

SHORT ARTICLES, COMMENTS AND CASENOTES

1985 Theberge Private International Law Award Recipient: Willis L. M. Reese

ABA SECTION ON INTERNATIONAL LAW & PRACTICE

Presentation of Award*

In the summer of 1982, the Board of Governors of the American Bar Association authorized the presentation annually of "a medal . . . to an individual judged . . . to have performed distinguished service in the field of private international law." The prize is named after our former colleague, Leonard J. Theberge, Chairman of the International Law Section in 1979-1980, and thereafter the Section's member on the House of Delegates of the American Bar Association.

However private international law is defined—whether as the conflict of laws or the unification of substantive and procedural law—Professor Reese's career in the field is distinguished. He is now the Charles Evans Hughes Professor Emeritus at Columbia Law School and many know of his accomplishments as the Director of the Parker School of Foreign and Comparative Law from 1955 to 1980, as well as his contributions as Chief Reporter of the *Restatement of Conflict of Laws (Second)*.

His work with the State Department's Advisory Committee on Private International Law and the Hague Conference on Private International Law is, of course, the special reason Professor Reese has been selected as the 1985 recipient of the Theberge Award on Private International Law. The sheaf of testimonials prepared for this occasion attest to Willis' wonderful character, ability and contributions. Two in particular convey these sentiments. Secretary-General Georges Droz of the Hague Conference on Private International Law wrote: Professor Reese is a "fully integrated mem-

*The award was presented to Professor Reese at the Section of International Law & Practice's annually sponsored General Counsels' Dinner, held on March 5, 1985 in Washington, D.C. The following is derived from the remarks of Don Wallace, Jr., Chairman of the Section's Private International Law Award Committee, who made the presentation.

ber of that doughty band of conflict specialists who have been meeting at the Hague for almost a century . . . and his own participation for almost a third of that span has covered the most fruitful and sustained period of achievement yet made in this field." Peter H. Pfund, Assistant Legal Adviser for Private International Law at the State Department, wrote that Professor Reese is "one of the most stalwart of stalwarts in our program of participation in international efforts to unify private law" and "is considered an essential participant at the quadrennial sessions of the Hague Conference. . . ."

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF WILLIS L. M. REESE

Willis Livingston Mesier Reese was born on June 16, 1913 in Bernardsville, New Jersey, and received his A.B. from Yale College (1935) and LL.B. from Yale Law School (1938) where he was first in his class and editor of the *Yale Law Journal*.

Since 1946, Professor Reese has been a member of the Columbia Law School faculty and today is Professor Emeritus. For twenty-five years of that association (1955–80), he served as Director of the Parker School of Foreign and Comparative Law at Columbia. He oversaw the development of the Bilateral Studies in conflict of laws now being published in seventeen countries, and, with his support and encouragement, special centers in Chinese, Japanese and Latin American law were developed at Columbia. He chaired Columbia's Faculty Committee Project on International Procedure, and is also well known as the Chief Reporter of the *Restatement of Conflict of Laws (Second)* and as Reporter of the Uniform Choice of Forum Act.

Beyond the walls of Columbia, Professor Reese has been active in numerous private international law endeavors. He is a charter member of the Advisory Committee on Private International Law of the Department of State, and has played a key role in the United States' participation in the Hague Conference on Private International Law. His involvement with the Conference goes back to 1956 when he was member of the first observer delegation of the United States. He was a member of the first official United States delegation in 1964, and has attended every quadrennial session since. As a participant, Professor Reese had served in various official roles. He was Vice President of the Commission on Traffic Accidents, and in 1972, he was Rapporteur for the Commission on Products Liability. Under his leadership the Conference adopted the 1973 Convention on the Law Applicable to Products Liability. In 1976, Professor Reese went on to chair the Commission on Marriage at the Thirteenth Session of the Conference. Professor Reese is also currently a member of the Curatorium of the Hague Academy of International Law.

