

TRIBUTE TO NORMAN DORSEN

It is an enormous delight for me to contribute to this dedication ceremony honoring Norman Dorsen. It did require, however, that I go back and note the fact that I wrote for the *Annual Survey* thirty-seven years ago. Not only did I discuss antitrust, I made some confident predictions. I noted with alarm that there had been five hundred corporate mergers in the previous year, but pointed out that that would level off as time went on. Well, five hundred would be a quiet month at the Federal Trade Commission these days.

I am delighted with the *Annual Survey's* decision to include in this dedication Harriette Dorsen, my good friend and former student, the formidable Dorsen young ladies, and, of course, to honor Norman. During my professional career no school has moved up as much in quality, stature, and influence as NYU Law School. As someone who was here much earlier, at one of the turning points in its history, I second what Dean Sexton said: no person has had more to do with the school's success—not the wonderful former deans, superb scholars and faculty members, or students and administrators—than Norman.

As you heard, Norman joined the faculty in 1961. I joined in 1964, and—Norman may not remember this, but I do—within a month or so we took a long walk along the river. I don't want to get too romantic about this—it was the Hudson River, it wasn't the Seine, it wasn't the Thames—you took your life in your hands in those days walking along those docks. But the idea was to discuss—Norman's idea was to discuss—his vision of what this law school was to be. I remember it rather well: an array of serious and productive scholars who would range from the philosophical to the practical, a diverse student body—but that was already true at that time—a rigorous curriculum grounded solidly in theory but which would incorporate practical thought and a commitment to public service, an outlook that was national rather than local—now you would say international, but then national was an ambitious goal, and a long-term goal of challenging—in terms of quality and influence—the very best law schools in this country. Some few on the faculty in those days did not hold to that vision. They thought it was overreaching. They thought that, for better or for worse, the school ought to be more parochial, less ambitious, and more inclined to help students pass the bar exam than to learn national policy.

Everything Norman has touched since that day—the Hayes Program, which he brought to preeminence, the current Global

Law Program, which in my mind sets the standard for what international law programs are supposed to be in this country—has achieved unprecedented success. Norman has been unyielding in pursuit of quality. As a former dean I know that tradeoffs are essential in academic life, but I have never seen Norman trade-off or compromise those notions of quality in any way—in faculty, students, or curriculum. While the long list of former students, members of his program and colleagues who have stayed attached to his institutions and this law school certainly attests to the influence he has had, the amazing thing to me is that this law school that now surrounds us forty years later is very much the law school that Norman described on that long walk. It is the law school he had in mind forty years ago.

Norman has been very active in public service, including his immensely successful tenure as head of the ACLU, and has received more than his fair share of degrees, medals, and other honors. But in all our years of friendship, in all our discussions of academic matters—and there have been many—I have never heard Norman speak, nor do I have the impression that he ever thought of himself, as anything but primarily a professor of law at NYU. It is given to very few people to see the vision of what they hope for a law school realized in their own professional career. His achievements are dazzling but to my way of thinking—and equally important—is the constancy and consistency of his dedication to this law school. For its students, its faculty, and for everyone associated with Norman, every step of the way he has been there. That is why it is, in my view, so appropriate for this journal to honor him in the way it has.

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