

IN MEMORIAM

*John H. Jackson**

The University of Michigan law faculty has been saddened twice within six months by the deaths of colleagues. These events can only serve to remind us that not only are the lives of individuals transitory, but institutions also can be deeply affected by the mortality of their members.

Today we gather to memorialize the life of Professor Bill Bishop. However, in our case today we have the opportunity in our sadness to also express happiness and joy for Bill. He lived a full and long life, dying at the age of 81, in seeming full vigor and activity. As his devoted daughter Betty said to me, and we all share in these sentiments, Bill left us the way he wanted to — suddenly, but having lived well to the very end.

Although we can be happy for Bill, nevertheless we are forced to reflect a bit on the meaning of Bill's life to our law school. Bill spent more than fifty years of his life on this campus, as an undergraduate student, as a law student, as a research and teaching assistant, and as a faculty member. Our gothic halls will seem emptier without Bill's gothic presence, for surely he represented the values of the architecture around him — stability, solidness, uncompromising excellence, attention to detail, and a bit “old-fashioned” in the laudatory sense of that phrase.

It is hard to believe that Bill had been retired for eleven years. He remained incredibly active — teaching part time every year, and regularly coming to his law school office to pursue his research interests, (often in a tie and coat even in mid-summer!). For many years Bill Bishop had been a central academic figure of international law in the United States, as detailed elsewhere in this issue.

Bill was a popular teacher, always filling his courses to capacity, and was revered as a professor in the “anti-Kingsfield” model, being one who cared about his students and who treated them with kindness and courtesy.

Bill's membership on our law faculty, dating from 1948, was very important to this school. His practical experience enabled him to

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avoid the many fallacies to which scholarship in international law unfortunately sometimes gravitates. A commonly expressed question of international law — whether it is in fact law at all — is essentially a theoretician's gambit. Those who have directly and personally experienced the effects of international law, whether serving in government or in other practical capacities, know that those effects are real, albeit quite different from the relatively cozy world of the domestic legal system of a powerful and stable nation. Students always have trouble grappling with those differences. Bill knew them well, and knew how to teach them.

Bill devoted much of his scholarship to teaching and leadership in the profession. His casebook for law students of international law — first published in 1949 — was a classic, and indeed for many years it held almost a monopoly position in the field. Characteristically it was a book not only for classroom work, but also designed to be an important research tool, with careful and elaborate notes which helped busy scholars and practitioners deal with a subject not well served by the usual legal research tools.

Bill's role as the Editor-in-Chief of the *American Journal of International Law* for almost a decade (from 1962 to 1970) enabled him to expand his role as a teacher and an advisor to the broadest possible world community. I think it is safe to say that there is no journal more prestigious and influential for the subject of international law. The happy byproduct of Bill's service was a greatly enhanced visibility and position for the University of Michigan Law School, a situation which even today plays a constructive role for our school. Bill played a major role in building the International Law program at the University of Michigan. It is our responsibility to see that this tradition is carried on.

So Bill's leaving us has its overtones of a milestone; as they say, "signals of the passing of an era." But it also poses to us a challenge. The future must give credit to the past, and we who carry on must see to it that will happen.