

# Northwestern University LAW REVIEW

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IN MEMORIAM:

*Adlai E. Stevenson*

Died July 14, 1965

*John Ritchie\**

ADLAI Ewing Stevenson's close association with The Northwestern University School of Law makes it particularly appropriate that an issue of the School's Law Review be dedicated to his memory. Mr. Stevenson was awarded the degree of Juris Doctor in 1926 and the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws in 1946 by Northwestern University, served for a time on the law faculty as a lecturer, and was the principal speaker on several historic occasions in the life of the University. Also his close relationship to our Law School was strengthened by his professional ties to many of our alumni.

Mr. Stevenson first served on the law faculty as a lecturer in the 1946-47 and 1947-48 sessions. During this period he arranged a series of monthly lectures, under the auspices of the Julius Rosenthal Foundation, dealing with the origin, operation and guiding principles of the United Nations. In addition to delivering a lecture in the series, he brought to Northwestern learned and distinguished men associated with the founding and development of the United Nations, including Professor Philip C. Jessup and Mr. George W. Ball, an alumnus of the Law School, who is now Under-Secretary of State. For the 1955-56 session Mr. Stevenson returned to the law faculty as a lecturer and participated with then Professor, now Secretary of Labor, W. Willard Wirtz and Justice Walter V. Schaefer of the Supreme Court of Illinois in offering a seminar entitled "Law and Society."

Despite the great demands that were made on him as certainly the country's most gifted speaker since World War II, Mr. Stevenson also served his Law School alma mater by graciously accepting a number of invitations to address Northwestern University audiences. Particularly notable were his address at the Founder's Day Convocation which was held in Cahn auditorium in 1951, his luncheon address of 1960 commemorating the centennial of the Law School, and his address of last May dedicating the James Roscoe Miller Campus of the University. On each

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\* Professor of Law and Dean, Northwestern University School of Law.

of these occasions, overflow audiences were privileged to hear words of wisdom, salted with wit and eloquently delivered with the felicitous turn of phrase characteristic of Mr. Stevenson's prose.

Further attesting Mr. Stevenson's close identification with Northwestern is the number of people closely associated with him and Northwestern. Mr. Kenneth W. Burgess, for many years President of the Board of Trustees of Northwestern University, was a senior partner in the law firm with which Stevenson was associated for the period 1935-41. Mr. W. Willard Wirtz became a law partner in the firm that Mr. Stevenson established after his second campaign for the presidency. Other partners in this firm were Mr. Newton N. Minow and Mr. John Hunt each of whom is an alumnus of the Law School.

In addition to Mr. Wirtz, two other former members of the faculty were closely associated with Mr. Stevenson. The Honorable Carl McGowan, now Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, resigned from the Northwestern University law faculty in 1949 to become administrative assistant to then Governor Stevenson. Justice Walter V. Schaefer, while on leave as Professor of Law in Northwestern University, served as an adviser to then Governor Stevenson and was chairman of the committee appointed by the Governor that prepared what is popularly known as the Schaefer Report on the Administrative Organization of the State Government. In 1951 Governor Stevenson appointed then Professor Schaefer of the Northwestern University law faculty to the Supreme Court of Illinois to fill out the unexpired term of a judge who had died in office. Subsequently Justice Schaefer was elected to the court on which he has served with great distinction since his appointment to the court by Mr. Stevenson.

In view of Mr. Stevenson's many ties to Northwestern University it is understandable that our Law School takes particular pride in his outstanding accomplishments and wise, dedicated service to his state, his nation and, indeed, all mankind. Truly he was, in the words of President Johnson, America's "foremost advocate and its most eloquent spirit."

*Otto Kerner\**

Adlai Ewing Stevenson loved Illinois, and though his responsibilities took him to many parts of our country and to all corners of the earth, he was able to say, in his unique and highly effective way, that "shamelessly and sentimentally . . . my heart will always be here in Illinois. Here five generations of my family have lived and prospered. My roots

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\* Governor, State of Illinois.

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are deep in our prairies and I owe Illinois a great debt. I have tried my best to discharge that debt honorably and well."

"Honorably and well." How perfectly these words express the life and deeds of the 33rd Governor of Illinois, the gentleman of wisdom and wit.

Speaking about Abraham Lincoln, he could say what others are saying about him: "Lincoln was more than a writer, a spokesman. What endears him in the minds of all freedom-loving people as the greatest democrat in our history—or any history—was his own faith in democracy, in the ability of the people to govern themselves."

He reminded us that "We see ourselves in Lincoln, as he saw himself in people. That greatness in him—is there not some of it in my neighbor, myself, my son? Of course, there is, we tell ourselves, for Lincoln was all of us—the spokesman for all that went before him in the building of America and everything we have fought since to preserve."

He dearly loved the time he spent here as Governor. And though other honors and titles came to him, he preferred being called "Governor," even when his title was "Ambassador," for the title reminded him of his State, his people, and the many happy years he spent here.

And so he has returned to the Land of Lincoln. He will sleep in Bloomington—in the heart of the State not far from Lincoln's Springfield—where Lincoln spent many hours and days, and where he had many, many close friends, including Jesse W. Fell, Adlai Stevenson's great-grandfather.

He is returning to the Central Illinois community where he said: "Here from my parents and grandparents, from . . . the friends of my boyhood . . . I have learned that good government is good politics, and that public office doubled the responsibility that a man felt in his own home, his own neighborhood, his hometown. I can remember the great truths that seem so obvious in Bloomington but so obscure in other places."

Adlai Stevenson remembered the great truths wherever fate and duty took him. And we shall remember him. His name is written indelibly into our history. His memory and spirit, we shall carry in our hearts.

We miss him; but we are proud that to us came the honor, the rare privilege, the fortunate circumstance that made a period of our own lives coincide, in part, with his.

We lived in the shadow of greatness, a greatness which somehow seemed to bring to each of us a special feeling, a particular kind of pride, a sense of satisfaction, that we lived in the world of Adlai Stevenson. This is a world that is better because of the life he lived, the deeds he performed, the words he spoke and the examples he set.

*Carl McGowan\**

If, as has been said of the generality of men, the law tends to sharpen the mind by narrowing it, then Adlai Stevenson was one of the more conspicuous of the exceptions left open by the aphorism. For him, the law was not only a discipline but a departure—a gateway, so to speak, to a world of public service and private reflection in which no pertinent fact or idea was an unwelcome intruder.

The essence of the legal art is surely to be captured in two concepts—relevance and reason. Justice Frankfurter was fond of characterizing lawyers as experts in the one; and Justice Brandeis placed the other in the proper relation to it by his famous injunction that “If we would guide by the light of reason, we must let our minds be bold.” In his concerns with domestic politics, at both the state and national levels, as well as in his approach to the desperate urgencies of international affairs, Governor Stevenson gave heed to these lessons of the law. His official life was, in this sense, a conscious and continuous practice of his chosen profession.

Before the public phase of his career began, he had made a respectable place for himself in the private sector of the legal world. It would be foolish to say that the latter area ever did, or ever could, claim his undeviating attention. His instinct for wider fields of service was too strong for that. But from each foray of ever-increasing scope that he made into public life—to Washington in the early days of the New Deal in 1933, to the Navy Department with Colonel Knox as the war clouds gathered and broke, to Springfield and to the presidential quest—he always returned to the ranks of the working lawyers. There is no reason to think that it would not have been his ultimate destination if and when his labors for a peaceful world could safely have been ended. He was that happiest of politicians—and the kind to whom we can most confidently entrust our interests and our liberties—the one whose personal serenity does not depend upon the surface excitements of high public position, and who knows that there is always useful work for him to do as a private citizen.

His professional endowment was, thus, a great assurance to him in his public employments. It also enabled him to perform them with skill and effectiveness. He brought to them the lawyer's industry which does not recoil from long hours, the pressures of deadlines, the immersion in grubby detail, the rigorous piecing together of a rational pattern of principle. Like all lawyers worthy of the name, he knew that the soaring flights of advocacy must rest upon these less dramatic foundations.

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\* Circuit Judge, United States Court of Appeals, District of Columbia Circuit.

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He felt the same direct and immediate responsibility to his audience for a speech—whether to the Rotary Club of Springfield or to the General Assembly of the United Nations—as the lawyer does to a court for a brief or oral argument. That is why they were so good.

Although, in the United Nations and out, he supported and advanced his country's policies and actions with conviction, loyalty, and effectiveness, one has a curious feeling that he had come more latterly to speak also for a vastly enlarged clientele. A re-reading, now that he has left us, of his last three major addresses—at the San Francisco commemoration of the United Nations in May, at the University of Toronto the same month, and at the Harvard Commencement in June—show them as reaching beyond our purely national concerns. They speak with the voice of people of all places and races who hold with reason and good will as the only true solvents of the lowering menace to civilization.

To have served as a sort of peoples' counsel for them, and by their choice, is an extraordinary summit of legal achievement. It is a legacy of aspiration he leaves to the law, and to its servants hereafter.

*Newton N. Minow\**

Adlai E. Stevenson won the respect of millions throughout the globe. But he had a special effect upon Northwestern Law School where he touched so many lives, enlarged so many careers, and was held in such esteem. As the School's most distinguished alumnus, Governor Stevenson later served as a teacher for its students. He also induced members of the faculty to render public service. Through his efforts, Justice Walter Schaefer now graces the Illinois Supreme Court and Judge Carl McGowan now distinguishes the Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia. W. Willard Wirtz serves, with dedication, as Secretary of Labor. And many other men have been willing to enter politics and public service because Adlai Stevenson showed us how noble and inspiring a life this could be.

It is fitting that another alumnus of our School, Arthur Goldberg, succeeds Governor Stevenson at the United Nations. The same high traditions continue without a break in step, and our School can well be proud of its contribution to improve our national life and to pursue the quest for international peace.

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\* Member of the Illinois Bar.