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ODE TO JOHN LOWE

*Norman Nadorff**

MY introduction to international oil and gas law was a baptism by fire. Luckily, Professor Lowe was there to quench the flames. In 1985, I was transferred to Conoco Inc. in Houston from DuPont de Nemours & Company in Wilmington, Delaware. At the time, Dupont was the seventh largest U.S. company by revenues and parent company to Conoco. I was transferred to Conoco because of my fluency in Portuguese and enthusiasm to work in war-torn Angolan, where Conoco had two major blocks (5&6). I was certainly up to any linguistic, cultural, or safety challenges, but what about oil and gas law? I hadn't a clue. Having studied at the Ohio State University College of Law, where oil and gas was not taught, I was a babe in the woods. Luckily, prior to year-end, Conoco sent me to a two-week oil and gas law class taught by Professor Lowe. I guess John taught me enough because I have managed a thirty-eight-year career as in-house and outside counsel in international oil and gas law. And I have had the honor of teaching law at four U.S. law schools, four foreign law schools, and various private and lecturing engagements around the world. John was my first and only teacher of oil and gas law. The rest was learned on the job.

Fast forward thirty years to 2006 where, as Senior Counsel to BP Angola, I had committed myself and BP to creating the first oil and gas LLM program in Africa at Angola's Agostinho University Faculty of Law. But who, pray tell, would teach? I reached out to law professors I had met along the way, including John. Eventually, John and Professor Owen Anderson (then at the University of Oklahoma) agreed to teach back-to-back modules. Their memorable classes and lectures in Angola (including joint participation in an AIPN event—see photo below) helped solidify the reputation of our Program, which is still thriving. In fact, I had the honor of teaching there recently to forty highly engaged representatives of a cross-section of Angola's academic and oil and gas communities. To date, we have graduated 600+ professionals, some of whom now occupy the highest levels in industry and government. Students from the class of 2009 (see photo) still remember Professor Lowe fondly.

In 2010, I had the honor of including Professors Lowe and Anderson in the first edition of a short course at Chulalongkorn University in Thailand

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that I helped legendary lawyer Al Chandler create. No doubt John is well remembered among his former Thai students as well.

Over the years, John and I have faithfully exchanged holiday greetings, though I wish I had seen him more in person (alas, our busy schedules dictated otherwise). I wish John all the best in retirement, though I am sure he will continue to contribute vibrantly to our ever-changing and demanding industry.

