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JACK MYLAN—AN APPRECIATION FOR A JOB WELL DONE

*C. Paul Rogers III**

I am grateful to be able to share a few thoughts and observations about Jack Mylan on the occasion of his retirement from the law school faculty. Jack has been my colleague—but more importantly, my friend—for 26 years, and I like to think that I know him as well as anyone at the law school. In fact, Jack arrived at SMU just one year after I did. As they say, we've been through the wars together, and have probably disagreed from time to time, although I can't really remember any specific instances. I do know that we've never had a cross word in all that time, but we have shared a lot of laughs.

In my considered view, Jack is the kind of faculty member who is the bedrock of any good law school—selfless, steadfast, dependable, conscientious, good-humored, and caring. For all of his career at SMU—and I am quite sure during his previous stints at NYU, Florida, and Willamette—Jack has quietly and effectively performed his job at the highest levels. He has always been a rigorous but popular and effective teacher and a productive and well-regarded scholar, co-authoring and frequently updating two multi-volume treatises on Closely Held Corporations. In addition, Jack was always willing to do the unsung committee work, often serving on and sometimes chairing the time-consuming graduate committee.

In short, Jack is the kind of faculty member that any dean appreciates because he does his job so well, calmly, competently, and without fanfare. When I was dean, I knew that when Jack agreed to do something, I had one less worry, because Jack would do the job and do it well. He understood that serving on a university faculty involves more than meeting one's classes and engaging in the scholarship of one's choice. Jack was great at another unglamorous but important law faculty responsibility, one too often neglected by too many. I call it "showing up." By this I mean attending law school functions, whether they be dinners, receptions, student "mixers," or speeches by distinguished visitors. Jack—and when appropriate, his wife Irene—could be counted on to just show up at those functions because it was the responsible thing to do.

There is an old-fashioned saying that behind every good man, there is a better woman, or something like that. Of course, in Jack's case it would

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not be accurate to say that Irene is behind him, or anyone for that matter, but the fact is that Jack and Irene together have been an important and valued part of our law school community for all these years. The two of them have a wonderful ability to support each other's careers and schedules. Irene grew up in Southern California and Jack in the Bronx but they are a great match. They've been married since Jack's law school and Irene's graduate school days, and it is fun to see how much they still genuinely enjoy each other's company. Irene, for example, still appreciates Jack's wonderful dry wit as much, if not more, than anyone.

Jack and Irene raised two terrific and accomplished daughters, Julie and Meghan. Their girls are a little older than my three daughters and I learned a lot from the Mylans. For example, I will never forget Jack telling me about picking daughter Julie up from high school before Julie had her driver's license. Her instructions to her dad were that he was to slump way down in the seat so as not to be seen until she got in the car, and then to drive quickly away. Little tidbits like that helped prepare me for the teenage years of my three girls.

As I mentioned, Jack grew up in New York, and while you can take the man out of the Bronx, you can never really take the Bronx out of the man. Occasionally that Bronx upbringing shows through, such as when Jack tells you that he just "sawr" a good movie. Jack also does not know the meaning of the term "stroll." As with many native New Yorkers, walking is to get somewhere, not necessarily to enjoy. I've learned that one should think twice about taking a walk somewhere with Jack because he will either unwittingly leave you in the dust or you will arrive at your destination fairly panting.

New York lawyers are noteworthy for their late night work habits, and Jack's are legendary around here, even though he was never really a "New York lawyer," as opposed to being a lawyer from New York. Jack spent his late evenings working and could sometimes be seen arriving back at the law school as late as midnight. I always thought Jack was on Hawaiian time, or that at a minimum, he was at least a meal behind the rest of us.

Jack has certainly earned his retirement, but that does not mean he won't leave a huge hole to fill on the faculty. We will miss his steady hand and the common sense and good judgment he brought to us. I know I'll certainly miss that dry wit. (Jack has an almost unique knack for seeing the absurdity of a situation and following with a quick quip). But mostly, Jack's retirement will mean the loss of a good person, a good human being from our midst. Jack has done his job quietly and without fanfare, but with great competence and good humor. He has enriched fully a generation of SMU law students and he has enriched us. Jack has made his mark on SMU and we are far the better for it. I hope Jack and Irene have a long, healthy, and happy retirement, because they both deserve it. Godspeed to you both.