

Michael Traynor
Penn Law
Memorial Service for Geoff Hazard – January 27, 2018

We have lost a dear friend. Director Emeritus Geoff Hazard led The American Law Institute for fifteen years and was an eminent scholar, expert on legal ethics, and prolific writer. He strengthened the ALI as a prized institution in the life of our country.

Under Geoff's direction, the Institute completed many projects, including the challenging Principles of Corporate Governance—for which then President Rod Perkins also provided inspiring leadership-- and the Products Liability Restatement. He led the way in involving members in consultative groups. His comments and advice were always incisive, cogent, and succinct. In addition to his distinguished service as Director, he was the Reporter for the Restatement Second of Judgments and for the ALI/UNIDROIT Principles of Transnational Civil Procedure. He was also a member of the ALI Council.

For the illustrations we use in our Restatements, he wisely urged Reporters to give “‘bookends,’ one that is clearly, ‘You can’t do that,’ the other one clearly, ‘You can do this,’ and not go beyond that in nuance. You are just asking for trouble if you try to do that.”

At our Annual Dinner in 1999, when Geoff stepped down as Director, then President Charles Alan Wright praised him as did Vice President Conrad Harper who described him as the “rightful successor of Herbert Wechsler.” In his remarks, Geoff said that “Being Director of The American Law Institute is the best job that a lawyer or legal academician can have, except, perhaps, being on the Supreme Court of the United States. Indeed, there are aspects of the Director’s job that are clearly superior to those of a Supreme Court Justice. The Director has more privacy, does not require the concurrence of four others to do anything official, and does not have to live in Washington.” Geoff’s remark was accompanied by appreciative laughter, which often occurs at our annual meetings and is a welcome counterpoint to the solemnity of our deliberations.

For eighteen years, Geoff and Beth and Shirley and I were weekend neighbors at Stinson Beach and shared many moments and conversations. I remember one talk with Geoff there about the Institute’s constructive influence and his making the crucial point that our work is persuasive because it is not authoritative. It provides judges and lawyers with wisdom without compelling them to follow it.

Geoff and I worked closely together, mainly on ALI matters but also on other issues. It was a professional and personal pleasure to work with him, and sometimes we could anticipate each other’s thoughts. I felt honored to join David Levi, Gerhard Casper, and others in praising “The Moral Foundations of American Law,” a recent book by Geoff and his son Doug Pinto Jr., a biblical historian. Geoff’s last book was on my father’s jurisprudence, edited by him and written with the help of his students. Geoff and my father had worked together on the Code of Judicial Conduct and admired each other and their respective contributions.

Geoff was unpretentious and witty. Here are just a few examples from annual meetings: To a Reporter: “[T]he clock is your friend.” To a dutiful presenter: “I will treat this [report] with the degree of routine that it fully deserves.” And, during debate: “Maybe, better than a motion we would have insight here.” When a member addressed President Wright as “Your Honor,” Geoff interjected, “Your Grace, not Your Honor.” To President Wright, who had reported that he had “slipped out during [a] discussion . . . to survey the medicines available in the gift shop,” Geoff said, “I thought you were going to say you were looking for a medicine that would work toward clarification of thought. That would be very welcome for any of our projects.” In response to a question about “what . . . the Institute [would] do in [a particular

case],” Geoff stated: “Make a sensible decision, I think.” With Geoff’s exemplary leadership and friendly guidance, a sensible decision is what we usually accomplish.

At our 1999 Dinner, Conrad Harper also remarked on Geoff’s “stunning 15 years” as Director. Now that Geoff has reached the end of his long road, we can say he had a stunning life. He also enriched our lives. We miss him and remember him with affection and appreciation for the chance that life gave us to know him.