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Robert S. Hunt

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ROBERT S. HUNT

William R. Andersen*

Authoring a tribute to Bob Hunt should have been a snap, so admiring is this author and so deserving this subject. But our friendship has been long and deep—both professional and social—and it has not been easy to treat in short compass. To complicate matters, Bob Hunt is unusually diverse. A lawyer's lawyer and a professional's professional, he also has deep interests in literature, theater, music, dance, history, and sports. He does not easily summarize.

I.

As a teacher, Bob had three outstanding characteristics. First, his teaching had a certain practical air. Bob's academic pedigree could have suggested a highly abstract or theoretical approach to teaching.¹ But his classroom manner clearly owed much to his years of practice. No matter how theoretical or policy-oriented the discussion, it was always possible to sense its operational and professional significance. Bob was an academic who treasured the American law school's university connection. But for Bob, academic analysis was only a necessary, never a sufficient, condition for a rounded legal education.

Secondly, Bob was unusually generous in responding to the school's teaching needs. He was selfless in accepting teaching assignments, even those that were pedagogically difficult. For a number of years, Bob was the only faculty member teaching the third-year required course in professional responsibility. Being the sole teacher of a required course meant that his classes numbered around 150 each year. Any class of that size is difficult. Moreover, professional responsibility presents special pedagogical difficulties in its attempt to pose ethical issues seriously and realistically for students who have never confronted the dilemmas of client representation. Bob accepted the assignment cheerfully and fulfilled it admirably.

Finally, in carrying out his teaching assignments, Bob showed an unusual fidelity to faculty curriculum policy. For example, the faculty at one time decided to require the course in land use planning in the first year, intending to give students a look at legislative and administrative dispute-settling systems in contrast to the judicial systems which monopolize the first-year curriculum. Bob took the assignment seriously. Rather than

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1. Bob earned a master's degree in history from Harvard, a law degree from that home of policy-oriented jurisprudence, Yale, and an S.J.D. from Wisconsin.

teaching the course out of a conventional casebook, he abjured the use of cases altogether. He developed a series of problems which were discussed in light of the state zoning enabling act and one of the local zoning codes.

Bob's commitment to this curricular goal outlived even the land use planning assignment. A few years later, the faculty substituted administrative law for land use planning in the first year, largely on the same rationale. Bob took a blood oath from each of us assigned to teach administrative law that we would not let the course degenerate into just another course taught from judicial opinions. None of us were as faithful in carrying out the faculty policy as Bob had been. Properly, he never let us forget it.

II.

Bob served as the school's Associate Dean from 1970 to 1975. His particular assignment was handling "inside" matters—curriculum, faculty, student affairs, etc. This is a full portfolio and in many ways the quality of the educational program at a law school is affected by the way these matters are handled. Bob contributed greatly in this role.

The first part of his decanal tenure was a time of unusual tension and conflict on American university campuses. Law schools were not spared that conflict and the "inside" Dean had to deal with it on a day-to-day basis. Bob handled these difficult matters with such professional calm that few guessed at the level of conflict he faced daily.² In such situations, Bob had just the right mix of sympathy and firmness: those involved felt they had had a full hearing, innovative proposals were fairly considered, but underlying academic values were not compromised.

Richard Roddis, who served as Dean during those years, also remembers Bob's loyalty. It was intense, it was personal, and it was often extended at some personal sacrifice. Bob was selfless and always ready cheerfully to take on additional duties.

That same personal loyalty marked his relationship with colleagues, as anyone who has ever fought a battle back to back with Bob Hunt will attest. One small example: on a snowy Sunday in 1974, when the law school was in the midst of the *DeFunis* litigation,³ I asked Bob for his reactions to the draft of a brief. Early the next morning, Bob presented me with a sheaf of papers. Not only had he performed major (and needed) surgery on the draft, but late Sunday night he had driven across town on snow-glazed streets to have it retyped.

2. I am sure, for example, that few of us knew about the arms cache found in a law school locker in the height of those troubled times.

3. *DeFunis v. Odegaard*, 416 U.S. 312 (1974).

III.

Many faculty members have contacts with students outside the law school walls, but to Bob such relationships were unusually important. He dined often with students and student groups, and attended their professional and social functions. He frequented student athletic contests and his loyalty as a fan was often recognized and much appreciated. (He was a loyal fan, as well, to children of faculty members and could often be found cheering them on at little league games, swim meets and the like.)

What Bob provided students was more than moral support. There was, in addition, occasional academic support in the form of special tutoring, and now and then there are even rumors of financial support. In all of this, Bob was more than an interested faculty member. He was a true friend.

Bob loves sports, though he was not the fabled athlete with a manner bold and brassy. He played baseball in college and seldom missed a daily swim when he was at the University of Washington. He continues to golf and ski.

For a time, Bob and I took skiing lessons together. He seemed to have just the right attitude for learning a skill of this sort in mid-life. He was serious enough to master the fundamentals, dignified enough to carry it off in grand style when things went well, and humble enough to evoke sympathy when the inevitable mishap occurred.

A longtime enthusiast of the opera and ballet, Bob held season tickets to several series. He was generous in taking children of faculty members to performances, providing important early experiences for them.

American musical theater was one of Bob's special loves. He is something of a walking encyclopedia on the subject—music, lyrics, lore, and all.⁴ He has a rich collection of original cast recordings, which he was always eager to share with fellow enthusiasts.

Faculty members had an opportunity to see Bob's skills in this field at a retirement dinner for Professor Marian Gallagher in May of 1981. Asked only to chair the entertainment committee, Bob's affection for Marian led him to treat the affair, in the words of the poet, as another op'nin' of another show. He produced a warm and witty musical tribute to Marian, borrowing songs from Broadway shows with suitably reworked lyrics. Performed by a law faculty troop of strolling players,⁵ the show was a memorable hit.

4. An example of the depth of this interest: Bob has corresponded with Mary Martin about her role (Nellie Forbush) in *South Pacific*. I have read her most recent letter to Bob.

5. No Theater Guild attraction were they.

IV.

Bob Hunt is an unabashed Francophile. (Had George M. Cohan written a French musical, its hero—like Bob—would have been born on Bastille Day.) His spoken French is, I am told, quite good, and his French cooking is, I know, excellent. He has travelled widely in France and has assimilated much from that culture.

The best example of this, of course, is his marriage to Claudette Marie Leers in 1984. A French woman who, like Bob, is a credentialed scholar, Claudette is charming, warm, and gracious beyond description. She and Bob share their time between homes in Seattle and Lyons. In Lyons, Bob has suddenly become a parent to four children (young professionals all). His eagerness to share with the young will thus continue to have ample outlets.

Bob and Claudette have made American visitors extraordinarily welcome to their home in Lyons. Should any readers have the pleasure of making a call there, they will see as I have a man whose retirement years are rich and full, and who betrays not the slightest regret for the life that late he led.

V.

Bob's contributions to us individually and to the law school have been many, and we regret losing him as a daily companion. We will miss his counsel, his insight and his friendship, his temperate outlook, his fierce loyalty. And his propensity to quote Cole Porter.