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Tribute to Dean James F. Hogg

Richard G. Lareau[†]

I have known James F. Hogg throughout most of his career as a law professor, university executive, lawyer in private practice, lawyer in a corporate environment, author and law school dean and president. In some of these settings, the relationship was very close. Jim was a law firm partner of mine, and he later became inside counsel at a large corporate client where he was not only involved in the legal aspects of an important segment of the company's business, but also in searching for, negotiating, and carrying out a number of business transaction in the form of acquisitions, joint ventures and other types of agreements.

Jim attacked each of his ventures with a strong energy and an inquisitive mind. He dives into things and sees issues, problems and solutions that might escape others but which are very real. He does not shrink from controversy and is a most able advocate.

During one period, Jim was involved in some rather contentious dealings with the Federal Trade Commission. He was not intimidated by the resources of the Government but carefully marshalled his facts, placed them into proper context and was able to arrive at a result that enabled his client to continue to operate its business without unreasonable restraints. A less skillful practitioner might have found his client encumbered by burdensome restrictions that would have impeded its ability to go forward.

Much of Jim's activities during his period of private practice and corporate practice were centered on the education field. He very early became computer literate and is today quite skilled at developing courseware, testing, and related applications. His skills were applied to building a large and sophisticated computerized education business. Jim was active in advising his client's executives and other employees involved in developing an education and training business, which included not only schools and training institutions, but also computerized course-

† Member, board of trustees of William Mitchell College of Law.

ware and other learning tools, and in marketing and servicing that business. Jim also played a major role in negotiating and completing and integrating acquisitions of people and technology, in forming joint ventures, and in negotiating with authors and software developers. While this education business did not fully achieve the success that had been envisioned for it, this was mainly a function of the difficult environment in which the business was trying to operate. The business did nevertheless succeed in attaining many of its goals and is today functioning in different forms and with different owners.

Jim's tenure in the non-academic world brought him into close contact with the owners and operators of business - shareholders, management, boards of directors, and other corporate constituencies. He took a strong interest in seeking to balance the sometimes competing interests, not in the sense of compromising, but rather in achieving some sort of fairness in the end result. As an example, he wrote on the subject of the often adverse consequences accompanying hostile takeovers. He took a position on the A.L.I. corporate governance project, arguing against what might be viewed as weakening businesses by subjecting their managers, executives, and boards of directors to increased exposures arising out of their conduct of their business.

All of the examples I have given show an involvement in helping businesses or institutions grow, through development of their people, skills, and technologies, and without artificial, uneconomic restraints. The same approach followed Jim to William Mitchell College of Law, where he had a strong involvement in, with what I as an outsider view as great results, improving the curriculum, strengthening the faculty, enlarging the endowment, increasing the use of technology, building the physical facilities in impressive fashion, and in general strengthening the School.

I await with interest the application of Jim's talents to his next endeavor.