

FOR THE RECORD

MICHAEL ASIMOW*

I taught at UCLAW for over forty years. I have enough memories to fill a book. When I walk the halls of UCLAW now, I am flooded with memories. Where to begin?

A bit of bio for those who don't know me. After graduating from Berkeley Law in 1964, I worked for Irell and Manella (then a small firm) in Los Angeles for two years. I got a call from a faculty member at Berkeley asking me if I had ever thought about teaching. It had never occurred to me, but the idea was very attractive. Because my family didn't want to move away from L.A., I approached UCLA, and the rest was history. This was 1967 and I was twenty-eight years old. I received the princely salary of \$14,400 per year, which didn't seem too bad since it was more than I was making in law practice. The dean was the great Richard Maxwell, who almost single-handedly rescued UCLA from the disasters of its early years.

Leaving practice for law teaching was one of the best decisions of my life. From the first day, I knew that this was the job I was born for. To this

* Visiting Professor of Law, Stanford Law School; Professor of Law Emeritus, UCLA School of Law. For further information, see the Editor-in-Chief's introduction on page 1 of this volume: 11 CAL. LEGAL HIST. 1 (2016).

day, I still get a thrill out of teaching and I have always loved the research end of the job. Committees — not so much.

At UCLA I taught numerous subjects. I started as a tax teacher. The dean asked me if I could teach Administrative Law. I hated the subject in law school (where it was a required course), but I said I'd give it a try. Administrative Law turned out to be the subject in which I specialize, and I have continued working in it throughout my career. I also taught numerous other subjects including Business Associations, Constitutional Law, Business Planning, and Contracts. Because I love first-year teaching, Contracts has remained my favorite.

I retired in 2001, and started collecting my generous pension, but in fact I never retired. I continued teaching one class a year and doing research. Although I was very happy as a UCLA emeritus, in 2010, I moved to Stanford Law School. At Stanford, I still teach one class a year (depending on the school's needs) and continue doing research. This move occurred primarily because most of my children and grandchildren live in the Bay Area and my wife Merrie and I wanted to be closer to them.

As I reflect back on my forty-plus years at UCLA, my first thoughts turn to my colleagues who are no longer with us. Most of all, I remember my dear friend and tennis partner Gary Schwartz, but also my great colleagues Julian Eule, Don Hagman, Murray Schwartz, Hal Horowitz, Ralph Rice, Herb Schwartz, Ben Aaron, Arthur Rosett, David Mellinkoff, and so many others.

I'm so grateful to my thousands of students and my fellow professors. I remember so fondly the warm and friendly atmosphere of the UCLAW faculty. We had our political disagreements, of course, but everyone remained civil and friendly. There was never the kind of backbiting and political intrigue that has occurred at so many law schools. I worked under numerous deans and interim deans — Dick Maxwell, Murray Schwartz, Bill Warren, Susan Prager, Norm Abrams, Jon Varat, Steve Yeazell, and Mike Schill. Every one of them offered me nothing but friendship, support and encouragement.

To select just one of many possible subjects that I might write about now, I'd like to mention popular culture. In the 1990s, Paul Bergman came up with the idea of writing a book on courtroom movies. I offered him so many suggestions that he invited me to become his co-author and so *Reel*

Justice was born. My work with Paul was and is one of the richest collaborations I've ever had [see also the essay by Paul Bergman in this volume]. This launched me into a new career of research and teaching about the intersection of law and pop culture — that is, law and lawyers in movies and television.

When Paul and I decided to offer a pop culture seminar, the Curriculum Committee turned us down. But we beefed up our application and resubmitted it and the course was approved. I recall so vividly the many times I offered this seminar at UCLA and all the enthusiastic students who enrolled in it. I continue working on pop culture subjects to this very day. UCLAW was a place where a faculty member could branch out into a new and untried field and receive the unstinting support of the administration and colleagues (even if they had their doubts about the academic value of studying movies and television).

So I conclude these reminiscences by offering my thanks to everyone at UCLA past and present — faculty, students, and staff. I had a wonderful career teaching at UCLAW and nothing but fond memories of my many years there.

★ ★ ★