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PERSONAL MEMORIES OF AND A TRIBUTE TO RALPH J. BEAN

Having grown up in a small beautiful valley surrounded by the mountains of the Potomac Highlands of West Virginia makes it easy for me to be nostalgic about my youth. Now as my childhood continues to slip further into the past, I better understand the advantages of growing up in the heart of the South Branch Valley. Moorefield then, as now, is small enough that each person has his or her own identity, not an identity "inherited" from one's parents or passed on to one's children; not one based upon one's social position in the community or one's race, religion or national origin. In communities where people know each other by name and character, stereotyping occurs much less frequently than in large metropolitan areas.

Each of us, at some point during our lives, starts to be more deeply aware of and interested in the greater community in which we live. This widening of our horizons is such a gradual process that we do not realize that it is happening. Later, when we look back upon our childhood experiences, everyday occurrences start to gain perspective. Ralph J. Bean was a part of my awakening to my community and to the legal profession which I now claim as my own.

The 1959 West Virginia Blue Book which honors Ralph J. Bean as President of the West Virginia State Senate provides the following biographical information:

RALPH J. BEAN, (D), of Moorefield, Hardy County, was born December 15, 1912, at Moorefield; son of Murray A. and Katherine (Hedrick) Bean; education received in the public schools, at Potomac State College and at West Virginia University, receiving the A.B. degree from the state university in 1934 and graduating from the College of Law with the LL.B. degree in 1936; married January 8, 1938 to Carrie Rosetta Muntzing, five children—Ralph Judy, Jr., Ada Katherine, Howard Broughton, Oscar Muntzing and William Henry; lawyer; Methodist; Mason; Shriner; Moose; Kappa Alpha Phi Alpha Delta and Theta Sigma Chi fraternities; Lions Club; West Virginia Bar Association; former member, Board of Governors, West Virginia State Bar; American Bar Association; served two terms as prosecuting attorney of Hardy County, 1937-45; commissioner of Accounts, Commissioner in Chancery; chairman, Hardy County Democratic Executive Committee since 1937; Vice Chairman, West Virginia State Democratic Executive Committee; elected to the Senate from the Sixteenth District in 1944 and reelected in 1948, 1952 and 1956; chairman of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary and majority leader in the 1949 and 1951 sessions; elected President of the Senate at the 1953, 1955, 1957 and 1959 regular sessions.

What is lost from this carefully edited biography of the President of the West Virginia State Senate is Mr. Bean as a person. Mr. Bean was not just a lawyer. He was a lawyer about whom stories were told. His deep voice, which would boom to accentuate his point, added drama to the courtroom. He was respected as an ethical advocate. In the pre-*Perry Mason* days of my youth, the role model of an attorney lived in my community. He was the lawyer in the first jury trial that I ever observed. He was Mr. Bean.

From the Blue Book's biography, how would one know that the listing of bar memberships really signified that he was a bar leader? The listing of his wife and children did not adequately connote that he was a family man. How would the reader know he was a warm-hearted, fun-loving man whose friends called him "Buddy?"

Mr. Bean demonstrated that a lawyer engaged in a small town practice could be an effective leader and public servant on a state-wide basis. He was "our" state senator, a senator whose skills were appreciated by his peers as evidenced by his progression through the leadership positions of Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, majority leader, and finally President of the State Senate.

Before television brought national and world news into our homes instantly and changed political campaigns forever, politics were more personal and, therefore, government itself seemed more personal. Mr. Bean represented our enfranchisement in government.

As an adult who has had to allocate my time between my work, my family, and my community, I now more fully appreciate Mr. Bean's commitment to church and community affairs. He was a strong supporter of the county public library. He fully appreciated and understood the special role of public libraries in the intellectual enrichment of the citizens of small rural communities. He was a strong supporter of education and was the founder of a scholarship program to benefit local high school graduates. He served on the West Virginia University Board of Governors from 1964 until 1969, and served as its president in 1968. He was honored for his support and contributions to education by Potomac State College. Although he was always busy, he always seemed to enjoy his life, which blended his practice of law with his politics and his community.

Most of us have known a "Mr. Bean" in our lives: a lawyer, a family man, a civic leader, and a public servant. It is, therefore, highly appropriate that we honor such a person by naming the West Virginia Law Review Suite in his memory. The endowment created by Mr. Bean's family and his friends will enrich the experiences of future Boards of Editors and staffs of the *West Virginia Law Review*. Hopefully, when the students of tomorrow see the bronze plaque as they enter the Law Review offices they will reflect on the tribute it pays to a person whose career, both as a lawyer and as a public servant, was marked by the highest ethical standards and professional conduct.

Mr. Bean, a 1936 graduate of our College of Law and President of his class, would be proud to know that our Law Review Suite, where future lawyers hone their analytical skills and strive for clear articulation of their thoughts, bears his name. He would be pleased that an endowment in his honor will improve the educational experiences of members of the *West Virginia Law Review*. Finally, those of us who knew him are happy that our memories of him as a distin-

guished member of the bar and a leader in our state will live on as an example for each succeeding generation of lawyers.

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