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JOHN H. JACKSON AND THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

*Harold K. Jacobson**

John H. Jackson was a wonderful colleague. He made Michigan a better place for me and for countless other faculty and students. During the more than thirty years that we worked together at the University of Michigan I was continually inspired by his scholarship, his determination to advance the rule of law in international affairs, and his commitment to making Michigan more international and a better place to do international work.

John's scholarship is legendary. He knows everything that could be known about the law of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade ("GATT") and the World Trade Organization ("WTO"). His numerous publications on GATT and WTO are classics and set the standard. A publication about GATT or WTO that did not contain numerous citations to his work would be inconceivable.

John's work is so well known that in certain circles he and his work became synonymous with Michigan. Whenever I wandered among the national and international officials who operate the international institutions that he and I study and introduced myself as a professor at Michigan, the standard response was, "Oh yes, John Jackson is there." To be a colleague of John's was a sure-fire entrée to the most select circles in the world of international institutions and trade.

What may be less known is how generous John was with his knowledge. I always had questions, and he always answered them promptly and fully. Sometimes in fact his answers were more complete than I sought. Political scientists constantly look for simple, elegant explanations. Through his answers John taught me that simple answers, however elegant, are often not adequate. One had to immerse one's self in the complex details to understand the dynamic interactions that were in process and the many ramifications of these interactions.

John was not only generous to me; he was also very generous to my students. He welcomed them in his courses, and he always found time for those seniors writing honors theses and graduate students writing dissertations who needed his expertise and counsel.

* Jesse Siddal Reeves Professor of Political Science, Adjunct Professor of Law, and Senior Research Scientist, University of Michigan. A.B. 1950, University of Michigan; Ph. D., 1955, Yale University.

Colleagues such as John who have so much knowledge and wisdom to give and are so willing to give it are very special and make a very special contribution to an academic institution.

John is an activist scholar. He is determined that law should govern international economic relations. When the time is appropriate, he goes into high gear to put his knowledge to use. His role in the transformation of the GATT into the WTO was spectacular. In the mid and late 1980s “wise” political scientists such as myself did not believe that GATT could be significantly strengthened and converted into a “proper” international governmental organization.

John proved us wrong. First, he provided a plan and a road map, *Restructuring the GATT System*.¹ The book showed what had to be done and how it could be done. The fact that the study on which the book was based was conducted under the auspices of the United Kingdom’s Royal Institute of International Affairs gave the book instant and high standing in the emerging public debate about GATT. During the project and after the publication of the book, John engaged in relentless persuasion. Governments around the world invited him to speak to them, and he did so with profound effect. Finally, after WTO was launched, John worked hard to insure that the newly created posts in the dispute settlement mechanism were filled with competent and strong people.

Watching John push toward and then achieve a seemingly impossible goal gave a vivid demonstration of what knowledge, determination, and energy can produce. The international trading system of the 1990s is much more structured than many of us in the 1980s expected that it could be, and John played a major role in producing this result.

We at Michigan profited greatly as a consequence of John’s involvement in this effort. Listening to his talks and in conversations with him, we could witness a creative mind develop strategy and tactics. He brought others engaged in the process of creating WTO to campus, and we learned from them. He made Michigan a hotbed of activity about GATT, the GATT system, and WTO, and we all benefited from this.

John also applied his talents directly to Michigan as an educational institution. He worked hard along with Robert Stern, Alan Deardorff, and me to create the Tuesday International Economic Luncheon (“TIEL”). TIEL brings together lawyers, economists, political scientists and others on a monthly basis to discuss international economic issues. It has been an important part of the infrastructure for studies of international political economic issues at Michigan for more than two decades.

1. JOHN H. JACKSON, *RESTRUCTURING THE GATT SYSTEM* (1990)

In 1988, University of Michigan President James D. Duderstadt asked John to frame and launch an initiative to internationalize the university. John agreed to become Associate Vice President for International Academic Affairs. John approached the task with his characteristic curiosity, determination, energy, and wisdom. During the year that he held this position, he surveyed international activities at Michigan and other institutions. He prepared a report that contained a comprehensive inventory of what other institutions and we were doing as well as far-reaching plans for the future.

The Jackson report is an important document. The inventory provides a baseline by which progress toward internationalization at Michigan can be measured. While not all of the recommendations in the report have been adopted, and while not all of those that were adopted followed the form that John proposed, the recommendations propelled the university in new and beneficial directions. Michigan is now a much more international place than it was when John served in the central administration. John's dynamic vision provided a crucial impetus in this development.

Michigan benefited greatly from John's membership on the faculty for more than three decades. He left a profound and lasting legacy.