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Frank T. Read

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Jim Hogg: The National Dimension

Frank T. Read[†]

Most of the pieces in this tribute rightfully praise Jim Hogg for his enormous contributions to William Mitchell College of Law and to the legal profession in Minnesota. In contrast, I would like to comment on a little known facet of Jim Hogg's professional life: the national dimension of his service to legal education. Jim's national contributions have received little fanfare. Nevertheless, this is an area to which he has contributed selflessly for the greater good of all in American legal education.

In his 10 years as Dean and President of William Mitchell, Jim Hogg has been a stalwart to the American Bar Association's Section on Legal Education and to the Association of American Law Schools. Jim has not just served on committees and been a leader in meetings of deans, but he has also been willing to perform many difficult and thankless tasks. Jim Hogg's capacity is seen at its best in his role as chair of an ABA accreditation inspection team. Every seventh year each ABA accredited law school must undergo a rigorous accreditation inspection. An inspection team chairperson is chosen from a very small, select group of highly experienced, knowledgeable legal educators. The chair leads a team of six to eight prominent professors, judges and practitioners through an arduous three to four-day inspection process. The chair's duties are onerous. The chair must organize the team in advance, train inexperienced members, be familiar with complex accreditation rules, and keep the team on track for the 12- to 14-hour days required to complete the inspection. Frequently, serious fiscal and personnel problems are uncovered, sometimes including major violations of accreditation standards. After the inspection, a detailed report which typically exceeds 100 pages in length must

[†] Dean Read is currently serving as Deputy Consultant on Legal Education to the ABA. He served for 20 years as the Dean of four law schools — Hastings, Florida, Indiana-Indianapolis, and Tulsa. On August 1, 1995 he will become Dean and President of South Texas College of Law.

be written. The facts reported in the report must be accurate; the fate of the school depends on it. The task of chairing such a team is *pro bono* service at its best. Few are chosen for such an assignment and even fewer are called to serve again year-after-year. Jim Hogg is one of those special few. His inspection teams respect and revere him; and, best of all, the school inspected knows it has been dealt with fairly. This service receives no accolades; inspectors are frequently the object of criticism. But, this process is essential to the betterment of legal education. Most American law school deans are unwilling or unable to carry out this task. Jim Hogg is one of the few who is both willing and able to perform this exceptional work. From the standpoint of those in the ABA and AALS, Jim Hogg has been one of the best chairs in the business during the last 10 years.

In addition to service in the vital accreditation process, Jim Hogg has served on key national committees, always with wisdom and wit. He is a leader among the deans of private, free-standing law schools. Jim's quiet, effective leadership and his willing service on the national scene has raised the visibility of William Mitchell College of Law and has been of extraordinary benefit to the world of legal education.

Lastly, a word about Jim's personal courage. This year, in an acrimonious national environment, a group of prominent deans from "prestige schools" publicly attacked the accreditation process. Their attack was based largely on misinformation and motivated by self-interest. Many viewed this attack as mean-spirited, but said nothing. Jim Hogg was one of the first to step forward to defend the accreditation process. He recognized that all human regulatory processes could be improved. Jim is no Polyanna, but he also knows the facts. He eloquently testified at national hearings, helping to rally the vast majority of deans to prevent rash and ill-considered actions. Jim Hogg has served on the national scene cheerfully, with great ability and wisdom, and with real courage.

He may step aside as Dean and President of William Mitchell, but his service to the world of legal education will continue for years to come.