

Symposium on The Civil Rights of Public School Students

Introduction: For Jack, Who Strove to Make Us Noble

Jay Conison

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.valpo.edu/vulr>



Part of the [Law Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Jay Conison, *Introduction: For Jack, Who Strove to Make Us Noble*, 44 Val. U. L. Rev. 1271 (2010).

Available at: <https://scholar.valpo.edu/vulr/vol44/iss4/10>

This Essay is brought to you for free and open access by the Valparaiso University Law School at ValpoScholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Valparaiso University Law Review by an authorized administrator of ValpoScholar. For more information, please contact a ValpoScholar staff member at scholar@valpo.edu.



IN MEMORIAM:
JACK ARTHUR HILLER
(1929–2009)

INTRODUCTION: FOR JACK, WHO STROVE
TO MAKE US NOBLE

Jay Conison*

Last Thanksgiving, the Valparaiso University School of Law community received the sad news that Jack Hiller had passed away. Our community lost a friend and mentor who was central to our lives.

Many of us have deep connections with Jack, even if we came to the law school only recently. My connections with him developed late—I joined Valparaiso as Dean in 1998, after Jack had officially retired. Yet, even then he was still a member of our daily life, and still vital in our progress as a law school and in our sense of community.

I came to appreciate Jack's influence as I worked on projects whose existence and impact were directly or indirectly attributable to him. In 1999, alumnus Robert Beer ('63), one of Jack's former students, established a Distinguish Teaching Award in his honor. The Hiller Award recognizes outstanding teaching, scholarship, and service, and as an award for overall excellence, celebrates the many ways in which Jack made us a better law school. Six recipients of the Hiller Award share their remembrances here, including the 2010 Recipient, Derrick Carter, who was honored for leading students in pro bono legal service to residents of post-Katrina New Orleans.

In 2004, Michael and Dianne Swygert created another important recognition of faculty, the Swygert Fellows Program. One of the Fellowships—the Swygert Research Fellowship—honors Jack, in that it is awarded to “a faculty member or librarian who, through his or her scholarship, lecturing, written work, and contribution to the advancement of knowledge, exemplifies the highest standards, as found in such faculty members as Marshall Jox, Jack Hiller, and Walter Moll.” This award has been an inspiration for faculty scholarly achievement, and one of the contributors, Robert Blomquist, was one of the first Swygert Research Fellows.

* Dean and Professor of Law, Valparaiso University School of Law.

1272 VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY LAW REVIEW [Vol. 44

But it was not just awards that showed me Jack's influence. I also saw it first hand, as I worked with Jack and Professor Emeritus Gottfried Krodel on a remarkable project to translate and publish Johannes Heckel's *Lex Charitatis*, an important German-language treatise on Luther's jurisprudence. Professor Krodel, in his contribution to these remembrances, describes how Jack, a law professor without training in theology or church history, introduced himself shortly after Professor Krodel's arrival at the University in 1965, and persuaded Professor Krodel to undertake the work of a translation. I had the privilege of working with Jack and Professor Krodel on the last phase of this project. In early 2010, after forty-five years of patient effort, and through forty-five years of Jack's continual encouragement and support, the work was published, shortly after Jack's passing.

Finally, I came to appreciate Jack's influence on our daily life in the law school through enjoying, day in and day out, the works of art he brought to the walls of our buildings, to the Brauer Museum, and to the law school for exhibits and shows. Art was a central part of Jack's life, and Professor Richard Brauer, former Director of the Museum of Art now named in his honor, describes decades of patient work by Jack to bring the museum to its current status as a gem of the University.

I could describe Jack's influence still more. I could talk about African law, travel, poetry, and a host of other subjects. But I will leave those topics to colleagues and friends. As I read the tributes that follow, I am struck by how profound is our debt to this extraordinary person. In reading these tributes, we learn as much about Jack the person as we do about Jack the accomplished teacher and scholar. We learn of his sense of humor and his marvelously open mind; his love of poetry and particularly of William Shakespeare; his commitment to mentoring younger colleagues and students; his love of books; and his early service as our librarian. We also learn of his humanitarianism, of his tireless writing of letters full of passion for justice and compassion for the poor.

As you read these tributes, you may laugh, you may cry, you may be prompted to remember your own connections with Jack and his influence on your own life and work. But above all you will find a gentle soul who strove to make us noble.