

SOME MEMORIES OF UCLA LAW SCHOOL

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I joined the UCLA law faculty in summer 1969, after a year of clerking in San Francisco and two years of practice in Washington, D.C. The school had been founded only twenty years before, and had a relatively small faculty when I interviewed there — about thirty people. By the time I arrived it was substantially larger, thanks to a hiring spree that brought me and seven or eight others onto the faculty all at once. We young turks were instantly integrated into the faculty, treated as family, but we also developed close and supportive bonds with each other, and I remember how commonly five or six of us would all be at work in our offices late into the night, consulting with each other, laboring not just on our own, but — in a way — as a group determined to make a contribution to the school.

I had offers from several established old law schools (including Penn and Virginia) considered at the time to be far superior to UCLA, yet my experience interviewing at UCLA convinced me that it was the only place for me. The people I met were warm, sharp, ready to test my mettle with

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much wit and humor, and, most important, free of the stiffness and pomposity that I found at some of the other schools I visited. They were my kind of people, and I thrived working among them, and with the young new colleagues who joined the faculty around the same time.

Westwood was still a village of sorts in 1969, and most of the faculty lived on the west side of Los Angeles, within a few miles of the law school. This made out-of-office socializing easy, and there was lots of it, usually in the form of dinner parties. There was also, of course, socializing during the workday, especially in the form of lunch at the Faculty Club, where a considerable number of us would gather at the same large table every day shortly before noon, eat together, and then go as a group for coffee in one of the club's lounges. I wonder if this wonderful tradition still goes on. I wonder if dinner parties are still a regular thing, now that many of the faculty live distant from the school, and now that the faculty is so much larger. I wonder if there is still a Ken Karst haiku contest each year. (I think it was haiku!) I wonder if the bonds among faculty are still as warm and tight as they were back in the day.

I say with utter confidence that my colleagues at UCLA were instrumental in the development of my career, and of my views about what a faculty should be. My years at UCLA were the happiest and most fruitful years of my life.

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