

STONE SOUP: THOUGHTS ON BALANCING A DEANSHIP AND FAMILY LIFE AFTER TWELVE YEARS AS DEAN

*Richard L. Aynes**

JUNE 30, 2007 marked the conclusion of my twelve-year service as Dean of the University of Akron School of Law. During that time the *University of Toledo Law Review* initiated its very successful “Leadership in Legal Education Symposium” and I benefited from reading articles in the prior symposia. It was inspiring to read about the efforts, thoughts, concerns, and accomplishments of fellow deans. Sometimes those essays gave me reassurance, raised my curiosity,¹ provided new ideas, gave me an opportunity to think about old matters from a different perspective,² and even prompted healthy disagreement.³

* John F. Seiberling Chair of Constitutional Law (2007-present), Dean (1995-2007), Interim Athletic Director (1993-94), and Associate Dean (1984-1993).

1. As someone who attended college in the late 1960s and early 1970s, titles involving icons from that era catch my attention. *E.g.*, John L. Carroll, *Words of Wisdom for Deans from Mick Jagger and Others*, 36 U. TOL. L. REV. 29 (2004); and Thomas M. Mengler, *What’s Faith Got to Do with It? (With Apologies to Tina Turner)*, 35 U. TOL. L. REV. 145 (2003).

2. In my view, the award for the “best title” goes to H. Reese Hanson, *Except for the Problems, Being a Dean Is a Very Good Job*, 33 U. TOL. L. REV. 77 (2001). One of my favorite essays is Dean Allan W. Vestal’s “*A River to My People...*” *Notes from My Fifth Year as Dean*, 37 U. TOL. L. REV. 179 (2005) (utilizing quotations from the movie *Lawrence of Arabia* to make his points).

3. I thought Peter Keane’s essay, *Interloper in the Fields of Academe*, 35 U. TOL. L. REV. 119 (2003) overlooked a number of wonderful deans who have come from non-academic settings. *E.g.*, Carroll, *supra* note 1 (former federal judge); Stephen J. Friedman, *Why Can’t Law Students Be More Like Lawyers?*, 37 U. TOL. L. REV. 81 (2005) (partner in the Corporate Department of Debevoise & Plimpton); John D. Hutson, *From Admiral to Dean*, 35 U. TOL. L. REV. 101 (2003) (twenty-eight years in the U.S. Navy); W. Taylor Reveley, III, *Cultural Musings of a Non-Traditional Dean*, 31 U. TOL. L. REV. 725 (2000) (twenty-eight years in private practice, including service as managing partner of a large law firm); Jim Rosenblatt, *Lessons Learned by a New Dean*, 36 U. TOL. L. REV. 151 (2004) (U.S. Army, including teaching at Judge Advocate General’s School); and Willis P. Whichard, *From a Warm Bench to a Hot Seat: The Transition from Judging to Deaning*, 36 U. TOL. L. REV. 221 (six years as a N.C. Appellate Judge and twelve years as an Associate Justice of the N.C. Supreme Court). To these six authors from the symposia, one could add the people I no doubt missed, at least ten deans from outside of the academia that I can think of but for whom I can provide no ready citations, and many others who undoubtedly served but are unknown to me. It also does not include what I might call deans with a “blended career.” For example, among those at my own school, we would include the late Albert S. Rakas, Interim Dean (1980-82) (began as an enlisted man and retired as a Colonel in the U.S. Army); Dean Emeritus Donald M. Jenkins (1982-87) (bomber pilot in the Korean war who stayed in the Air Force Reserve, ultimately rising to the rank of Major General while he was Dean); and former Dean Isaac

Having benefited from the contributions of other deans for so many years, this year I felt obligated to try to make some small contribution to the joint enterprise. My goal in writing this essay is to expand on an area of common interest to many deans: how to strike a balance with family life and work.

I. BALANCING DEANING AND FAMILY LIFE

One recurring theme has been how a dean balances the tensions between obligations to family and obligations to a law school.⁴ The thinkers from the Scottish Enlightenment believed that generally such tensions were irreconcilable and that the existence of those tensions was what made life enjoyable.⁵ In 2007, former Dean Nancy B. Rapoport indicated that “[a] deanship is a seventy to ninety hour week” and that “[i]t is well-nigh impossible to do a good job as a dean in only forty or fifty hours a week.”⁶ In 2002, then Dean Howard Glickstein, with twenty-three years of experience, noted that “the pressures of family responsibly place great strains on a deanship.”⁷ And, of course, the opposite is true as well: the pressures of a deanship can place great strains upon a family. Dean Glickstein advised, “[y]ou cannot imagine the time involved in being a dean until you assume the job. Your schedule is comparable to that of a first year associate at a major law firm.”⁸ Dean W. Taylor Reveley of the

C. Hunt, Jr. (1987-1995) (while having served as an Associate Dean and Dean at other schools before coming to Akron, had also worked in a major national law firm, was Principal Deputy Counsel and then Acting General Counsel for the U.S. Army, worked at the SEC, and after stepping out of the Dean’s Office, served two terms as an SEC Commissioner).

Similarly, while I appreciate Dean Garon’s creative approach, I am skeptical that it would achieve the results he seeks. See Jon M. Garon, *Take Back the Night: Why an Association of Regional Law Schools Will Return Core Values to Legal Education and Provide an Alternative to Tiered Rankings*, 38 U. TOL. L. REV. 517 (2007). Likewise, Dean Friedman, *supra* note 3, at 81-93 advocated what I view as a flawed economic model that places the short-term interests of certain types of law firms above the long term interest of clients and new lawyers and which ignores the more creative economic and strategic approaches analogous to the lessons of MICHAEL LEWIS, *MONEYBALL: THE ART OF WINNING AN UNFAIR GAME* (2003). Still, whether those views will ultimately prevail or my own reservations will turn out to be accurate, it is commendable that these deans were willing to express their views publicly and that this symposium is willing to provide such a forum. Indeed, even if not adopted, the views expressed may spark other new ideas which might not otherwise arise.

4. Jeffrey A. Brauch, *The Dean and Family Life*, 36 U. TOL. L. REV. 11, 11 (2004); Thomas C. Galligan, Jr., *A Running Conversation*, 36 U. TOL. L. REV. 65, 65-66 (2004) (missing children’s programs at school during the day).

5. I can almost imagine some of my colleague saying, if that is true, then I must have been enjoying life a lot!

6. Nancy B. Rapoport, *Not Quite “Them,” Not Quite “Us”*: *Why It’s Difficult for Former Deans to Go Home Again*, 38 U. TOL. L. REV. 581, 597 (2007).

7. Howard A. Glickstein, *A Dean’s Survival Guide*, 34 U. TOL. L. REV. 75, 76 (2002).

8. *Id.* at 76. See also Michael D. Sabbath, *Should You Accept the Position of Interim Dean? Some Observations from Someone Who Did*, 36 U. TOL. L. REV. 159, 160 (2006) (comparing the job of Interim Dean to the experience of a first-year associate at a large Atlanta law firm); Robert K. Walsh, *Advice from the New Dean’s Boot Camp*, 34 U. TOL. L. REV. 185, 186 (2002) (indicating

William & Mary School of Law, who for nine years was the Managing Partner of Hunton & Williams of Richmond, Virginia, analogized the job of dean as being similar to that of a managing partner of a major law firm.⁹

Whether enjoyable or not, the tensions seem destined to be with most of us throughout our careers. In general, spending so much time on family matters that one cannot meet the duties of a dean jeopardizes one's position and simultaneously compromises one's ability to care and support for one's family. Conversely, putting so much time and energy into being dean that it deprives one's family of one's presence and engagement in their lives, can have serious consequences as well. Most of us are somewhere in the middle of that tension, trying to balance the needs of family and the deanship.

Further, it is evident from these symposia articles that these questions haunt deans with families, and, especially, those with children who are still living at home.¹⁰ I do not purport to have the magic solution to this tension. Indeed, I think—to use two favorite words of a dean, that this has to be considered contextually and with judgment—what works for one dean at one school may not work for another dean at another school. Further, what works for children of one age may not work for children of another age.

Like the story “Stone Soup” we read to our children when they are young, others have begun the soup and I will add what I can.

II. PRELUDE

My contribution begins with a prelude. On June 15, 1993,¹¹ I was assigned, in spite of my reservations,¹² to be the Interim Athletic Director at our University's Division I Athletic Program.¹³ At the time my daughter was nine and my son was five.

One of the apparently unbreakable traditions was that the Athletic Director traveled with the football team to away games on Saturdays. My time-saving compromise on this was that I would drive separately to the opposing site, meeting with the coaches and team on the field and in the locker room at appropriate times.

that an unnamed dean was resigning after his second year as dean because it was too much like the practice of law).

9. Reveley, *supra* note 3, 725. See also THE AALS DIRECTORY OF LAW TEACHERS 926 (2006-07) (listing Dean Reveley's biographical sketch).

10. Brauch, *supra* note 4, at 11-17; Galligan, Jr., *supra* note 4, at 65-66.

11. I served in that capacity until April 9, 1994.

12. I was the law school's associate dean at the time and at an AALS Conference on Constitutional Law at the University of Michigan where I had presented a work-in-progress. In an approximately 9:30 pm phone call our university president told me that I could talk the new appointment over with my wife, but they were going to announce it at noon the next day. I reached my dean, Isaac C. Hunt, Jr., who was at a conference in Washington, D.C. at 7:00 a.m. the next day and asked for his help. He clarified the matter greatly: “You don't understand. The decision has already been made and you have no choice.”

13. Yes, there is another story here, but this is neither the time nor the place to tell it.

My son was just beginning a long-time interest in soccer.¹⁴ He had games on Saturdays and my wife would take him to his games and be his biggest fan. Early in this process I realized that this would be a great opportunity to take my daughter on trips with me. She went with me to several away games. Wherever we went it was a *great* time. We had great talks,¹⁵ listened to the radio, sang songs, and had no interruptions. For both of us these were wonderful times. Particularly memorable was the trip to Western Michigan in Kalamazoo, Michigan, where my daughter discovered that we got to stay overnight in a hotel, the Athletic Director has his own box that was supplied with food, and when we went down on the field together at halftime, we were interviewed for a TV broadcast back to Akron. Another memorable trip was to Bowling Green, Ohio, where she saw search lights shining in the sky at night for the first time. The pictures of the two of us together are some of my favorites.

As the year progressed, other opportunities developed. My daughter got to be a ball girl for the women's basketball team and we were together for all of the women's basketball games when it was her turn to perform those duties. Of course, my son then insisted on being a ball boy for the men's team.¹⁶ Our whole family often attended the variety of sporting and fundraising events in which the Athletic Department was involved. Our children enjoyed these events and there were often unexpected benefits. For example, while my daughter and I were participating in a charity walk-a-thon, we walked past some of our alumni. One of them said to the others, in a low voice that my daughter apparently heard, "she is the Athletic Director's daughter." A few minutes later my daughter proudly said: "You know, Dad, ever since you've been the Athletic Director, I've been famous!"

The boundaries between work and family began to blur and "our" ten months in the Athletic Department were some of the very best months for my family and me.

III. DEANING AND THE FAMILY

One might well wonder, what has this got to do with the family of a law dean? The answer is, this experience opened a window of opportunity that I might have otherwise missed. It taught me that one can cross the boundaries between work and family life with good consequences.

14. One year in high school, for example, he was playing on four different soccer teams. As I am completing this manuscript, he has just joined his first college intramural soccer team.

15. A word of gratuitous parenting advice: I have had some of the best and most important conversations with my children in the car. It has something to do with being shut off from the outside world (at least until cell phones became so popular) and, I think, the seating arrangement where they do not have to look you in the eye. I know this is counterintuitive to some, but whatever the reason, it works. See Dean Douglas E. Ray's explanation of this phenomenon as an application of "the angle rule" in *Minnesotan: A Language for Constructive Communication between Faculty and Dean*, 34 U. TOL. L. REV. 159, 163 n.14 (2000).

16. At five years of age, he thought this was great fun, but it expanded my responsibilities to sit with him to try to make sure that none of the basketball players fell on top of him.

While some have suggested that being dean makes it more difficult to attend programs of children at school during the day,¹⁷ my experience was to the contrary. Much of the work that a dean does (unlike scheduled classes), can be shifted to another time if one has enough advanced notice. This flexibility allowed me to attend virtually all of my children's school events in the day while they were in kindergarten, elementary school, and middle school. At many of these events I was one of the very few fathers present, and it made me appreciate one of the benefits of being a dean: it may have an overwhelming schedule, but it is a schedule with some flexibility. If one is disciplined and plans ahead, a dean can actually attend more of those day-time school events than faculty members who have conflicting classes that cannot be changed.

There are a few normal law school activities that lend themselves to family events. Our Student Bar Association ("SBA") has an auction to support public interest scholarships and several times we have made this a family event. At the fall SBA picnic, my children would often play on the faculty team against the law students in softball. The SBA sponsors a "Barrister's Ball" every year. One year, when my wife could not attend, my daughter, who was in high school, went with me.

But these opportunities may be few and far between. If any of my dean colleagues can convince their children that going to a moot court or mock trial competition is as exciting as sitting under the basket during a basketball game and catching stray balls, they are better advocates than I am!

Dean Jeffrey A. Brauch has outlined some useful strategies: leave work in time for family dinners;¹⁸ coordinate law school events and family schedules where possible; be judicious in the scheduling of trips; reserve dinner and the evening for family matters; do law school work after younger children have gone to bed; and link business trips with family trips.¹⁹

I think there may be more opportunities if one remains attentive and creative. For example, in the spring of 2000, I had the good fortune to be invited to be a member of a panel to discuss the Fourteenth Amendment at the Library of Congress in a program broadcast by C-Span. My son was eleven at the time and some angel whispered in my ear that this would be a great chance to replicate, with my son, the trips my daughter and I had enjoyed together.

We took advantage of the six hour drive to D.C. to talk—no phones, no computers, no video games, and no one coming to the door.²⁰ We spent the evening in a hotel that had a pool and we swam as long as he wanted to swim. The next day we took a taxi (not a common thing in our part of the country) to the House of Representatives and the office of Congressman Charles T. Canaday of Florida, who was our sponsor. There we met the other members of the panel: faculty members from three other law schools.

17. Galligan, Jr., *supra* note 4, at 65.

18. This is more difficult for deans at schools which offer evening programs.

19. Brauch, *supra* note 4, at 11-13.

20. See *supra* note 15 (on conversations in the car).

The Congressman took us to us to the Congressional Dinning Room for lunch²¹ and then onto the floor of the House of Representatives. That night, my son's aunt, who worked for the *Washington Post*, joined the reception following the program.²² Afterwards, we took the taxi back to the hotel, swam the night away, and benefited from the drive home as another father-son activity.

There are several other trips like this that I will not recount, but I think this illustrates the point. Though Dean Brauch had success with taking his children to the American Association of Law Schools ("AALS") Annual Meeting,²³ in my experience it often conflicted with my children's school schedule. In general, I did not feel comfortable taking my children to an academic program like the AALS Annual Meeting, or to a professional meeting like our Ohio Bench/Bar/Deans Conference because I would need to attend so many programs that we would not have time to spend together. But, I have always found the American Law Institute ("ALI") annual meeting (and the corresponding Dean's Breakfast) a possibility. My daughter went with me to ALI three times, twice in Washington D.C. and once in Chicago. While I had an interest in ALI, my main purpose in going was to attend the Dean's Breakfast jointly sponsored by AALS, the American Bar Association ("ABA"), and the Law School Admission Council ("LSAC"). Usually, I attended the meetings on Monday and Tuesday mornings, including the Deans' Breakfast, while she slept late. Then we had lunch together (sometimes with a member of the alumni), followed by sightseeing for the rest of the day.

Still, there are many options. For our children, softball, soccer, and baseball were not only the opportunity for Mom and Dad to see them perform, but for me, I also had the pleasure to serve as an assistant coach for both children,²⁴ and then, for my son, as his head coach.²⁵

This past summer was my fifth and final year as the head coach for my son's team. He is a better player than I am a coach,²⁶ but I have had excellent assistant

21. We had a crisis because my son thought the only choice off of the elegant menu that he could eat was a hamburger and yet he felt that it would somehow be expected that he order something else. Yale's Southmayd Professor Akhil Amar saved the day by himself ordering a hamburger, which then made my son feel that he too could order a hamburger. I will always be in Akhil's debt for his kindness.

22. One wonders how many family secrets should be made public here. But in my son's eyes, the program moved a little slowly and as I looked up to the bright camera lights I could see him making shadow figures on the wall. Several friends that had seen the program commented on my son being there. Happily, it seems that the camera crew edited out the shadow figures.

23. Brauch, *supra* note 4, at 12.

24. My opportunity to coach my daughter's team ended when she began playing on her high school team.

25. Caution: yes, it is a little different when your players are growing goatees and driving themselves to the games and practices.

26. While I realize this was a Kiwanis/Little League recreational team, as a parent I still want to note that my son's batting average for the season was .675 and his on-base average .729. In addition to playing first base and outfield, he pitched the last inning of the All-Star game without giving up a run. We beat the All-Star team of our neighboring community, even though they had the better record against our teams and had won last year's game. I tried to attribute this to great coaching, but the players assured me this was not the case.

Winter 2008]

STONE SOUP

227

coaches.²⁷ Even as dean of a busy law school, I was able to coach games played in the months of May, June and July. In five years, I have missed only one and a half games because of a work-related matter. Everyone in my office knew that I was willing to do whatever had to be done before I left for baseball and after the game. But that time in between was sacred, absent some emergency that never developed.

I should emphasize that this too was a family event. My wife, who knows baseball well, attended all the games, kept the scorebook for us, cheered for our son, and kept the coach in line. Our daughter also attended the games when she was home, and at times grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins also came.

A dean can create similar interactive opportunities in religious organizations, scouting, musical groups, and countless other ways. When our daughter decided to attend college at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana, it created an opportunity to recreate those long car trips together in the years when she did not have a car on campus. I relished taking her to campus and picking her up to bring her home throughout the course of the year.

The opportunities, if not endless, are there. In order to take advantage of them, one has to be creative, consider the context, use judgment, and, most importantly, set priorities.

IV. RECIPROCITY: FAMILY HELP FOR THE DEAN AND LAW SCHOOL

While the concerns of deans are first and foremost about the parental role within the family, there are obvious ways in which one's family helps the dean and helps the school. People are quick to recognize how a spouse can make contributions to a dean's own career and in a number of settings. There is no doubt that the School of Law benefited in many ways over time from the talents of my wife, Kathy, who is also a lawyer.²⁸ Further, in the unpredictable work days of a dean, my wife was often the "advance person" to go to the next event to represent us while I was still tied up on some matter at the School. Obviously, for most of us, our spouse may be not only a confidential advisor, but sometimes the only person to whom we can talk about certain matters. The engaging spouse is always helpful at social events, and in fundraising matters.

It may not be quite so obvious, but I want to suggest that children too have their ways of being helpful. In part, they keep us human and humble and show people that the dean is a real person with the same challenges. Children keep us connected to reality and inspire us to do our best—both for our children and for the children of others affected by a dean's decisions. As they grow older, they can help a dean in unexpected ways. When my daughter was a teenager, she once asked about an essay on which I was working. When I told her what it was about, she said she had just read an article about that topic. It was relevant and I

27. Among those were Dwight Bungo, Dan Marshall, and Dave Scarpino.

28. Though this is somewhat of a simplification, Kathy put me through law school and then I put her through law school. We overlapped in school for one semester. In the summer of 2007, we marked our thirty-sixth anniversary.

cited the article in my essay, giving credit to her.²⁹ Of course, both of my children know more than I do about technology, and they each provide their share of advice when I run into a problem. Dean Brauch suggested that family members benefit from being exposed to law schools matters and I think this is true.³⁰

I do not doubt that my daughter benefited from having lunch with a member of our alumni who is a prominent Washington D.C. lawyer and has been rated by a fairly sophisticated evaluation system as one of the top five trademark lawyers in the world.³¹ I am also quite sure that being taken to the floor of Congress by Congressman Canaday was a valuable educational experience for my son. Among the many remembrances of people they met, my daughter can point to her picture, as an infant, with the late Associate Justice Arthur J. Goldberg and my son to his picture with Ohio's former Governor Robert Taft.

When I was the associate dean and my son was four years old, he was sick one night. Both my wife and I were in his room in the middle of the night. At some point she went back to bed and as I was getting ready to return to our room, our son said to me, in a small, calm voice that brought a tear to my eyes: "Daddy, where will you be if I need you?" Shifting gears quickly, I assured him that I would be "*right there*" in his room if he needed me and it did not take me long to retrieve my pillow and a blanket so I could sleep on his floor that night.

In an analogous way, there are many times when the various constituencies of the law school will not "need" you. But they need to know that you will be there if they do. I was not on campus when the terrorist attacks of 9/11 took place, and I learned about them only through a call from our associate dean. Though we are almost 400 miles from Washington D.C. and almost 500 miles from New York City, in the uncertainty of the immediate aftermath of those attacks, no one knew what would happen next. Our campus had been evacuated and what were considered to be strategic areas were being guarded and patrolled by our university and city police.

Nevertheless, as people were leaving campus, I was moving in the opposite direction to come onto the campus. On the way I called to make sure my wife was on her way home and that our children were already safely home from school. Law Librarian Paul Richert and I made a room-to-room search to make sure everyone had evacuated the building. After we had completed that task and made sure the building was locked down, he went home and I stayed in my office alone for an hour or so, finishing up some work and thinking about the events of the day. I doubt that many people knew that I had even been there, but it was important that "The Dean" be present in that type of crisis.

Though our students were not affected in the same way as those who were in school in New York City, it was nevertheless a time of crisis for them and

29. See Richard L. Aynes, *Bradwell v. Illinois: Chief Justice Chase's Dissent and the "Sphere of Women's Work,"* 59 LA. L. REV. 521, 528 n.45 (1999).

30. Brauch, *supra* note 4, at 13.

31. W. Mack Webner, University of Akron Class of 1968 and a partner with Sughrue Mion, PLLC in Washington, D.C. Sughrue Mion PLLC, <http://www.sughrue.com/mwebner/> (last visited Nov. 12, 2007).

Winter 2008]

STONE SOUP

229

when we were back on campus, I held an open forum at noon and again at 5:30 to talk with our students and any of the faculty and staff who wanted to participate. These were difficult and touching meetings, with many students worried about their own fate and the future of the nation. It was a time when they needed to see “the” dean and to have someone give them calming, but realistic, reassurance.

There were other times as well, two different times over a ten year period, when separate individual students were threatening suicide; when a steam pipe broke in our building making it uninhabitable for a time and melting down all of our telephone and computer connections; when our Ohio Board of Regents proposed to fund all of the public law schools in Ohio based upon the entering LSAT and undergraduate grade point average of the new law students,³² and times when individual faculty or staff had tragedies within their families. In all of these instances, my son had impressed upon me the importance of “being there” when “needed.”

A second example came from our daughter when I was an associate dean, but it involves a story that I often told as dean to our entering students in one of their orientation classes. When she was young we used to use “reverse psychology” to try to get her to do things by playing upon her desire to be a “leader.” One night I was trying to get her to go upstairs to get ready for bed and I told her that I was going to be the “leader” in going upstairs first. She was determined to be the “leader” and she must have said something that touched a sensitive nerve in me. I decided that she needed to know a little more about her father, and as we climbed the stairs, I told her that I had been a leader in high school where I did certain things, a leader in college where I did other things, and so forth. By the time I had finished, she was at the top of the stairs and turned her head around, looked down at me, and with a smile on her face, said: “And now you’re just a Daddy!”

I told this story to our new law students—in a gentle and kind way—to help them understand that, in spite of all of their past accomplishments, they were starting over again.

The story also has a deeper meaning. None of us would trade away the title of “Daddy” or “Mommy” for that of “dean.” Yet, every year some of the almost 200 deans will be lucky enough to have both titles.³³ Both are significant and somewhat interrelated, but our children help us keep our focus upon what is important, give us context for doing our jobs, and help keep us humble. No matter how many awards you receive, articles you publish, important friends you have, or how great the applause you receive, you will still be “just a Daddy or Mommy” to that wonderful five-year old who is not very impressed by the other titles and accomplishments. That, in turn, will help you lead in a manner that is both humane and productive when working with your colleagues and students

32. This plan was ultimately rejected by the Ohio Legal Education Commission established by the state legislature. See John Funk, *Panel Derails Limiting Law School Enrollment*, CLEV. PLAIN DEALER, Apr. 28, 1998, at 1B. For more information on the funding plan, see also John Funk, *State Law School Analysis Grim*, CLEV. PLAIN DEALER, May 28, 1996, at 1B.

33. Both involve what seems to be a “name” change.

who are struggling with their own balancing act between important family matters and work.

V. CONCLUSION

Though the number of law schools has increased over the last thirty years, it seems to only keep pace with the increase in the population and the needs of a complex society for lawyers. Yet, there are still less than 200 law schools in a nation with approximately 3,000 colleges and universities.³⁴ This alone means that the position offers a “unique experience”³⁵ and, as my “new dean” colleague Larry Dessem has written, it is “a great honor as well.”³⁶ Dean Lawrence Ponoroff once observed:

Law school deans enjoy a certain cachet relative to their peers elsewhere in the academy. Just as law alumni tend to identify much more closely with the law school than the larger university, so, too, do they tend to respect and idealize the law school dean much more so than can be said for the deans in other disciplines³⁷

It has long been recognized that within higher education there is a significant difference between status (or prestige) and success.³⁸ Our challenge—and one which still eludes us—is not to figure out how to measure status, prestige, or pedigree—we know how to do that pretty well. Rather, our challenge is to design ways to measure “value added.” In the interim, as Dean Jay Conison has suggested, one can “find genuine successes in the work of the faculty, in the careers and deeds of alumni, and in countless other ways; and . . . recognize that these are the true gauges of success”³⁹

One of the great treasures of being in the unique position of a law dean is the support and assistance one receives from fellow deans.⁴⁰ However, to those

34. See DOMINIC J. BREWER, SUSAN M. GATES, AND CHARLES A. GOLDMAN, IN PURSUIT OF PRESTIGE I (2002).

35. John D. Feerick, *A Few Reflections on a Long Deanship*, 33 U. TOL. L. REV. 25, 29 (2001).

36. R. Lawrence Dessem, *Top Ten Reasons to Be a Law School Dean*, 33 U. TOL. L. REV. 19, 24 (2001).

37. Lawrence Ponoroff, *From Water Closets to Alumni Relations: A Few Reflections on Where the Dean's Time Is Most Productively Deployed*, 36 U. TOL. L. REV. 137, 138 (2004). See also Kenneth C. Randall, *Longevity*, 37 U. TOL. L. REV. 127, 128 (2005) (discussing uniqueness compared to other units on a University campus); Vestal, *supra* note 2, at 181.

38. See BREWER ET AL., *supra* note 34, at 134.

39. Jay Conison, *Success, Status, and the Goals of a Law School*, 37 U. TOL. L. REV. 23, 36 (2005).

40. When I started writing this essay, I intended to include a list of many of the wonderful people who had been especially helpful to me: family, friends, colleagues on and off campus, alumni, fellow deans, the leadership of our professional organizations, and others. But as the list grew, I realized that the best one can do in these circumstances is to simply acknowledge that while a dean may sometimes have to stand alone, a dean very seldom accomplishes anything worthwhile that is not part of a team effort that involves multiple indispensable parties. To everyone who has

Winter 2008]

STONE SOUP

231

of you who carry on in the important role of dean, I hope you know that strong families produce strong schools and strong families begin with strong parents. When colleagues and co-workers would come to my office—often with some expression of apology—about needing time off for some important family matter, they received two words in response: “Family First.” I hope that those of you who continue to work in the important position of dean will have the ability to say the same.

been so helpful, I want to express my thanks and my appreciation and, especially so, to my own family.