way that our institution reflects this grand man.

Oliver Schroeder was born in Cleveland in 1916. His father's business, Schroeder's bookstore on Public Square, was one of Cleveland's landmarks and gave Ollie a feeling of oneness with Cleveland that he has never lost. He attended Western Reserve University, graduating *summa cum laude* in 1938, and returned to Cleveland after he received his J.D. from Harvard in 1941. His first job was as an attorney with the Cleveland Ordinance District of the War Department. World War II took him away from Cleveland, first to the Japanese Language School in Boulder, Colorado, then to the Advanced Navy Intelligence School in New York City, and then to various jobs with the Navy in Washington, D.C.; but in 1945 he returned to Cleveland to finish his naval career in the Navy's Contract Termination Office. In 1946 he joined the Cleveland Transit System as assistant general counsel.

His teaching career began at our university in 1948 (as a lecturer in international politics and American government), and at our law school in 1951. Although his entire career has been at our university, his interests and work have spanned the globe. Close to home, he has been active in the Cleveland Bar Association, the Ohio Bar Association, the Ohio Bar Foundation, and the Ohio Legal Center Institute; further afield, he has been active in the American Bar Association, the American Bar Foundation and the American Academy of Forensic Sciences; internationally, he has been a member of the Inter-American Bar Association and a fellow in the World Rule of Law Center, and has lectured at the Inter-American Academy in

Havana, Cuba, the London Hospital Medical College, the Swedish National Police Academy in Stockholm, the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, the Oxford University Law Society, and the Congress on Comparative Law.

His interests have been eclectic. From his base in the criminal law and constitutional law courses, his thoughts and writings have ranged widely. He quickly became an expert in forensic medicine and his lifetime of teaching, writing, and proselytizing in the field recently earned him the prestigious Gradwohl Award from the American Academy of Forensic Sciences. He writes, as he teaches, with ease about subjects as diverse as civil rights, space law, and comparative law. Nor has he remained always above the fray. He has served in public office, has been consultant to numerous commissions, advisory councils and planning groups, and has been an active member of the charitable and religious communities of Cleveland.

His good work is reflected throughout our law school. Alumni around the country tell me of the analytical rigor and probing scope of his classes; and of the intellectual excitement that he generated among students. We give our students no greater gift than when we challenge and excite them. Ollie's colorful presentations were more than just entertainment, they were an important tool of communication, an invitation and entree to the joy of intellectual inquiry. As a leader, Ollie has guided many organizations: this law school (as acting dean for administrative affairs for four years), a prominent Cleveland suburb (as mayor of Cleveland Heights), and many others, from the Cuyahoga County Grand Jury (as foreman) to the ABA Committee on International Law in United States Courts (as chair). By all accounts, his leadership has integrated rather than splintered, and inspired rather than directed. As a creator and visionary, he founded our Law-Medicine Center in 1953 and directed it for 33 years. He showed us how to build on the strengths of our community and tap the energies of other wise people. As a scholar, he wrote about important subjects with a breadth of knowledge and understanding that illuminated as it exposed. He showed us how to conceive of issues broadly, to explore the context as well as the text, and to relate issues to history and humanity. As a public servant, he worked for many causes and organizations, showing us that our profession is at bottom a helping profession and that our skills should serve many good causes.

But it is not for his accomplishments alone that we are grateful; his legacy is more than just his manuscripts and good deeds. He is a

man of great spirit—generous and caring, open and warm. He is a man of humor and humility. He showed us many things: the value of combining our intellectual rigor with human kindness, the value of conjoining our high aspirations with humility and a little self-deprecating humor, and the value of humor in general, even in times of disappointment or trouble. Indeed, he showed us the value of values—the kind of values on which our profession should flourish. We are at our best when we emulate what Ollie showed us.

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