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## A Tribute to Dean Jeffrey E. Lewis

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## A TRIBUTE TO DEAN JEFFREY E. LEWIS

JAMES P. WHITE\*

This invitation to participate in a tribute to Dean Jeffrey E. Lewis provided me with an opportunity to demonstrate the respect and admiration which leaders in American legal education have for Dean Lewis. I have been privileged to have been associated with Dean Lewis for almost thirty years. I first worked with him during his tenure as Associate Dean of the University of Florida Levin College of Law. I then worked closely with him during his tenure as Dean at Florida and during his long period of service as Dean of the Saint Louis University School of Law. In these positions, he has been a leader among deans of the 200 accredited law schools of the United States. Most importantly, I have been closely associated with Dean Lewis in his leadership roles in the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar of the American Bar Association (ABA).

Dean Lewis served twice as a member of the ABA Accreditation Committee and served as the Committee Chair during a tension-filled period in American legal education. He was a splendid Committee Chair whose committee leadership successfully avoided the rocks and rapids besetting American legal education at that time. His leadership was accomplished in the "Lewis manner," quiet and effective. Following his service on the Accreditation Committee, he was elected to two terms on the Section Council. This was a particularly difficult period in American legal education, yet his wise and effective counsel helped the Council and the Section through this difficult period. At the end of his second term on the Council, many of his fellow Council members urged him to consider a Council position which would lead to his chairing the Council. In his usual modest way, he demurred, feeling he could provide effective leadership without a title. And, this he has done.

As the ABA Consultant on Legal Education, I relied upon Dean Lewis on many occasions. He was always ready and able to assist. When he chaired an ABA site evaluation committee, he expected all team members to perform their assignment in a professional, timely, and complete manner. He served on

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\* Professor of Law, Indiana University School of Law-Indianapolis. Professor White retired in 2000 after twenty-six years as Consultant on Legal Education to the American Bar Association and continues to serve as Consultant Emeritus.

a variety of committees and workshops, including New Deans, Associate Deans, and Workshops on Law School Development. He has given himself, often on short notice, to provide advice and counsel for the betterment of legal education. He has been called upon to chair conferences, task forces, and special studies and to undertake a myriad of other responsibilities. He has done all with grace, style, good humor, and great modesty.

Dean Lewis knows and understands the legal profession and legal education, and he has always strived to bring these two elements of the profession closer together. He believes that if law schools are to fulfill their function of educating future lawyers to contribute to problem-solving, they should emphasize the problems of cost, quality, and delivery of legal services; the development of better systems of public legal health and justice; and the broader responsibilities of lawyers to society as a whole.

In testimony given to the Commission to Review the Substance and Process of the ABA Accreditation of American Law Schools, Dean Lewis stated:

The American Bar Association, through the Council and the Accreditation Committee, serves as a broker for and mediator of the demands and interests of a variety of important constituencies of American legal education. Those constituencies include consumers (applicants and students, employers and the public), the legal profession, the . . . ABA accredited law schools, the United States Department of Education, and the high courts of the various states.

This mediating and brokering role is an essential and necessary function. It is through the accreditation process of the American Bar Association that the competing demands and interests of legal education's various constituencies are rationalized, balanced, and integrated into a sensible protocol. The presence of this national accrediting organization for legal education assures, in addition to the sensible protocol, a national pool of knowledgeable volunteers, and a national perspective for law schools which feed a legal profession which is ever decreasingly defined by parochial state borders.<sup>1</sup>

Thus Dean Lewis defined the ABA accreditation process in which he was an effective leader.

At a Joint Program of the ABA Section of Legal Education to the Bar and the University of London, held in London as part of the Joint meeting of the American and English Bars in 2000,<sup>2</sup> Dean Lewis presented a paper entitled "*Advanced*" *Legal Education in the Twenty-First Century: A Prediction of Change*.<sup>3</sup> I cite this article as an example of Dean Lewis's provocative

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1. Jeffrey E. Lewis, Dean, Univ. of Fla. Levin Coll. of Law, Remarks before the Wahl Commission (Feb. 10, 1995).

2. Jeffrey E. Lewis, "*Advanced*" *Legal Education in the Twenty-First Century: A Prediction of Change*, 31 UNIV. TOLEDO L. REV. 655, 655 n.1 (2000).

3. *Id.* at 655.

examination of the future of legal education. In his presentation Dean Lewis stated:

This essay carries a prediction of significant change in the structure of American Law Schools. . . . The curricular change foreseen will affect our understanding of “advanced” legal education. . . . Now, here is the prediction. Certificate programs will grow in two ways. First, they will increase in number. Second, the certificate programs will increase in credit hours from one semester to two semesters of course work—the third year of the J.D. program. In other words, the J.D. certificate programs will eventually grow into what is the equivalent of what is now the fourth year of law study—what we now call the LL.M. And so the third year of the J.D. program will replace and render obsolete the fourth year LL.M.<sup>4</sup>

Dean Lewis concluded by stating, “You may note that this essay of prediction is written in words of certainty, and you may suspect that in truth the language chosen may be more a function of wishful thinking than certainty about the future. Can’t fool you!”<sup>5</sup>

Dean Lewis recognized the rapidly developing global legal community and has worked to forge new linkages between American law schools and those in other countries. He was one of the original participants in the ABA Central and Eastern European Law School Initiative. He has been a leader in programs providing linkages between American law schools and those of Eastern Europe. Highlights of these programs have included exchange of legal materials, faculty exchange, joint research programs, and foreign summer programs. Dean Lewis for many years served as a Visiting Professor at Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, demonstrating his recognition of the globalization of legal education.

Jeff Lewis is a longtime friend and, as I have shown, a major participant and player in the advancement of quality legal education in the United States and the world. He is a man of principle. He knows and understands the legal profession and legal education, and has long strived to bring these two elements of the profession closer together. I am proud to have had Dean Lewis as a friend, colleague, advisor, and helper. For over twenty-five years I have called upon him for advice, wisdom, and special service. He has given much to the world of legal education, and we in legal education are his beneficiaries.

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4. *Id.* at 655, 658.

5. *Id.* at 659.

