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## William Warren

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## WILLIAM WARREN

*Lance Liebman\**

Don Rapson, then graduating from Columbia Law School and preferring not to be a foot-soldier in Korea, went to Dean Warren. The Dean said: "Go to General X in the Pentagon, tell him I sent you, and he will hire you as an Army lawyer." Don went to the Pentagon (it was probably easier to stroll in fifty years ago). The General said: "I never heard of Dean Warren." But after a lively talk Don was hired and supplied good professional service to his country.

This is the Dean Warren with whom I worked from 1991 to 1996, when I was the fifth post-Bill dean. Immediately on my selection, Arthur Kimball arranged for me to have lunch with Bill at the University Club. Bill's conversation had no small talk, no genial reminiscences. He was focused on the business plan for Columbia Law School, and I am sure that plan was little changed from the one he implemented in the 1950s and 1960s. Bill wanted Columbia to be the very best law school it could be. To do that, he wanted excellent facilities and a focus on the special opportunity of an Ivy League law school in New York City: The school should educate young people to practice business law and should be the academic focus for the world business culture that has its hub in New York.

Bill could help like no other supporter of the school. Having been dean, he knew how to do things. He gave me names, some of whom had never heard of him (and had no interest in helping Columbia Law School) but many of whom helped immensely. Also, he had led an academic life in a way that had made him rich, and he had no charitable goal for his resources other than the law school to whose improvement he was so devoted.

The results are easy to see: William C. Warren Hall, home to the *Columbia Law Review* (Bill loved the *Review*) and to some of the school's clinics and its public interest activities; William and June Warren Hall, half Law School and half Business School, 100,000 square feet of top-quality classrooms and administrative offices. Note the two marriages so central to Bill: his to June Warren, all-time First Lady of Columbia Law School; and law with business.

I will always remember the meetings with Jim Polshek, a great architect and human being, Bill Warren, and Max Abramowitz, original architect of the law school building that Bill conceived and constructed. It was understandably hard to persuade Max that even a door knob should be moved from its location in "his" building. Jim, who knew the building's inadequacies for students because he had been a Columbia Law School

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spouse, patiently showed what must be improved and how much it would cost. Bill's focus was always on doing the deal, moving in a practical way into the future. I was the student, and Columbia Law School now benefits from the fine education I received from this unique teacher.