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HANK LISCHER: A FRIEND, A LEADER, AND AN “OF COUNSEL”

*Donald J. Malouf, Esq.**

HENRY J. Lischer, Jr. (Hank) came into my life and the lives of my colleagues thirty years ago. He was the pride of what was then called Southern Methodist University School of Law, and he was a “catch.” We had heard about Hank from other faculty members, and I made it a point to meet him. My motives were not unselfish. Our firm needed the unfettered thinking of an academic tax and estate planning specialist. Hank appeared to be the perfect “of counsel,” and indeed he was. Except for intermittent academic assignments elsewhere (and, of course some fly fishing and mountain climbing), Hank consistently provided us with wonderful research and thinking on issues that were truly cutting edge.

Well, I say unfettered . . . Hank somehow always had at least one editor chasing him on a forthcoming (or past) deadline. (He could not say “no” to a publisher’s request, particularly if the due date was more than nine months away.)

Hank wrote articles on such pot-boiler subjects as “The History of Depreciation,” “Unitary Apportionment of the Income of Multijurisdictional Businesses,” and “Distribution Rules for S Corporations after the Subchapter S Revision Act.” We could hardly wait to read his next publication.

Later, I joined Hank in dodging editors’ calls throughout the years when he and I co-authored a number of volumes on estate planning for the West Texas and West National Forms series. Those were truly entertaining times! We would ask each other why we were doing this, and neither had an answer.

Hank was kind in allowing me to participate in some of his graduate seminars, where I learned from both Hank and the students.

When planning joint legal projects with Hank, we at the firm would always have to check Hank’s schedule. Hank has a wonderful skill in attracting temporary teaching assignments in such places as Taiwan, New Zealand, Germany (a “Gastprofessor”), and various law schools in the U.S. We never quite knew where we would find Hank, but he was always responsive, particularly when email became the primary means of communication.

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Hank and Barbara became very much a part of our personal lives. My kids babysat with the Lischer kids, and we had the pleasure of watching the Lischer children grow up to be truly excellent people.

Hank and I were also Assistant Scoutmasters together. (He later became the Scoutmaster of the troop.) Hank was wonderful with the boys. His Marine discipline and his heartfelt compassion combined (as they do in the classroom) to create the perfect environment for learning. We went on campouts in every kind of weather and ate every kind of food. Sometimes the rules got bent a little. One particular scout would cook the scoutmasters' dinner. We looked the other way when the young man would bring out a flask of red wine with which he prepared for us beef bourguignon that exceeded one's expectations from a fine French restaurant.

I have such mixed feelings about Hank's retirement. Envisioning Hank *not* being at SMU Dedman School of Law somehow makes me feel insecure. I will miss our professional interaction. But Hank is a wonderful friend, and I know the friendship will continue.