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## Monrad G. Paulsen

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# MONRAD G. PAULSEN

MICHAEL I. SOVERN\*

Nothing made Monrad happier than bringing together two people he loved whose lives had not previously intersected and seeing a new friendship blossom. I owe some of the most satisfying relationships of my life to that wonderful taste. And I see its fruits all over this room today. Monrad would be overjoyed if he could see us all together.

I fell into orbit around Monrad at the University of Minnesota in the summer of 1955. I was a twenty-three-year-old, newly minted assistant professor of law who had never before been west of Asbury Park. Monrad, a graybeard of 37, took me in hand. Our offices were close by and I fear I set his scholarly output back quite a bit that year by dropping in whenever I needed help. Since he had taught almost all the courses in the curriculum, he was a great professional resource as well as a wise counselor.

We spent the summer after my first year on the Minnesota faculty collaborating on a law review article.<sup>1</sup> It was a terrific article and the collaboration was a pleasure, but there was one difficult moment that Monrad eased by suggesting that we have an asterisk footnote that would say: "The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of either of the authors."

At summer's end, Monrad left for Columbia, promising to come and get me. A year later, I was back in place with an office just down the hall from his.

In the intervening year he had acquired a fresh batch of friends that he would share with me. As so many of you here know, throughout his life he would acquire, and keep, friends—not the way some people collect stamps or coins, but, rather, the way a tree acquires rings or a bronze statue acquires patina. It was a part of his nature, his warmth, his vitality. It reflected his need to share and exchange ideas and feelings.

He was already well-embarked upon that extraordinary journey through the law schools of America and much of Europe—a lecture-ship at the University of Utah from 1945-46; Assistant Professor and then Associate Professor at Indiana from 1946-51; Associate Professor

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<sup>1</sup> Paulsen & Sovrn, "Public Policy" in the Conflict of Laws, 56 COLUM. L. REV. 969 (1956).

at the University of Minnesota from 1951-54; and then, at last, Professor of Law. We proudly claimed him for Columbia from 1956 to 1968, until he left to become Dean and John B. Minor Professor of Law at the University of Virginia from 1968-76. As our presence here today attests, he ended his days as your founding Dean and Vice-President for Legal Education. Along the way, there were a host of visiting and summer appointments. He was the Fulbright Professor at the University of Freiburg in 1964; the Visiting American Professor of Law at the University of London's Institute for Advanced Legal Studies in 1966; Professor of Law at the University of Gottingen in the summer of 1973; and much more. And at every stop, there was fresh scholarship, new courses, and, of course, more friends.

He was an extraordinary teacher—brilliant, funny and caring. Monrad's file at the Columbia Law School includes a memorandum to my predecessor asking for an exemption from the maximum teaching load. He had taken on a new assignment and, as a result, a seminar of his had been dropped from his teaching responsibilities. His memorandum concludes: "Can I hope that it will be reinstated? I make the request with all the force which I possibly can." He loved to teach and he loved to be with students. At Columbia, he hit the long ball in student-faculty softball games, was the star of the annual Law Revue, invited students far from home to share his table at Thanksgiving and Christmas, and in countless ways, in the classroom and out, helped generation after generation of students to grow.

His belief in the importance of scholarship was inspiring and the standards he brought to its evaluation were the highest. He was a nearly unique figure among rigorous critics: much of his own prodigious production met his high standards. Works of his still lead the way to understanding in family law, criminal law, the law governing juveniles, and constitutional law.

He was a giant—literally and symbolically. After a third of a century of law teaching, there are few places in America without a lawyer who learned from him. I know Columbia's alumni best, of course. He remains for them the Zero Mostel of law teaching: Who would have supposed that great body could harbor so subtle a talent, so graceful a man?

I first characterized him that way in a dedicatory piece in the *Virginia Law Review* and he loved it. There was another characterization he and I enjoyed. It dates from around 1960; it was Chanukah and Monrad was lecturing me on Judaism; I gently reminded him of my origins, pointing out that two years at Minnesota did not a *shaygets* make; and dubbed him Moishe Paulsen. I like to think that I paved the way for Yeshiva that night.

I remember Monrad's worrying many years ago about his son, Christopher. The boy was very big for his age, and people tended to expect him to behave like a much older child. Though he never drew the parallel, there was a vulnerable boy inside of Monrad too. And his life was marked by giant-sized portions of pain and joy. In his last years, the pain of his physical decline was made more bearable by the joy in his and Elsa's sons Peter and Christopher, and by the happiness he found in his marriage to Jenny.

For a quarter of a century we shared pain and joy, hopes and disappointments, and, of course, ideas—lots and lots of ideas. I wish it had been longer, but I count our loving friendship one of the great blessings of my life.