

NATHAN P. FEINSINGER, A MEMORIAL

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Nate Feinsinger was well established as one of the faculty's leading figures when I came to the Law School about thirty-five years ago. He had joined its ranks in 1929 and early established a high reputation in Domestic Relations, Bills and Notes, and Suretyship, before taking on Labor Law and related work. In Domestic Relations he had worked with Albert C. Jacobs, one of the preeminent men in the field and editor of the leading casebook. And in Suretyship he was responsible for the fourth edition of Stearns's treatise. These were before Bill Rice's leave of absence abroad occasioned his taking on Labor Relations Law. Thereafter, he became, with Rice, counsel to the Wisconsin Employment Relations Board. During World War II, when he became a leading figure of the National War Labor Board, his stature and reputation became truly national in the labor relations field.

Thus, when I first met him in 1949, he was established as one of the nation's leading figures in labor relations, a position he continued to enhance despite obstacles which a lesser man would have found insurmountable. His national reputation was not only as a teacher and scholar, but also as a mediator and arbitrator. As a mediator he was preeminent. The story of Hawaii's annual Nathan P. Feinsinger Day, to mark his settlement of the industrial conflict between the island's sugar workers and the owners is well known. He mediated disputes in the airline, steel, meat packing, and West Coast maritime industries, and in the New York subway system, among others. He was also frequently called upon in local labor disputes, with less than national significance.

Apart from my knowledge of Nate as a friend and faculty colleague, with whom I shared Labor Law courses for many years, it was as an arbitrator that I knew him best. For many years he served as permanent umpire under the Allis Chalmers-UAW agreement, for Honeywell and the Teamsters, and others. In 1954, he became umpire under the collective bargaining agreement between General

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Motors Corporation and the UAW, a job in which he continued until 1966, the longest tenure of anyone in that capacity.

When Nate joined the Law School's faculty in 1929 he was about twenty-six years old. He continued in active service on the faculty, with breaks during the World War II years and for brief tenures as visiting professor at other schools, until 1973, when he became Professor Emeritus. But even after he reached emeritus status he continued to offer a seminar in Disputes Settlement so long as he was able. His tenure as an active faculty member exceeded forty years, during which the Law School expanded its faculty from about ten members to more than fifty and became a highly respected national institution. Of the school's high national regard a good share was attributable to Nate. Of course, he was joined by such noted members as Beuscher, Brown, Bunn, Hurst, Rice and Stedman, among others. But it is also true that probably no one on the faculty contributed as much to the school's national reputation.

Much of what Nate accomplished as a teacher and as a mediator and arbitrator was achieved against odds which a man without his indomitable spirit would have found insuperable. In the early 1950's, while Nate was on a mid-winter automobile trip to a University alumni gathering with a young professor of the College of Letters and Science, they were struck by another car in a blinding snow storm. Nate's companion was killed. Nate himself suffered a fractured hip and various internal injuries from which he never fully recovered. These were followed later by the onset of Parkinson's disease. But none of these daunted him. Despite his afflictions he continued as before, responding to calls from Presidents of the United States to mediate national emergency labor disputes, from Mayor John Lindsay in a prolonged New York subway strike, from Wisconsin Governor Gaylord Nelson to settle a strike in a large steel plant and from many others to mediate other disputes. For a large portion of this time Nate also discharged his responsibilities as umpire under the General Motors-UAW contract as well as his teaching duties.

During all the years that I knew him, Nate never lost his courage or his sense of humor. By any standard he was a great man, and it is not likely that any of us will meet his equal. His life truly, and with overflowing measure, provides an example for all of us.