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A Tribute to Professor William J. Bridge—Teacher, Mentor, and Friend

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A TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR
WILLIAM J. BRIDGE—
TEACHER, MENTOR, AND FRIEND

*John K. Horany**

MY first class with Professor Bridge was Professional Responsibility in my third year at SMU. From him I learned great respect for the ethical norms of our profession, and in his teaching he emphasized real-life obstacles that lawyers encounter. His classes included the 1980's era high-tech innovation of using videos to demonstrate client encounters, which helped us understand and appreciate the responsibilities and obligations that come with holding a license to practice law.

Early in that spring semester, I acted in an SMU Law School Follies skit where I delivered a very unflattering portrayal of Professor Bridge. While I do not recall the details of the skit, I remember that it involved donuts—lots of powdered donuts. Afterwards, at the cast party, Professor Bridge came up and gifted me with a box of Girl Scout cookies, and we shared a good laugh. I remember thinking to myself what a good-natured sport he was about the rather mean portrayal. Fast-forward to the last day of class when Professor Bridge was giving instructions on how to properly identify the exam blue books for those of us who would be graduating that May. He instructed the class to put a “G” before our exam code, and then he looked at me and said, “And if you were in the Law School Follies, put an ‘F’ in front of the ‘G!’” This caused a twitter of laughter in the classroom and sheer terror in me for a few seconds. Professor Bridge thus demonstrated his wicked sense of humor!

In the years after law school, my path often crossed with Professor Bridge, or Bill, as I came to call him. As a dedicated and devoted supporter of the Bar None production benefitting the Sarah T. Hughes Diversity Scholarship, I frequently encountered Bill. Everyone in the cast knew and appreciated his distinctive laugh, his faithful work on writing and producing the law professors' ads in our programs, and his attendance at nearly every performance. Later on, I worked with Bill, Martha Hardwick Hofmeister, Tom Mayo, Frances Maloney, Anthony Magee, and others on the program committee for the William “Mac” Taylor

* Sole practitioner, John K. Horany, P.C., Dallas, Texas. B.A., Southern Methodist University, 1983; J.D., SMU Dedman School of Law, 1986. I am so honored to write a tribute to Professor William J. Bridge, as it has been my privilege to know him as teacher, mentor, and friend.

American Inn of Court. Every single person on that committee would serve in leadership of our Inn. Bill served, along with Tom Mayo, as our SMU faculty representative, helping recruit law students to our Inn for many years.

Bill continuously demonstrates his concerns for justice for all persons—for the accused, the poor, minorities, women, and those on the margin. A man of great faith, he puts his faith into action by worshipping and providing leadership at the Catholic Campus Ministry on the SMU campus. Bill was also a very early leader and supporter of the Dallas Legal Hospice (now Legal Hospice of Texas), where I also had the pleasure to serve on the board of directors with him. During the dark years of the HIV pandemic, Bill served as a volunteer notary public to help finalize estate documents for those whose lives were cut short by HIV.

Bill is dedicated to his family, his lifelong friends from school, the Georgetown School of Foreign Service, and Georgetown Law, as well as to his colleagues at the SMU Dedman School of Law and at the university's main campus, where he served as president of the Faculty Senate. Bill is the sort of friend who will drop everything to come over and check when one is ill or has just received devastating news of a loved one's death. In his quiet and unassuming way, Bill takes seriously the biblical injunction to care for the widow, the poor, those who are ill—in health or spirit—and those in jail, doing whatever he can to help “the least of these.”¹ Bill is a true, loyal friend and mentor to many of his students and colleagues, always willing to give advice or input, especially to young lawyers as they plot out career options.

Bill Bridge has made Dallas, our nation, and our world a better place, and his life's work will help thousands of others through the efforts of the students and lawyers he taught and mentored. I am so grateful for the opportunity to get to thank Bill for all he has done for our community and for me personally. I know that he will continue to inspire, encourage, and educate in his new home in Portland, where he is surrounded by family and close friends.

1. *Matthew* 25:40.