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Charles F. Wilkinson

*University of Colorado Law School*

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CHARLES F. WILKINSON\*

## A Tribute to Eugene F. Scoles

I came to this law school in 1975 with ten years of law practice but no prior experience on any faculty. This was shortly after Gene Scoles's deanship, when he had become a member of the regular faculty. His influence on the school from 1975 through 1982 was pervasive—almost a palpable thing—and I wish to comment on Gene's place in the law school community from the perspective of a younger faculty member.

Phrases like "leading by example" and "role model" are far too pale to describe Gene's impact on this school, its faculty, and its students. He was absolutely passionate in his insistence on quality. His idealism did not just rub off on others—it burned into all of us who dealt with him.

Gene was uncompromising on faculty appointments, the heart and soul of any law school's future. As chair of the Appointments and Dean Search Committees, he insisted on the most rigorous investigation of all candidates. His reports at faculty meetings were thorough down to the gnat's eyelash. Occasionally, in years when Gene was on other committees (he always took on major committee work), an appointments report might be skimpy. Gene's questions would be rapid-fire and pointed—he is not always subtle—and the matter would drag on, sometimes to a second meeting. Once, another faculty member suggested that the inquiry had become too tedious, to which Gene replied, "I'm sorry, but the words 'professor of law' mean a great deal to me and I'm not willing to have them bestowed on just anyone." Neither the clock nor the calendar mattered to him on matters of principle.

Gene was as aggressive a proponent of affirmative action hiring as I have ever seen. Too often, affirmative action is short-hand for giving an ill-defined "plus" to those minority and female persons who happen to be in the applicant pool. To Gene, affirmative ac-

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\* Professor of Law, School of Law, University of Oregon.

tion was much more demanding than that: it required an early, extensive, and unstinting search so that every possible minority person or female was in the pool to begin with. He made lists of minority and female law teachers and contacted them when we had openings in their fields. He called around to other schools and law firms to seek out promising young minority graduates. He sent out letters to all of our leading graduates, asking if they would be interested in law teaching. He repeatedly knocked on faculty members' doors, saying, "Do you know anything about so-and-so?" referring to a young Chicano or Indian or black attorney who might make a good law teacher.

Younger women and men on the faculty remember Gene for his selflessness in investing long hours as a mentor. He was invaluable in working through teaching methods with junior faculty members. He knew the publishing side of the law profession cold, and was always available to talk through the ins and outs of placing an article or a book with this or that law review or publishing house. When it came time for a younger faculty member to make a hard decision on a permanent or visiting offer at another school, an extended conference with Gene was usually a necessity.

His personal qualities made him a joy as a colleague. He was ready to take on any topic from jurisprudence to world affairs to retirement benefits to steelhead fishing. And he was always ready to take *you* on. His caustic wit made entering his office an experience not unlike hitting near-freezing water after a sauna: brace yourself.

In his relentless search for pure standards of excellence, Gene Scoles forced upon this school a great many of its finest moments. He always insisted that we pause, reflect, and take careful stock—that we look long and hard into the mirror, and be absolutely certain we were satisfied with what was looking back at us. Those moments gave the law school toughness and sinew, and are an indelible part of our institutional character.