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Penn Law
Memorial Service for Geoff Hazard – January 27, 2018

We have lost a dear and valued friend, and we have lost a legendary teacher who indelibly and benevolently touched the lives of all of us.

In 1994, after many years in New Haven, Geoff and Beth moved to Philadelphia, and eventually Sue and I became their friends.

If you ever played tennis with Geoff, the first thing you noticed was that he was a good athlete. The second thing you noticed was that he had no apparent weaknesses. The third was that the point of playing the point was to win it. And the last was that he was generous, gracious and fun to play with.

And if you played mixed doubles as we often did together with Beth and Sue, all of the above also applied.

If Geoff had been a professional tennis player, he would have won multiple grand slams on different surfaces on different continents, having displayed unmatched skills, unflagging stamina, and exquisite finesse, all the while earning the respect and admiration of younger players, as he nurtured their careers.

In short, he would have been one of those magnificent players who transform the game.

And so, we are here this morning to celebrate a stunning career and remember a magnificent person and loving friend.

Few lawyers in the last half century have had a more profound impact on the state of the law, than Geoff Hazard. And few have had the ability to bridge and connect the worlds of the academy, law practice, and the administration of justice. Geoff was one of the law's wise men.

For fifteen years, Geoff was the Director of The American Law Institute. He was an exemplary leader—from recommending Restatement topics and selecting reporters, to guiding the projects to successful completion. Working with Geoff on drafting a Restatement was an amazing experience. The first thing you realized was that Geoff knew the text, understanding its strengths and weaknesses. Then you realized his extraordinary ability as a lawyer, characterized by penetrating insights, historical references, and the ability to foresee consequences, and then craft wise resolutions. When the drafting got stuck, Geoff always managed to move it forward, by asking a question that unlocked the conundrum, by suggesting a new approach, or sometimes, by deferring resolution for more thought. Whether direct or indirect, his orchestration was masterful.

Harold Koh once observed that watching Geoff drive ALI sessions to closure was a lesson on how a great lawyer can tighten and make rigorous any text—whether she is a life-long expert or, in Geoff's case (and in his words), “just a damn good lawyer asking damn hard questions.”

Harold also remarked that Geoff had a singular capacity to see points of agreement where others only saw discord.

The ALI has long been recognized worldwide as a uniquely valuable institution. Other countries considering whether to create a similar model asked Geoff for advice and counsel. In recent years, Geoff was sought out by legal institutions in the European Union and in Latin America. As Mike Traynor has noted, Geoff strengthened the ALI as a prized institution in the life of our country and worldwide.

Geoff's counsel was not confined to the national and international stages. He was a legendary teacher. For almost two decades, we collaborated in teaching a seminar at Penn Law School on civil procedure and complex litigation. Almost a decade ago, we had the good fortune to be joined by Professor Catherine Struve. Geoff loved the seminar. We loved it even more when Cathy joined.

Each year, early on in the semester, the students awakened to Geoff's unmatched tutelage, and marveled at their incredible good fortune. Few teachers could match his vast knowledge or the way he deftly placed legal problems in historical context, plumbing underlying principles and tying together the procedural and substantive law. He taught students to understand the indeterminacy of law and how to work with it. An apostle of rigorous thinking and clear exposition (as he would say, "describe the metes and bounds"), Geoff took ample time to help students refine their analytical skills. The students were thrilled.

Throughout his distinguished career, Geoff was a wonderful mentor to young law professors. His seemingly inexhaustible willingness to counsel and nurture younger colleagues has been affectionately recorded in a series of tributes in a recent Penn Law Review.

As a scholar whose articles and insight shaped the course of doctrine in many areas, Geoff was a figure of immense influence. But he was also a rules maker. For several years, we served together on the Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure of the United States Judicial Conference, commonly known as the Standing Committee.

In my more than a decade of experience on the rules committees, no member made a greater contribution.

As with drafting Restatements, Geoff's exquisite judgment was invaluable. And his value was appreciated and recognized when, at the end of his term of service, Chief Justice Rehnquist appointed Geoff as consultant to the Standing Committee.

It's always good to save the best for last – and that is Beth Hazard and the amazingly wonderful and loving life Beth and Geoff had together, and how they touched and comforted and inspired so many of us, as they took us into their affectionate fold.

How lucky we have been. How lucky we still are.