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# A Tribute to Douglas K. Amdahl

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## A TRIBUTE TO DOUGLAS K. AMDAHL

LLOYD SHERVHEIM†

When I first met Chief Justice Douglas K. Amdahl (class of '51) some thirty-four years ago, he was seated in shirt sleeves at a table behind a plywood counter in the old offices of the Minnesota School of Business where the Minneapolis-Minnesota College of Law then held forth. It was evening, and classes were soon to start, and the Chief Justice was carefully recording the modest tuition payments which were being offered that evening in a devoted effort to make the law school *book* balance.

Having read what in those days passed for the school catalog, I approached, somewhat timidly, with my undergraduate transcripts in hand to inquire about admission. The late Judge William Sykora (class of '38, then just plain Sy) glanced at the transcripts, nodded and handed them to the Chief with a pleasant "Looks OK to me—if you agree, sign him up, Doug." And so it was that the formality of application, review, screening, selection and admission was accomplished. Judge Sykora was the Registrar and the Chief Justice was the Assistant Registrar. Reminiscing recently, he enumerated some of his other duties which included bookkeeping clerk, teaching assistant, office boy, coffee maker, errand boy and janitor.

Through the intervening years, as his career unfolded before him and as the levels of his responsibility steadily increased, the Chief has never wavered in his dedication to the College. He was actively present when the Minneapolis-Minnesota College moved to the old Metropolitan Building; he was there when the merger with the St. Paul College of Law produced the William Mitchell College of Law to which we now point with pride; he was there through negotiations to purchase the College's present campus; and today, as we prepare to break ground for the Warren E. Burger Law Library, Chief Justice

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† Chairman of the Board of Trustees at William Mitchell College of Law and Senior Vice-President-Law and Corporate Secretary at The Saint Paul Companies, Inc.

Amdahl remains in the forefront as Secretary to the Board of Trustees.

Doug's is not the only success story which the opportunity afforded by William Mitchell and its predecessor colleges has produced, but his is most certainly one of our proudest. Had the William Mitchell opportunity to obtain a quality legal education not been available to enable him to become a lawyer, we may never have known the many contributions he has made to professionalism, the quality of the reams of opinions his pen has produced, the improvements he has pioneered in judicial administration and the creation of the Minnesota Court of Appeals, and now the soon-to-be built Minnesota Judicial Center. And through all of his successes, Doug has remained the friendly, gentle, thoughtful person he always was—a person anyone would be proud to call “friend.”

And I'm confident that in his retirement from the High Court he will find more, not less, time to devote to his Alma Mater. For what he has done, and for what we expect in the future, we are richly blessed and truly grateful.