

# ARIZONA LAW REVIEW

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VOLUME 18

1976

NUMBER 3

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## *A TRIBUTE*

*On the occasion of his retirement as dean to resume  
full-time teaching, the editors respectfully  
dedicate this issue to Joseph M. Livermore.*

## DEAN JOSEPH M. LIVERMORE

Glen O. Robinson\*

The occasion for this tribute came as a considerable surprise to me as I suppose it did to Joe's many other friends. When I last saw him, about a year ago in Washington, Joe talked about his decanal responsibilities in an animated manner which gave no hint that after such a brief tenure as the most august of persons, a law school dean, he was about to rejoin the circle of ordinary working stiffs. Deans do not last forever, of course; they do not even last as long as they used to, as the trend seems to be towards ever shorter terms. This new trend is not always to be regretted, but when someone like Joe Livermore becomes a dean it is a sheer triumph of good judgment and common sense for the school that

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is fortunate enough to have him, and when he steps down, it has to be a great loss.

The compensating benefit is that now Joe is freer to return to purely scholarly pursuits. (I think especially of two of his articles—one on the insanity defense (with Meehl) and the other on civil commitment (with Meehl and Malmquist)—as illustrations of the scholarly payoff of not confining Joe to the task of dunning alumni, etc.) I do not know that the world needs first-rate legal scholars, which I know Joe to be, any more than outstanding deans, which I am certain he was. But speaking as someone outside Arizona who benefits from the former more than the latter, I look forward to his future scholarship.

Joe is, however, more than just a good legal scholar. He is a splendid lawyer (which is quite distinct from being a good scholar) who teaches by example as much as by written word or prepared lesson. As I am sure Minnesota defense lawyers learned to their discomfiture when Joe was on leave of absence as an assistant U.S. attorney (and as I learned nearly a score of years ago at Stanford where we more or less competed for the whimsical fancy of law professors), Joe is a tough competitor. He was first in our class at Stanford, and he has been in the first class of lawyers ever since. (He is also a first class gourmet, a talent he did not, I think, acquire in Minnesota.)

Joe has a firmness of mind that produces firm convictions, but I have never detected any dogmatism in them. Whatever the strength of his views, he has always been open to rational persuasion. I could not say that Joe suffers fools *gladly*. Few people, except other fools, do. But Joe suffers them with unflinching tolerance and courtesy.

It was his balanced judgment as much as his analytical prowess that made him such a vital figure on the Minnesota faculty (where Joe and I were colleagues for six years) in the years before he became Dean at Arizona. Joe was the kind of colleague you turned to, not just for an answer, but for a solution. Yet he was not full of gratuitous advice. At faculty meetings—which were often tendentious affairs—Joe was one of the few who could keep his silence unless he had something special to say. Moreover, when he had something to say it was always offered without any pretense that he had a better opinion than the next person (though odds were that he did).

Having a keen sense of humor, and an appreciation for the whimsical side of life, Joe is not a man to take himself too seriously, but he has always had the grace to take his students, his colleagues, and his friends seriously. As a colleague on the Minnesota faculty he was an unflinching ego booster. Just as one was wondering what to do with 50 reprints of

one's latest law review article, there was Joe at the door asking for a copy. More than that, he would read it! Now, as most law professors know, the typical law review article is not read by more than a half-dozen people (including friends, relations, and tenure and appointments committees). But for his colleagues, Joe was faithfully one of those half-dozen. It did not matter if the subject of the article was the role of the tsetse fly in South American labor law, or the role of controlled burning in Western wilderness policy, Joe read it and digested it like an intellectual goat (an eclectic one at that). God knows what use he made of it all, but one did not like to ask. (Those of us who serve up this stuff are content if a colleague responds with an agreeable burp—as Joe always did—without pressing into a discussion of the merits.) I am sure, however, that it is all stored away in his capacious memory, ready to be recalled if some chance occasion demands.

It is somewhat awkward to write a tribute to someone who is not retiring but merely in transit to another stage of his career. While there should always be occasion for celebrating a friend's achievements—and Joe's are already many—it is so much more convenient to defer doing so until they can all be neatly summed over an entire career. Obviously in Joe's case that will have to wait a good while. For mid-term occasions such as this, one should perhaps offer advice as much as praise, but as one who is himself in the process of readjusting to a teaching career after a couple of years away from it, I am looking for advice, not offering it. Nevertheless, I am pleased to have the present occasion to applaud Joe's distinguished service in the past, confident that it will continue in the future, and to wish him every success in his once and future career as a law professor.