



2000

Dean Reuschlein: The Patriarch of Villanova Law School

Donald W. Dowd

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.law.villanova.edu/vlr>



Part of the [Legal Biography Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Donald W. Dowd, *Dean Reuschlein: The Patriarch of Villanova Law School*, 45 Vill. L. Rev. 5 (2000).

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.law.villanova.edu/vlr/vol45/iss1/2>

This Tribute is brought to you for free and open access by Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Villanova Law Review by an authorized editor of Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law Digital Repository.

2000]

DEAN REUSCHLEIN: THE PATRIARCH OF
VILLANOVA LAW SCHOOL

DONALD W. DOWD*

THE words “paternal” and “patriarchal” have come to have almost exclusively negative connotations. It is hard to think of Dean Harold G. Reuschlein, however, without those words coming to mind. Dean Reuschlein was the true begetter of the Law School, and he was without a doubt a father to all the faculty and students of Villanova Law School. Without doubt, Dean Reuschlein also led the Law School in a grand patriarchal fashion.

When I came to Villanova, the faculty was a very small family and the student body not that much larger. It would have been very hard to have thought of the Law School without the presence of Dean Reuschlein and his wife. Like any good father, he was sometimes stern, but for the most part enormously supportive and protective. Like a good father, he fought hard and effectively for his family with the outside world (the ABA, the AALS) and the world closer to home (the University Administration). He got the best out of his family through cajoling, rewarding, and tolerating their various differences and idiosyncrasies. He might have seemed ferocious at times to the student members of his family but he fought ferociously for them as well, and they all knew that behind his every act was affection and concern.

He and Marcella had both the faculty and students to their house regularly. He had close personal contacts with almost all of the students and did everything he could to advance both their careers in law school and their careers beyond law school.

Dean Reuschlein’s model is not one that can be easily followed today. The institution is much larger, and more diverse, its opportunities much greater, but without inspiration and impetus he gave to the Law School there would be no Law School today. Dean Reuschlein gave the words “paternal” and “patriarchal” very positive meanings, which unfortunately may have been forgotten or overlooked in our brave new world of legal education.

Whenever faculty or students from that dawning age gather, “Harold stories” are inevitable and numerous. It is tempting to divulge, say, my colleagues Ernie Roberts’ or Jane Hammond’s “Harold stories,” or those that my student Jim McHugh or so many other graduates have told again and again. These stories vividly bring Harold back to us, but will have little

* Professor of Law Emeritus, Villanova University School of Law; A.B., 1951 Harvard University; J.D., 1954, Harvard University School of Law.

resonance in today's law school. The echo Harold left, however, will reverberate as long as the law school lasts. We who were here at the beginning will always be grateful for the privilege of helping Harold build his Law School and will always remember him with love and a little awe.