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MAYNARD PIRSIG

James F. Hogg[†]

Maynard Pirsig touched the lives of literally thousands of people. On some of those lives, he made a most profound impression. Mine was one of those lives.

I first met Maynard when, as dean of the University of Minnesota Law School, he came out to Boston to interview me in 1955 for a teaching position at Minnesota. He brought me back to the university to meet with the faculty appointments committee and an offer of a faculty position resulted, making it possible for me to begin teaching in this country.

Over my stay of fourteen years at the University of Minnesota Law School, Maynard was a wonderful friend and constant supporter. In 1968, Maynard and I were invited to go to Indonesia for three months and advise on the improvement of the system of judicial administration in that country. Our hosts were the chief justice of the Indonesian Supreme Court, the minister of education, and the minister of justice. Maynard was a recognized international expert on the subject. In a way typical of Maynard, he made no show or pretense of that special expertise. He proceeded quietly and carefully and, as a marvelous listener, he studied the art of the possible. Following that study, he concluded with a series of recommendations that subsequently were implemented.

He was one of the kindest of men. He was always curious. During the several weeks we lived in Jakarta, before we went on tour visiting every court in both Java and Sumatra, we were awakened every morning at 5:30 a.m. This was when day broke; that fact was announced by a very noisy rooster outside the bedroom window. Now, a lot of people confronted with such a rooster would have figured out how to have the bird transferred to the cook pot, but not Maynard. Said he, "Jim, that is a truly remarkable rooster. I am going to set my tape recorder by the bed and

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record his message so I can listen to him and remember him in the years to come." He did.

Maynard retired from the University of Minnesota Law School in 1970 and moved to William Mitchell College of Law. I saw the hallmarks of Maynard's hand at Mitchell over the next fifteen years – the encouragement he provided for improved scholarship and ever-better teaching, and the emphasis he placed on recruiting teachers of high caliber. These were important years of growth for William Mitchell, and Maynard's hand is spread wide upon the scene. His national and international reputation as a scholar and a teacher added significantly to the stature of the school.

In 1985, Maynard encouraged me to come to William Mitchell College of Law to serve as president and dean of the school. Once again, he was a marvelous helper and supporter. His counsel was always there for me. We talked a number of times about computers, and the increasing role that they were playing in the teaching, studying, and practice of law. He had developed substantial electronic experience earlier in building Heath Kit models into both hi-fi systems and television sets. In his eighties, Maynard set about studying the engineering behind computers. He applied the same skills and dedication to the study of computers that he applied to the study of law. Maynard acquired at least five different computers and used them all. In his eighties, he was capable of repairing, and did in fact repair, his own computers at the board level. I see this as a testimony to Maynard's vitality, curiosity, and refusal to recognize any boundaries on the learning in which he might choose to engage.

His sense of humor was always to be seen at the corners of his mouth – dry, gentle. His face could break into a wonderful impish smile. He would tell stories about himself. One story I remember involved a Turkish rug. While in London in 1931, he had seen this rug in a store on Oxford Street. He liked it so much that he made a down payment on the rug, and the store undertook to put it away. In 1991, while back in London and teaching in the William Mitchell summer program there, he went back to the store on Oxford Street and inquired about his rug. "But of course," said the man behind the counter – "and do you have your receipt with you?"

When we at William Mitchell were faced with the daunting task of raising funds to build the Warren E. Burger Law Library,

Maynard was there with an early and generous lead gift. Maynard's role in that campaign is recognized and remembered in the room on the second floor of the library that is named in his honor. The room contains a collection of Maynard's memorabilia.

Maynard's great love was the law and, in particular, teaching law. But he was not above a toy or two. Some eight years ago, Maynard was going to come over to our house in Edina for a birthday party. I remember the conversation well. Said Maynard, "Well, Jim, I'm not quite sure whether I should bring my town car or my country car." As it turned out, he brought the country car over that night, a tribute to the distance from Prospect Park to Edina. That country car was a matter of great pride for Maynard – an Audi 5000 with every conceivable option.

Maynard was very proud of his family and their accomplishments. For example, the writings of his son Bob Pirsig, including *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (which, if I recall correctly, has been republished in over twenty foreign languages), were a matter of great joy and pride for Maynard. He was particularly pleased when Bob took a draft text of his next book to Maynard with a request for comments and suggestions. Maynard was truly touched by that opportunity.

It is most fitting that this man who gave so much to others should, in return, receive so much love and care. His daughter Wanda's devotion was beyond belief. Maynard moved into a nursing home in New Brighton three years before his death. Every morning thereafter, Wanda had breakfast with Maynard, and then later in the day, stopped in to see how he was doing. Maynard's wife Harriet died many years ago, but Harriet's sister Florence, usually known as Flo, was another absolutely marvelous contributor to Maynard's care. Randy Tietjen was another contributor to Maynard's care. Randy had been a student of Maynard's and later became his close friend. Randy spent countless hours talking with Maynard about Maynard's great love – the law. Randy and I sat on the edge of Maynard's bed on January 9th of this year, and the three of us enjoyed a martini to celebrate his birthday. Maynard really enjoyed it.

Those of us who had the privilege of knowing Maynard are witnesses to the remarkable life of a truly great man.



MAYNARD PIRSIG AT THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF MINNEAPOLIS