Encouraging Excellence

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ENCOURAGING EXCELLENCE

MARJORIE GIRTH

Howard Mann has loved teaching and has consistently urged others to strive for exemplary performance as legal scholars and educators. It is therefore very fitting that our students have acknowledged his commitment by dedicating this issue of the Buffalo Law Review to him.

As a law student, Howard was editor-in-chief of the Iowa Law Review, and he recounts vividly the challenges and frustrations of leadership in such an endeavor. At Buffalo he has repeatedly made himself available when our student editors have sought his advice in resolving one difficult problem or another. Year after year they have received generous allocation of his time, concern, and experience, as well as exhortations that they must not settle for any product that was "less than first-rate."

As a colleague, Howard has been equally kind. A dozen years ago he welcomed me warmly as a beginning law teacher and introduced me skillfully to the complex meanderings and maneuverings of academic life. In this process Howard repeatedly stressed that "legal education" as a profession—not merely one's own work—must have a priority for attention and concern. And he cautioned against becoming isolated from, or ignorant of, developments at other educational institutions. Howard's own network of sources about the internal debates at major law schools in this country continues to be both active and accurate. And the mischievous enthusiasm with which he reports the latest "news" in our comparatively tiny universe reveals a zest for our endeavors that can be infectious.

On other occasions, Howard can be not only lively, but maddening. At such times his standards can seem impossible for mere mortals to satisfy, and attempts to persuade him to reevaluate are unavailing. Similarly, one who questions the intricate "Mann System" for analyzing constitutional law may risk a withering re-

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sponse if the inquiry has not been very carefully prepared.

Howard's impatience with less-than-stellar performance is seemingly rooted in rampant idealism and is almost always short-lived. Much more enduring is his determination to understand ever more thoroughly the role of "the Court" in our governmental processes and to communicate that understanding to others. As a result, "retirement" has not appreciably changed his responsibilities. Howard continues to teach, both formally in our classrooms and via the media, whose representatives have repeatedly sought his reactions to legal developments. And he continues to learn, weaving recent events into his rich understanding of the historical development of our governing institutions.

May the years ahead provide him with many satisfying professional challenges. Those of us who have been convinced, engaged, or even provoked, by Howard's achievements to date look forward to sharing the results of his ongoing quest.