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## STEVEN P. FRANKINO: A TRIBUTE

JAMES P. WHITE\*

ON September 13, 1975, Creighton University School of Law dedicated its new Ahmanson Law Center. The new building dedicated on that day was in large part a result of the efforts of Steven P. Frankino who became the fifth dean of Creighton Law School in 1971.

As the newly minted Consultant on Legal Education to the American Bar Association (ABA), I was privileged to offer brief remarks at that dedication. I stated:

A law school with a quality educational program must provide a curriculum which is richer, more varied and more innovative. It must be a school which reaches across disciplinary lines in its teaching and research, a school which has jointed with the organized Bar in post-admission education, a school whose faculty members contribute to legal education, and most importantly, a school which is attracting an able student body, and through its graduates, adding strength to the profession.<sup>1</sup>

Creighton University School of Law was such a school, and was such a school in large part because of the leadership of its dean, Steven Frankino. This quality of law school leadership by Dean Frankino was to be demonstrated twice more, at Catholic University of America and finally at Villanova Law School.

But his leadership at Villanova and previous schools was not the only evidence of the significant contribution to American legal education by Dean Frankino. He served on a number of occasions as a site evaluator of law schools on behalf of the American Bar Association. His influence on American legal education was great because of his wise counsel to many law schools over many years. He served with particular distinction as a member of the Law School Accreditation Committee of the American Bar Association. There he gave sound and cogent advice, in a quiet yet persuasive manner. His sage advice and guidance often resulted in a contentious case being resolved in an amicable and thoughtful resolution.

As the American Bar Association Consultant on Legal Education, I relied upon Dean Frankino on many occasions. He was always ready and able to assist. When he chaired an ABA site evaluation team he expected

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1. James P. White, *Dedication Ahmanson Law Center*, 9 CREIGHTON L. REV. 249, 250 (1975-76).

all team members to perform their assignment in a professional, timely and complete manner.

Dean Frankino recognized the rapidly developing global legal community and worked to forge new linkages between American law schools and law schools of other countries. In 1991, he was one of a group of American law school deans who visited law schools in Poland and what was then Yugoslavia. This visit was an initial outreach of the newly formed American Bar Association Central and Eastern European Law Initiative. The American deans traveled at their own expense. Out of this visit, the ABA Sister Law School Program emerged. Dean Frankino was an active participant in the 1991 visit and was a leader in the resulting visits of deans and vice-deans from Central and European law schools to American law schools.

The Sister Law School Program was enormously successful in terms of generating follow-up programs between the schools. Highlights of these programs included long-term exchange of legal materials, numerous plans for exchange of faculty in specific areas, joint research programs and jointly conducted summer programs. Dean Frankino was a major leader in the success of the Sister Law School Program.

Dean Frankino was 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 throughout the world. He served in a variety of capacities on behalf of the legal education community. He gave unselfishly of himself, often on short notice for advice and counsel for the betterment of American legal education. He was a person of energy and creativity. He was a man of principle who acted on who he was and what he believed. He knew and understood the legal profession and legal education and always strived to bring these two elements of the profession closer together. His brief hiatus from the world of legal education as partner at Kutak & Rock was manifestation of his efforts to bring together the practicing bar and the teaching profession. He believed that if law schools are to fulfill their function of educating future lawyers to contribute to problem solving, law schools should give greater emphasis to problems of cost, quality and delivery of legal services, to developing better systems of public legal health and justice and to the broader responsibilities of lawyers to society as a whole.

Steven Frankino was Catholic in every context. He was a deeply religious man, who practiced his faith in many ways, including assisting those in need of counsel and assistance. He was also Catholic in his interests and tastes. He loved opera and theater and shared these interests with his beloved wife Rosemarie. I had occasion to attend an opera with him while we were participating in a legal education meeting and was impressed with his great knowledge of the operatic world. I recall his standing in line in inclement weather to secure a ticket to attend the Polish National Opera in Warsaw.

On the occasion of the eightieth birthday of Villanova's founding dean, Harold Gill Reuschlein, I was privileged to attend the celebration at the Frankinos where there was a surprise appearance of a group of Villanova law students performing Gilbert and Sullivan, a favorite of Dean Reuschlein. This was an example of the thoughtfulness of Steven Frankino, to plan this special celebration for his mentor, Dean Reuschlein.

Dean Frankino took great joy in life and thus was a delightful companion at meetings, task forces and workshops. I was proud to have Steven Frankino as a friend, colleague, advisor and helper. For over thirty years I would call upon him for advice, counsel and special service. He gave much of himself to the world of legal education. The legal profession and humankind are indeed better because of Steven Frankino's presence in this world.

