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How Would Jack Do It?

WILLIAM R. GREINER†

I met Jack Hyman about this time of year forty-two years ago. Carol and I had been living in Seattle, Washington and I was on the faculty at the University of Washington in the School of Management. But, I had taken a leave and I was at a law school in New Haven doing a year's study and working on a book. Along about late September in that year, members in the law faculty suggested that maybe I might want to consider going into law teaching, instead of teaching at the School of Management. And yes Ken, it was Boris Bitker who made that suggestion. I thought about it and I said all right. Then Professor Bitker said, "I really think you ought to talk to the State University of New York at Buffalo. Their former dean is coming to interview." Boris proceeded to tell me a bit about his take on the University at Buffalo which was very positive and especially the Law School. I remember specifically him saying, "They're a very smart law school." So I said "Yes."

At the appointed hour, I went in to meet this man, Jack Hyman, and I must say I had many feelings about that interview. I was charmed, but I was impressed. I was impressed by intelligence which was on display at a very high order and I was also impressed by the dignity of the individual. He combined great humanity with great wisdom. And when I left that interview I said, "Gee, I hope I get to see him again and I hope I hear further from the University at Buffalo," which I did. The next time I saw Jack was in New Orleans. This was at the AALS meat market, the convention where all the law school faculty hiring used to go on. At that time, Nelson Rockefeller was governor. All things were possible. The Law School didn't just send a small delegation to the annual meeting, it sent the whole faculty. And that's literally true. There were twenty some odd people in that room. Most prominent, however, was Jack Hyman. While I was at Yale, I edited a book, a casebook that had been started by Hal Berman. It had been

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published and I was proud of that, but I didn't know whether anybody would pick up on that because the book was a book for undergraduates. If I had known Jack better, I would have known that he had acquired the book. Not only had he acquired the book, he had read it, at least substantial parts of it. Thus, he proceeded to do the interrogation on behalf of his colleagues so that they could decide whether or not they should make me an offer.

I have to tell you I have never enjoyed a job interview more than that conversation with Jack Hyman. Once again he demonstrated his enormous intelligence, and his great humanity and his great dignity. As a result of that conversation, an offer was made, and Carol and I came here. But I can say honestly, and I have said this before, had it not been for Jack Hyman, the rest of our life as we know it would not have happened in the way in which it did. We owe Jack that debt on a very, very personal level. He was the one who more than anyone else brought us to this, which has become our, place.

When we did come here it was 1967. UB then, along with the rest of the American academy and the country, went through a very turbulent period. Our University in some ways was spared the worst of that period, but we had our days. And it was during those days that people like Jack Hyman made an enormous difference. Our faculty, which at the time was housed "downtown" and isolated from the rest of the University, wanted to participate and be helpful to our University, but it was somewhat difficult. Jack, who knew both the University and the community, was in particular helpful to us because there were so many of us who were relatively young and new faculty. How should we behave in this environment? What could we do for our University? Jack was an enormously important leader in this regard. He had a deep and abiding commitment to the University, in addition to the Law School. He helped us all. He was a great advisor. He was our guide during that difficult period.

Also during that time, Jack displayed, in addition to his incredible dignity and intelligence, his commitment to social justice. Hugh Scott has talked a little bit and Vivian Garcia as well about how Jack became the mentor to new students and new faculty and new staff who were being brought into the University, and in particular to the Law School. These were people who should have but had not been part of this University and Law School years before. As our community,

our University, our Law School, we set out to try and deal with some of those omissions and Jack was an extraordinary leader in that regard. However, he went beyond that. He tried to be, and I think was, an effective leader in the whole of the University with regard to how the University should play its role in correcting for our omissions.

I remember one event in particular. We here at this campus were engaged in preparation for an enormous public expenditure on behalf of the Western New York community. The State, which had acquired UB in 1962, was going to invest in all new facilities for the University on this, our North Campus, and the rehab of some of the older facilities on our historic South Campus. Millions and millions and millions of dollars were going to be spent on this project. Jack observed that, just as the University had omitted people from its attention in prior years, the beneficiaries, or at least some of the direct beneficiaries, of this enormous State expenditure would be employers and employees in the construction business. The construction business, like so many of the businesses in our country at that time, was not, as we now say it, integrated. Jack was the person in the University who stepped forward and said we should see to it that when the State makes this great expenditure on our behalf and on behalf of our region, we should pay attention to the interests of all citizens in Western New York. In an open letter, he called for the State not to commence the building process at UB until it had taken steps to see to it that the construction trades would be integrated. This letter resulted in closing down the construction process at the University for a year, while the Governor undertook to do right in this regard. Though our efforts could not change all that behavior and rewrite all that history, we as a community and a university began a process which is still on-going. But, it was a process that started with a call from Professor Hyman, former Dean Hyman, picked up by our then President, Martin Meyerson, and ultimately by our governor. That was the kind of leadership that Jack could and did display.

On a regular basis, Jack demonstrated personal qualities that I think are really extraordinary. He leaves us a legacy of that. More than anything else, I think of the dignity and the human compassion that Jack would display, even handedly and equally. He was always the formidable presence, the dignified Dean Hyman, but you knew, (and he

did have great laugh) you knew that underneath that somewhat austere demeanor there was this warm human being ready on a personal level to help if he could. He was a great help to me, Jim Magavern and Milt Kaplan when we were starting some experimental ventures. We taught a course called Environmental Law before that was a popular notion. Jack used to attend my classes and give me advice on my teaching and it was always good advice. He was a friend. He was a helper. And yes, he was a leader. But more than anything else, he was a teacher. I think that's how we should remember him. I know we will remember him in other ways, but remember him as a teacher. I do. Over my lifetime I've often said to myself, "How would Jack do it?" And if I ever came even close to how Jack did it, then I knew I was going to get it right.