

# THE LEFSTEIN YEARS A PRESCRIPTION FOR LEADERSHIP

GERALD L. BEPKO\*

*A leader has the focus, passion, courage, and wisdom to create an atmosphere that allows others to create.*

*A leader empowers others, giving them the tools they need and the "room to let them run."*

*A leader offers compassion and caring to those with whom one's life intersects.*

These are the qualities of leadership that promote success, according to Lee Bolman, coauthor of *Leading With Soul: An Uncommon Journey of the Spirit*. They also help to explain the wonderful success of Norman Lefstein's deanship at the Indiana University School of Law—Indianapolis, 1988-2002.

## I. FOSTERING CREATIVITY

Norm's particular focus as dean has been obtaining the resources needed to enhance the local, regional, and national reputation of the school. It can almost go without saying, although it shouldn't, that his crowning achievement will be Inlow Hall, the \$35 million facility with state-of-the-art classroom technologies and research resources. Norm was involved from the very earliest moment of planning, including a crucial meeting in which Norm, then Indiana University (IU) President Tom Ehrlich, and I laid the initial plans for a combined Herron/Law project. Norm was a key factor in securing state funding for the project (to the tune of \$21 million), after which he successfully led a capital campaign that raised \$14 million in private donations from alumni and other supporters, including the Inlow naming gift. His passion and talent for fundraising also resulted in a steadily increasing annual fund, many privately funded professorships and scholarships, and a new honorary lecture series.

Inlow Hall has not only served the law school community well, it has also become a landmark for the campus. The IUPUI campus has been preparing itself as a great university community for more than thirty years, behind a veil of parking lots. Now, Inlow Hall, the new home of the IU School of Law—Indianapolis, along with the Informatics Complex just to its north, shows a new face to the adjacent downtown area and serves as a new gateway to the campus. The gateway was well conceived by the architects most involved. The Smith Group of Washington, D.C., designed the law school; Robert A. M. Stern of New York designed the Informatics Complex; and Jon Belle, of Buyer, Blinder, and Belle, New York, provided the master planning for this entire

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\* Interim President, Indiana University, and former Chancellor, Indiana University-Purdue University—Indianapolis (IUPUI). The author acknowledges, with gratitude, the research, writing, and editing that Sylvia M. Payne, Special Assistant to the Interim President of IU, contributed to this article.

segment of the campus.

Beyond Inlow Hall, one of Norm's great legacies will be his unwavering and unrelenting support for the creative and scholarly effort of the faculty. Norm conceived and initiated the Program on Law and State Government and supported the continuing development of the Center on Law and Health, which now ranks eighth in the nation<sup>1</sup> and which has become an increasingly important component of IUPUI's status as a home for premiere health-related interdisciplinary research and teaching. He dramatically enhanced the caliber of the faculty through judicious recruitment and retention of the most highly qualified and productive scholars, the creation of endowed professorships, and an emphasis on continuing professional development, thus creating the expectation for, and a working environment conducive to, scholarly productivity. Along with the continuing development of our student body, and the extraordinary accomplishments of our alumni, this advance in scholarship has increased the recognition that the IU School of Law—Indianapolis is one of the nation's truly fine law schools.

The 1996 law school accreditation team praised the significant increase in the quantity of faculty scholarship addressed to national audiences, the high rate of students' passing the Indiana Bar examination, and the expansion of student services (especially career placement services). The external consultants to the Administrative Review Committees that have twice examined Norm's leadership of the school over the past nearly fourteen years praised the leadership and enthusiasm he exhibits in promoting matters of interest to the legal community and to the overall enhancement of the profession. The present strength of the school's clinical programs is directly attributed to him, as is an increased capacity for judicial and governmental internships bearing academic credit.

No review of Norm's extraordinary accomplishments would be complete without mentioning his efforts to diversify the student body. When Norm first began as dean, the school was struggling to recruit minority students. Today it has 139, reflecting an increase in the student diversity ratio from three percent of the school's population in 1988 to nearly twenty percent in 2002. The number of applications overall has increased as well, thus yielding a student body better prepared for success in law school.

It is clear that the faculty, curriculum, and student body are better in every way; that Norm's successor has inherited a stronger school as a result of his tireless and passionate leadership; and that our graduates can take ever greater pride in having earned their degree at the IU School of Law—Indianapolis. The school has always attracted many of our best and brightest college graduates and provided a capstone education for these students right here at the crossroads of Indiana in the state's seat of government and largest population center. The school's value is enhanced by the fact that those who study here are much more likely to end up making their careers and their lifelong contributions right here in Indiana, whether in law practice or the many other roles they play because of the special blend of theoretical and practical education provided by our law

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1. U.S. NEWS & WORLD REP.

school. All these qualities have matured during the Lefstein years.

## II. EMPOWERING OTHERS

No one who was there can ever forget the august presence of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy during the September 21, 2001, dedication of Inlow Hall. It was indicative both of the stature Norm has among his peers in the legal profession and of the caliber of graduates who have served our state and nation as lawyers, judges, and lawmakers. On that occasion, Justice Kennedy reminded us: "Our understanding of the law is that it is empowering. It gives you freedom. It gives you the capacity to think, to dream, to hope, to dare."

Norm has this same understanding of the law and has applied it to his leadership of the school. As one faculty member succinctly put it, "He lets us do our jobs." But Norm's notion of empowerment was not as passive as all that. It was more on the model of Ralph Waldo Emerson whose goal as a teacher and mentor was not "to bring men to me, but to themselves." Although the conventional assumption once was that one generation stands on the shoulders of the last in its acquisition of knowledge, we have Emerson to thank for the more interactive model of mentorship and motivational guidance that empowers rather than controls. This is the style of leadership that Norm brought into play to such good effect by giving faculty the tools and freedom they need to be creative and productive in their work.

Early in his deanship, Norm established incentives to attract talented scholars and to seize opportunities when they arose. He expanded the size and influence of the law school's Board of Visitors to increase connections between the needs of the community and the work of the faculty. At the same time, he sought to increase the school's influence in the community by supporting the expansion of clinical programs, with particular emphasis on criminal defense and civil practice. Norm's special commitment to the law school's pro bono program, which was established in 1993, has resulted in students' providing more than 26,000 hours of service to the community, gaining valuable practical experience in the process.

Norm encouraged and supported partnerships with law schools in Beijing, China; Lille, France; La Plata, Argentina; and Queensland, Australia. In addition, he encouraged the creation of the Program in International and Human Rights Law, which has sent student interns to more than thirty-five countries during the past five years. One of the school's most ambitious international ventures, for which Norm advocated ardently, is the new LL.M. Program in American Law for Foreign Lawyers which, beginning this year, will bring international lawyers to Indianapolis for a master's level program while also providing opportunities for our J.D. candidates to interact with attorneys from around the world.

The backdrop for all these achievements has been the broad base of support he has earned and enjoyed because of his excellent rapport with the legal community. The respect Norm has among his peers smoothed the way for the resources to be gathered for many tools of empowerment.

### III. SHOWING COMPASSION

At a recent Symposium on Indigent Criminal Defense in Texas, Norm said to the assembled gathering:

*How we treat the poorest and least powerful members of our society says a whole lot about what kind of society we are. It has always seemed to me, that for lawyers and the justice system, there is nothing more important than what we do in the treatment of our citizens and the protection of their liberties.*

Norm's passion for the betterment of the law school was matched only by his compassion for the indigent and his quiet but steady crusade of advocacy for better programs of criminal defense on their behalf. A nationally recognized expert on legal ethics, Norm has argued eloquently for standards to ensure that effective public defenders are assigned to indigent cases and that continuing legal education be mandatory for those providing representation to defendants unable to afford private attorneys.

As both a former prosecutor and defense attorney, Norm shrewdly cultivated high-profile leadership among members of the bar arguing for a better indigent defense system in Indiana. He was instrumental in achieving reforms in Indiana because he proposed a carrot-and-stick approach to the problem in which the state reimburses cash-strapped counties for forty percent of their cost of providing public defenders if they adhere to standards for providing counsel to poor defendants. To get the reimbursements, counties that appoint lawyers must make sure the lawyers have specific credentials.

In the belief that both the prosecution and defense need to be well represented in the criminal courtroom, Norm, as chair of the Indiana Public Defender Commission from its inception in 1990, worked to secure the independence of the indigent defense function from undue judicial influence in criminal cases and post-conviction death penalty proceedings. Norm has long served as a member of the American Bar Association's standing committee on indigent defense and once served on the national Committee on Criminal Justice in a Free Society with, among others, former U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno, who was then Dade County State's Attorney in Florida. Norm chronicled the result of these experiences in his 1996 publication of *Reform of Defense Representation in Capital Cases: the Indiana Experience and its Implications for the Nation*.<sup>2</sup>

To convey some idea of how delicately Norm balanced his passion for the success of the law school with his compassion for those in need of legal services, but unable to pay for them, I offer a remark that Dean Frank Newton of the Texas Tech Law School made about Norm after he described his efforts to change Indiana's indigent defense system during a symposium on the subject focusing on proposed reforms in Texas:

*He's talked to you about the hard part, which is where you come up with*

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2. 29 IND. L. REV. 495 (1996).

*the money to change the system. All of us understand that that sometimes adversely affects your relationship politically with counties and state government. The dean lives in the most populous county in Indiana. He has been an advocate for reform in the state of Indiana, yet the legislature recently gave him the money to help build a brand new law school building. So, there really is life after doing the right thing!*

Norm's wry rejoinder to this comment was, "And I had to raise a lot of private money, too."

#### IV. WHAT TRUE LEADERS GIVE TO US

Lee Bolman concluded his thoughts on the characteristics of a true leader with the story of three stonemasons. When asked what they were doing, the first one said, "I'm cutting stone." The second said, "I'm building a cathedral." The third said, "I'm serving God." A true leader, Bolman said, is the one whose colleagues confidently give the second and third answers to that question because they have been made to feel that their work is meaningful, significant, and enduring.

Norm has created the context in which all those involved in the success of our law school know that their work is meaningful, significant, and enduring. What better legacy could we have? Thank you, Norm, for leading us so effectively and "leading with soul."

