

ON PETER HENNING

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Peter Henning was an increasingly rare academic: someone who thoroughly knew criminal and business law, was fluent in the institutional aspects of the law, and wrote top-notch scholarship that weaved the two together. Peter was also a friend and mentor; my career in law would be very different had Peter not taken an interest in me.

Wayne State University Law School was my first teaching job; Peter was my rabbi. I taught Business Associations using the materials he generously provided me, and I still do. He was patient and kind as he walked me through my first year of teaching, while I wondered how to do it all. It was because of Peter that I started blogging—something novel back then. At the time, Peter was writing the White Collar Crime Prof Blog with Ellen Podgor. He arranged for me to start the M&A Law Prof Blog.

That gig blossomed and launched my career. Soon Peter and I took our show to the *New York Times: DealBook*, where I wrote on corporate law and he did white collar crime. We started in the midst of the 2008 financial crisis and so had a bird's-eye view of the major events over the next decade. It was fun. We would fly to New York to do videos. And, of course, we stuck together. I still remember when, grumbling over the low pay of the *Times*, we offered our wares to the *Wall Street Journal*. Suddenly, we were in a bidding contest, laughing and plotting strategy. The *Times* came through, and we stayed there for many years.

As the Wayne cohort moved to other schools, we all stayed friends. Eventually, when I moved to Berkeley, I was happy that Peter also agreed to teach a class at Berkeley, and he would come every year. Not surprisingly, the class, on white collar crime, was a tremendous success.

I was never close with my father. Over this time period, Peter was my father figure. When I needed advice, I would call him. He had a mind of equanimity and was always right. He was at my wedding; I talked to him about my divorce. We both have three girls. I still remember that almost every conversation with Peter ended with him talking about having to go drive one of his daughters somewhere. He loved his family, he loved his friends, and they loved him. I will miss him as I raise my own teen girls, and our lives will be poorer without him.

Peter was not just a terrific person and teacher; he was a great scholar. In the legal academy today, deep knowledge of the law is a lost art. Instead, scholarship is focused on interdisciplinary work and social causes. This is

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a topic for another time and there is a role for both, but it appears that legal scholarship is increasingly divorced from what law schools do, which is train lawyers.

But Peter, a former prosecutor, knew how to train lawyers. He also wrote deeply, smartly, and thoughtfully on how criminal and business law should work. His seminal works included articles on insider trading, corporate compliance, and sentencing. He was an editor of the “Wright and Miller” treatise.¹ Indeed, the reason why Peter was such a prominent media person was that he not only had an awe-encompassing knowledge of the law, he knew and studied how it worked. I am not surprised that Peter is one of the top ten cited criminal law professors. I am not surprised that he wrote over 40 law review articles.² He loved what he did, and it came easy to him.

And I hope as we sit here today and honor him, we can take him as a person and a scholar and continue his good works. I know that when I teach, I try to model his mentorship. I hope that all of us sitting here realize that being a good professor means having deep knowledge of the law and furthering that knowledge and study in the academy—and that being a terrific scholar means knowing how legal institutions work and training lawyers to succeed within them. Peter was all of this.

I miss him terribly.

¹ See CHARLES A. WRIGHT ET AL., *FEDERAL PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE* (2009).

² See Henning, Peter J., HEINONLINE, https://heinonline.org/HOL/AuthorProfile?base=js&search_name=Henning,%20Peter%20J.&1=1612674363 [<https://perma.cc/88M8-W6WT>] (last visited October 30, 2022).