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## Thank You, Jack

Hugh B. Scott

*United States District Court for the Western District of New York*

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## Thank You, Jack

HUGH B. SCOTT†

I'm a 1974 graduate of this school. In '71 I came here, proud to be a product of the late 60s. I wanted to change everything around me—civil rights, Vietnam, the system, anyone over thirty. Aside from carrying my hair through the door to come to class, I was really interested in questions of constitutional law and our freedoms as American citizens. After fighting in World War II, my father moved here from Memphis in the late 40s. He came to the Law School already with a family and no money. Between an argument with me about cutting my hair and my trying to figure out what my schedule was going to be, he said, "Who are your teachers? Who are you going to have?" When I got to Jacob Hyman's name, he stopped. He said, "He's still there isn't he?" I said, "Yeah." I said, "I haven't met him." My father then sat me down and told me that Jack Hyman was nearly the only person here at UB in the late 40s who would give him encouragement about who he was, about his capacity, his ability. My dad seemed to feel that he had let Professor Hyman down by leaving the school. My father said to me "make sure you get through that school" and I will make sure finances "won't be an issue for you." "You can't let Jacob Hyman down." That's 1971.

Jack Hyman really did show a genuine interest in civil rights and to me he really understood the struggles of the 60s and the Civil Rights Movement or whatever you might want to call that period of turmoil. I saw it as a period of people fighting for basic human rights and I had a professor who understood that. I also found that what he taught us was usable, that there was a connection between what we learned and what I might do to change conditions that fueled so much unrest in the 60s.

Jacob Hyman knew that a number of minority students who had been admitted to the school were bringing a lot of issues with them, not the least of which were issues of self confidence and self esteem. He also knew that when arriving at the Law School we also felt a sense of

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† Magistrate Judge, United States District Court for the Western District of New York.

intimidation. And so, Jack always would stop me, and I know a number of you in this room, and ask, "How is everything going?" And that wasn't just "How's it going?" He really wanted to know how things were going. And I was just tremendously moved when he showed that kind of interest. I will never forget it. And I like to think that Jacob Hyman is part of everyone here today.

Jack Hyman made us learn how to learn. Jack would implore us to follow the advice of scientist/philosopher Thomas Huxley, who urged all to: "Sit down before [a] fact as a little child, be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly wherever and to whatever the abysses nature leads, or you shall learn nothing."<sup>1</sup> Jack Hyman taught us to seek objectivity and reasonableness and how to advocate with a respectful voice. If you took any time to observe Jack Hyman, the teacher, the lawyer, the mentor, the friend, you saw the person each of us as lawyers should strive to become—lawyers with the highest standards of professionalism, decency, compassion, wisdom, and above all civility. Thank you, Jack for everything you did for all of us.

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1. 1 LEONARD HUXLEY, LIFE AND LETTERS OF THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY 235 (1900).