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Robert Galloway Dixon, Jr

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ROBERT GALLOWAY DIXON, JR.

F. HODGE O'NEAL*

Robert Galloway Dixon, Jr.—known to his colleagues and friends as “Bob”—was a gifted, dedicated, versatile, and highly accomplished person. His career was a happy amalgam of teaching, scholarly writing, and public service. He distinguished himself in all these fields.

Yet Bob’s personal characteristics were what we most admired. He was diligent and imaginative. He was understanding, appreciative of others, and sincerely concerned about their welfare. Above all else, he had tremendous courage and complete integrity. His life provides a model for all of us to emulate.

Bob cared. He cared about people. He cared deeply about his family—his wife, Claire, and their children. He cared about institutions such as the United States Supreme Court, the United States Constitution and constitutional government, the free enterprise system, and the Washington University School of Law. He cared about ideas—such as the concept of equality, as was so graphically demonstrated by his organizing, chairing, and moderating of a 1978-1979 series of nine programs under the theme: *The Quest for Equality*. In a foreword to a symposium on *The Quest for Equality* in the *Washington University Law Quarterly*, Bob noted that “the three great recurring themes in Western legal and political philosophy” are “liberty, justice, and equality.”¹

Bob had an impressive educational background. He received an A.B. degree (summa cum laude) from Syracuse University in 1943 and a Ph.D. (Political Science) in 1947. He was a Ford Foundation faculty fellow at Stanford in 1951-1952. He received a J.D. degree with highest honors from The George Washington University in 1956.

Bob had an unwavering, consuming devotion to teaching. From 1946 to 1956 he served as a teacher of political science at the University of Maryland. From 1956 to 1975 he taught law at The George Washington University. Beginning in 1975, he occupied the prestigious chair of Daniel Noyes Kirby Professor of Law at Washington University. In

* Dean, Washington University School of Law. A.B., 1938, LL.B., 1940, Louisiana State University; J.S.D., 1949, Yale University; S.J.D., 1954, Harvard University.

1. Dixon, *Foreword: Equality, the Elusive Value*, 1979 WASH. U.L.Q. 5.

his law teaching he specialized in the fields of constitutional law, especially civil rights and liberties, and in the field of administrative law.

Bob excelled in the arts of the superb law teacher—in pedagogy, in scholarly writings, and in contributions to the development of the law. He was keen and imaginative. His teaching had a toughness of scrutiny and perseverance that did not easily tolerate the lazy student or the sloppy thinker. Nevertheless, his teaching was always marked with grace and kindness. Bob's devotion to teaching was so great that it drove him to meet his classes and to give of himself to his students even in the last year of his life, when he frequently suffered excruciating pain and sometimes hardly had the physical strength to travel the few miles from his home to the classroom.

Among his books are the following: *Democratic Representation: Reapportionment in Law and Politics* (1968) (winner of Woodrow Wilson Foundation Book Award for 1968); *Social Security Disability and Mass Justice—A Problem in Welfare Adjudication* (1973); *Standards Development in the Private Sector: Thoughts on Interest Representation and Procedural Fairness* (1978). He also authored a number of monographs, contributed chapters to several books, and wrote scores of articles for legal and political science periodicals.

In the five years Bob was at the Washington University School of Law he had a tremendous impact on the law school's development and reputation. He provided leadership to the faculty by his wisdom and determination. He was instantly alert and attentive to anything that might affect the school's welfare. He demanded high standards from himself, his students, and his faculty colleagues. This concern for excellence manifested itself in the standards Bob applied while serving on the law school's personnel committee and its tenure committee. It manifested itself also in the patient assistance he gave his junior colleagues in their teaching and writing. Bob spent many hours with his younger colleagues, consulting with them about their teaching and going over their writings to point out possible improvements in thought or style. He never failed to offer words of encouragement when they were needed. To use a phrase he used in characterizing a leader he especially admired, Bob was a "mover and shaker." He insisted on responsible choices. He was influenced not simply by the probable immediate impact of a decision on the law school, but also by the effect it would have on the school's future direction.

Bob's contributions were not limited to the academic world. Judges,

lawyers, and political leaders frequently called upon his talents. He was Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Office of Legal Counsel, United States Department of Justice, during 1973-1974, one of the most critical periods for the Department of Justice in our nation's history. He was Council Member (1973-1974) and Public Member (1974-1980), Administrative Conference of the United States. He was a member of the United States Civil Service Commission Advisory Committee on Administrative Law Judges (1976-1977); Chairman, Research Advisory Board, Legal Institute of Phi Delta Phi (1978-1980); Section Council Member (1975-1978), and Chairman (1978-1980), Special Committee on the Legislative Veto, American Bar Association Section of Administrative Law; and a member of the American Bar Association Committee on Federal Limitations on Attorneys' Fees (1978-1980). Bob was a member of the Advisory Board for Improving Management in Government, Committee for Economic Development (1969-1972), and an advisor to the United States Civil Service Commission from 1976 until his death. He was consultant to numerous organizations and activities, including: Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, United States Department of Justice (1976-1980); National Endowment for Humanities (1974-1980); National Commission on Reform of Federal Criminal Laws (1969-1971); and constitutional conventions, New York (1966-1967), Pennsylvania (1967), Maryland (1968), and Illinois (1970).

Bob was a delightful companion, colleague, and friend. He was warm and animated. A lunch or dinner with him was an occasion of pleasure and enrichment. He was worth listening to on almost any subject. The scope of his concerns and the reach of his mind were impressively great. He grappled constantly with the problems of our time; to him they were important and urgent. A discussion with Bob was always interesting, vital, and rewarding.

Bob died at age sixty, still youthful at the very peak of his productivity. He had almost completed another major work, a book on equality. Still looking for new fields to conquer, he was thrilled by the prospect of new intellectual ventures. More important to Bob than what he had already accomplished was what he was just beginning or planned to accomplish in the future.

The law school and those of us who were Bob's colleagues and students were fortunate to have him with us for five years. As a member of a law school faculty, Bob was a "pride and joy" to the dean, the

faculty, and the students. He was a loyal and effective co-worker, with the skill and energy to provide effective leadership. He was never lacking in patience or faith. He was someone for the dean to boast about in communications to alumni. He was an inspiration and an example to teachers and students. Bob never failed to live up to his own unyielding criteria of intellectual worth and professional and public obligation. The monuments he has built here will endure.

All of us in the law school community admired and respected Bob. Those of us who knew him best loved him deeply. His life and career remind us of the observation of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., "That a man may live greatly in the law"²

2. O.W. HOLMES, *The Profession of the Law*, in COLLECTED LEGAL PAPERS, 29, 30 (1920).