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John R. Price

University of Washington School of Law

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A LARGE MARK ON THE PLUS SIDE

John R. Price*

At an early point during the fifteen years that we were colleagues on the faculty of the University of Washington Law School, I came to appreciate the breadth and depth of Dick Cosway's commitment and contributions to legal education. Whatever the context, Dick represented close to the ideal law teacher—nurturing young colleagues, encouraging and supporting others, participating fully in Law School committees and social activities and, perhaps most important, always stimulating and exciting our students. His greatest gift was as a classroom teacher where his consummate skill was widely recognized by students and colleagues.

Of the many honors Dick received, we are most proud of his selection as a recipient in 1980 of the University of Washington Distinguished Teaching Award. Each year the Alumni Association selects one full professor, one associate professor, and one assistant professor to receive Distinguished Teaching Awards. There is no higher recognition of teaching excellence at the University of Washington. President Gerberding's letter to Dick puts it quite succinctly:

I have the pleasure of informing you that you have been selected to receive the University's 1980 Distinguished Teaching Award in the category of Professor. Your students and colleagues have nominated you with highest praise for your teaching abilities and your fine contribution to the University's teaching program. I join them in their tribute to you and extend my congratulations and appreciation for your dedication to teaching excellence.

At each stage of his academic career, Dick demonstrated his superior scholastic ability. As an undergraduate at Denison University, Dick was elected to membership in Phi Beta Kappa, Omicron Delta Kappa, Blue Key, and Tau Kappa Alpha. He continued his record of achievement in his law school career at the University of Cincinnati, which culminated in his induction into the Order of the Coif. Recognizing him as outstanding teaching material, the University of Cincinnati College of Law recruited Dick for its faculty, on which he served from 1946 to 1958. During his years at Cincinnati, Dick rapidly progressed through the ranks from instructor to full professor. In between times, Dick worked at the Department of Justice and pursued graduate studies at the George Washington University and Harvard University law schools.

* Dean and Professor of Law, University of Washington School of Law

Dick's association with the University of Washington School of Law began in 1953 when Dick accepted our invitation to be visiting assistant professor during the academic year 1953–54. After having accepted the offer to visit here, Dick was asked to teach a new course: Jurisdiction, Venue and Code Pleading. Although he had not taught it before, Dick responded with his characteristic good humor and accommodating nature:

I am certainly willing to undertake the course within the limits of my ability. The class can certainly be assured of a fresh approach, if nothing else.

His successful visit led to an invitation, in 1958, to become a permanent member of our faculty, which, fortunately for us, Dick accepted.

In addition to his extraordinary teaching skills, Dick's career has been marked by mature scholarship, in recognition of which he was elected to membership in the American Law Institute and was selected as one of the Washington State Commissioners on Uniform State Laws. Luckily for the practicing bar in Washington, Dick also had a deep commitment to continuing legal education. As a result, Dick participated in a large number of CLE programs on commercial law, particularly after Washington enacted the Uniform Commercial Code. Following his presentation of a ten-session seminar on the Uniform Commercial Code for the Tacoma-Pierce County Bar Association, its president wrote our dean, Lehan Tunks, a glowing letter about Dick's performance:

On this occasion I received . . . very laudatory comments. The result is wholly due to the fact that Professor Richard Cosway gave the lectures. The manner in which he handled the lectures was both interesting and humorous. We feel most fortunate in having been able to secure his assistance. If Deans of Schools of Law keep little black books, our association would appreciate it if you would give Professor Cosway a large mark on the plus side.

Although Dick has formally retired from the faculty, we look forward to a continuation of our warm and close friendship. Our sorrow at losing a valuable member of the law school family to retirement is tempered by the knowledge that Dick will have much more time to spend with his wife Betsy and to pursue his many hobbies, including his advanced interest in computers. Dick's absence from the classroom will be felt by faculty and students alike, but the high standard he set for teaching remains to encourage us all.