

### *Symposium on The Civil Rights of Public School Students*

## For Jack, My Law Professor, Cultural Teacher, and Friend

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### Recommended Citation

Michael I. Swygert, *For Jack, My Law Professor, Cultural Teacher, and Friend*, 44 Val. U. L. Rev. 1319 (2010).

Available at: <https://scholar.valpo.edu/vulr/vol44/iss4/26>

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## FOR JACK, MY LAW PROFESSOR, CULTURAL TEACHER, AND FRIEND

Michael I. Swygert\*

No person has even been associated with Valparaiso University and its School of Law—both as a student and as a member of the law faculty—longer than Jack Arthur Hiller—six decades. He first came to the University as a student in 1949 where he earned both an undergraduate and a law degree. Afterwards, he joined the School's law faculty where he remained until his death in 2009.

Jack left behind an unequaled legacy of service, scholarship, and friendship with countless alumni and present and former colleagues. Among his singular contributions to the development of the VU School of Law, perhaps the most important was Jack's role in bringing fresh and invigorating intellectual perspectives to the small law school in the heartland of America.

Years after graduating first in his law class at Valparaiso, Jack was admitted to the graduate law program at Yale Law School where he flourished. As I noted in my history of the Valparaiso University School of Law—*And, We Must Make Them Noble*—“At Yale, Jack studied the tenets of American legal realism at its epicenter and also became familiar with the emerging jurisprudence known as law, science, and policy that had developed at Yale.” Jack was impressed. Upon returning to the Valpo classroom, he shared the innovative analyses with students and faculty. Jack loved Yale and apparently Yale loved Jack. While there he served as a paid tutor for incoming Yale law students.

Years later, when I was a 3L Valpo law student, I wanted to follow Jack's path and seek a graduate degree in law. I applied to three schools: Harvard, Yale, and Stanford. (Stanford never replied, maybe because I spelled Stanford, “Standford” in my application). Al Meyer, Dean of the Valparaiso Law School, wanted me to follow his path and go to Harvard, while Jack Hiller encouraged me to go to Yale. In due course, both schools accepted me, but Jack convinced me that Yale was the better choice. I took his counsel and, to this day, believe he was right.

But more important than Jack's influencing my choice of graduate school was his emphasizing for all students the critical role of creativity not only in the law, but also in all professions and culture as a whole. He sensitized us to the broader opportunities that can come with the

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1320 VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY LAW REVIEW [Vol. 44]

privilege of being a lawyer: above all, to be a humanitarian and spend time and energy for the well-being of peoples throughout the world, especially those who are poor and lacking education. To this end, Jack spent several semesters teaching law classes on the African continent. But he didn't limit his outreach to one part of the world. He was a teacher for all cultures and all peoples, from Kenya, Tanzania and Malaysia, and from London and New Haven to Valparaiso.

I was one of the countless students Jack influenced. I was lucky to be in his principal venue—Valparaiso, Indiana—when he was there. For me, Jack was one of the giants of my education at the Valparaiso University School of Law.

Along with other teachers at the VU Law School, Jack Hiller taught me to “think like a lawyer,” but unlike some, he taught me *to not always think* like a lawyer. (It certainly didn't win any cases at home). Of deeper wisdom, Jack demonstrated for me that the law is but one dimension—albeit critical—of a cultured and civilized society, one under the rule of law and directed by a creative spirit.

Throughout his life, Jack embraced the richness of literature, philosophy, religion, history, classical and folk music, the fine arts of painting, drawing, and sculpture, the discipline of writing poetry. He was a silversmith, a collector of sculpture, an author of diverse topics including Japanese stylized poetry. On several occasions Jack brought inspiring artists and their work to the Valparaiso School of Law for the enjoyment and cultural benefit of students and faculty. He was full of life, a man intoxicated with the infinite beauties and mysteries of divine creation and human creativity. Oh, I wish he were still among us.