



2000

Harold Gill Reuschlein - Dean through Two Decades: 1953-1972

J. Edward Collins

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



Part of the [Legal Biography Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

J. E. Collins, *Harold Gill Reuschlein - Dean through Two Decades: 1953-1972*, 45 Vill. L. Rev. 7 (2000).
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.law.villanova.edu/vlr/vol45/iss1/3>

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]

HAROLD GILL REUSCHLEIN
DEAN THROUGH TWO DECADES: 1953-1972*

J. EDWARD COLLINS**

WHEN Harold Gill Reuschlein agreed to the task of founding a law school at Villanova he was 49 years of age. He had spent most of his adult life in and around law schools. Educated at Iowa, Yale and Cornell, he had taught at Georgetown, Notre Dame, Syracuse and Pittsburgh. His Georgetown experience was interrupted by military service. Entering the Office of the Undersecretary of War in 1942, he rose to the rank of Colonel and served as Deputy Chief and finally as Chief of the Office of Legislative Services in Headquarters, Army Air Force. With the end of World War II, he resumed law teaching at Notre Dame, followed by service at Syracuse and Pittsburgh.

If he was at all observant, and no one who knew him could think otherwise, he had closely observed the functioning of eight deans and university administrations and evaluated their strengths and weaknesses as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the institutions with which they were involved. While never a dean or a dean's associate or assistant, he came to Villanova with eyes wide open and ears attuned and with a clear vision of what he intended to accomplish at the law school he was starting.

Blessed with vibrant health, a surplus of energy, a strong personality, charm, persuasiveness, a wide circle of professional friends and acquaintances whom he was not reluctant to tap and utilize (in a non-perjorative sense, of course), a strong religious faith, a not inconsiderable touch of guile and gall, and a more than fair amount of good fortune, he proved to be the ideal man for the task at hand—administrator, educator and politician. . . .

Dean Reuschlein's guile was evident. . . . To a question from the Board of Bar Examiners as to whether the new School would comply with the American Bar Association Standards for Accreditation of Law Schools, the Dean replied that he was paying no attention to the ABA Standards and said they were too minimal and since they were virtually all quantitative, Villanova would exceed all of ABA minima from the very beginning. Thus, an immediately favorable local climate was created. Professional organizations and influential lawyers and legal educators the Dean used as tools to secure what he believed necessary for his Law School, all to the glory of Villanova. As a result, the School of Law came to be highly regarded by objective observers as "the jewel in Villanova's crown."

. . .

* Reprinted with permission from HAROLD GILL REUSCHLEIN ET AL., *THE VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW* 48-53 (1991).

** Professor of Law Emeritus, Villanova University School of Law.

His use of friendships with very important people is shown by the appearance of no fewer than eight members of the Supreme Court of the United States as sitting judges in the Reimel Appellate Court final arguments or as dinner speakers, by Chief Justice Earl Warren and then Senator John F. Kennedy as recipients of honorary degrees at the dedication of Garey Hall and by the presence of Mr. Justice Clark as the principal guest at the later dedication of the addition to Garey Hall. Forum and dinner speakers over the years were significant persons from the Who's Who of America's Statesmen and of the American Bar. When something needed doing for the good of the School an influential voice always seemed to respond to the Dean's persuasive call. . . .

...
 Much of Dean Reuschlein's contribution to legal education may be found in his 25 years' service in the educational surveillance activities of the American Bar Association. He served for 20 consecutive years in the work of the American Bar Association's Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, variously as Chairman of the Section, as long time member of the Council of the Section, as member and for four years as Chairman of the Section's Committee on Accreditation and Approval of Law Schools. His was largely the impetus leading to the promulgation of the present set of Standards for the Accreditation of Law Schools. He took great satisfaction in his role in founding in 1970 the now highly regarded Annual Workshop for Law School Deans and his long service in the work of inspecting and evaluating performance scores of law schools.

At Villanova University, as an accomplished musician, he left a much appreciated legacy in the Villanova Singers, the University's highly regarded male choral group which he founded in 1953.

Testimony to his services to academia is witnessed by the six doctorates *honoris causa* conferred upon him.

For his services to his Church, two Popes have honored him with Knighthood in the Order of Saint Gregory the Great and the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

In all the Dean's efforts, Mrs. Reuschlein was a much-loved participant. The great and near great who visited the School of Law were invariably housed and dined by the Dean's gracious lady and generations of students and alumni frequented the Reuschlein home on Spruce Lane in Villanova.

Dean Reuschlein's portrait graces the wall of the main corridor of Garey Hall, opposite the Dean's office, the gift of the Class of 1959. Of more importance, his powerful personality has been indelibly etched upon the minds of more than 1000 alumni who passed through the School while he served as Dean. To that group of alumni and to some 39 full-time faculty members with whom he had been associated, Harold Gill Reuschlein, teacher, administrator, promoter and academic politician will always be *the Dean* and the Villanova School of Law will always be *his* Law School.