

## PETER J. HENNING: COLLEAGUE AND FRIEND

ROBERT A. SEDLER<sup>†</sup>

For many years, I was very fortunate to have had Peter J. Henning as a colleague and friend. His office was two doors down from mine, and I began most days at the law school talking to Peter. My field of constitutional law and his field of criminal procedure overlapped a lot, and we frequently discussed this overlap as reflected in decisions of the United States Supreme Court. We also talked about our families. My two children were considerably older than his three, and my family included four grandchildren. On the days that Peter, Kingsley Browne, and I were at the law school, we would have lunch together. Peter and Kingsley would usually pick up their lunches across the street, and I would join them when I did not bring a lunch from home. As time went on and I aged, they insisted on getting my lunch for me. We had great conversations at the lunch table.

Peter was an extraordinary teacher and scholar. It was very exciting to see Peter emerge as one of the nation's foremost scholars on white collar crime. As time went on, his outstanding scholarship paralleled the evolving nature of white collar crime in the American criminal law system. Peter said that at one time, if a convicted white collar criminal received a sentence of six months, it was a "high five" event for the prosecution. As Peter's national stature increased, so did the recognition of the seriousness of white collar crime in the United States. The sentences became much more severe, and the successful prosecutions expanded exponentially. All the while, Peter's scholarship was much cited in white collar crime cases.

An example of Peter's extraordinary teaching was in his teaching of the Professional Responsibility course, traditionally one of the dullest courses in the law school curriculum. Drawing on his long experience as a prosecutor, Peter was able to spark great student interest in the course, presenting the students with many examples of the real life problems that lawyers face in conforming to the ethical requirements of law practice. Throughout the years, students crowded his office, seeking to engage with Peter on a one-to-one basis. He said that it was in those meetings that he did his best teaching.

Peter was also the most visible Wayne State University Law School professor in the Michigan public arena. His frequent appearances on television, radio, and in the newspapers not only provided the Michigan public with much information about high profile criminal cases and

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corporate takeovers, but enhanced Wayne Law's reputation in the Michigan legal community and with potential students.

In 2013, Peter was a Fulbright Scholar teaching at the University of Zagreb in Croatia.<sup>1</sup> At that time, I was making brief visits to universities in Russia and Slovakia, giving lectures on American constitutional law. Peter and I were able to share our experiences about lecturing on American law in foreign countries.

Unfortunately, Peter was stricken with a grave illness that cut short his extraordinary career. Kingsley and I visited him in the facility in which he had been placed. He could not recognize us, but as we saw him, we were able to recount that career and how fortunate we were to have had Peter as a colleague and a friend.

Along with a number of my colleagues, my wife Rozanne and I attended the memorial service for Peter. Kingsley gave a remembrance that we all could share. We all had the opportunity to express our sympathy to Peter's wonderful wife Karen, who stood by him during his illness and did everything possible to preserve his memory. At the reception afterwards at the University of Detroit Mercy Law School, we all shared memories of Peter.

He is very much missed.

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1. *Wayne Law Professor to Teach in Taiwan as Fulbright Specialist*, WAYNE ST. UNIV. L. SCH. (May 20, 2016), <https://law.wayne.edu/news/wayne-law-professor-to-teach-in-taiwan-as-fulbright-specialist-33654> [<https://perma.cc/AXP4-MY6R>].