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A Tribute to Professor Leroy S. Merrifield

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Although I have collaborated with Leroy Merrifield on four editions of a labor law casebook over the past twenty years, and although we have each taught as a visitor at the other's law school, I did not fully appreciate the hidden dimensions of this quiet, unassuming scholar until we spent a day together in early 1986 at EPCOT. To begin with, Leroy had to use all his patient, persistent cajolery to entice me and another academic colleague (who is almost as staid and unbending as I am) to join him, along with our respective spouses, on an expedition to Disney World's newest extravaganza. Then, when we arrived, it quickly became obvious that Leroy had done his homework and knew exactly where we should go. Under his brisk command, we marched off to take a diving bell down to view the wonders deep beneath the seas; to lunch at the "Nine Dragons" restaurant in the Chinese Pavilion, by far the best and most popular dining spot in the complex (Leroy of course had cannily made the necessary reservations); and to anticipate the endless delights of the World of the Future, as envisaged by the great names of American industry.

Only at the very end of the day did Leroy's conscripts rebel. I can still recall another hour-long waiting line looming before us, and Leroy, eyes gleaming, youthful ardor undimmed, urging us onward, "Once more, dear friends, once more!" We balked. At that point Leroy's fair Marian stepped forth, mercifully announcing, "Enough, Leroy, enough. Don't you see these folks just can't keep pace with you? You'd better take them back to the conference center in Tampa and let them get some rest." And so Leroy and his weary but happy little band drove off into the sunset, our heads awhirl with a kaleidoscope of images and sensations we would never have experienced except for the perseverance of our indefatigable leader.

As I have since discovered, Leroy's enthusiasms are not confined to the gleaming baubles of Disney World. His tastes are catholic. Would you like to know where you can tap your toe to the purest New Orleans jazz that Washington, D.C. has to offer? Ask Leroy. Would you like to know what operas are playing this time of year in Vienna or Buenos Aires? Ask Leroy. Would you like to know how to arrange a visit to the grandest waterfall in the Western Hemisphere (it's quite a ways south of Niagara)? Ask Leroy. I could go on. Here is a person who simply doesn't have the capacity for posturing, even if it were only feigning an air of *joie de vivre*. Yet in his unique way he embodies as well as anyone I know a zest for the genuine good life.

This is a serious journal, and by now the editors have indulged my frivolities longer than I had any right to expect. There is, after all, Leroy the law teacher and labor expert to consider. Leroy's

forte as a legal thinker is synthesis. He will take hold of a sprawling, incomprehensible mass of NLRB and court decisions on some arcane issue, and find an almost aesthetic pleasure in weaving order out of the chaos. He will gather the quite dissimilar reports from twenty-seven countries on the extent of worker participation in management decisionmaking, and produce a single, illuminating, coherent overview of the whole subject. The results look so simple, so easy to follow, that only someone who has tried knows how much painstaking effort has gone into the task. All of us in the labor field are the beneficiaries of Leroy's wizardry in such exercises.

I have never seen Leroy teach. I trust he is not flamboyant. His students, however, are getting the genuine article. This is a teacher in love with his subject. His knowledge of it is encyclopedic. He is intense in his desire to communicate it to others, and always avid to add to his store of learning. Leroy will haunt the Labor Board and the federal courts to hear the latest argument or pick up the most recent decision. And unlike the egomaniacs who tend to populate our profession, he will even attend a scholarly conference at which he is not a featured speaker.

Esteem and affection are the best words to describe one's feelings toward Leroy. There is high esteem for a true professional, for someone who pursues learning for its own sake, and not for the fame it may impart. Even more, there is warm affection for this kindly, selfless, gentle man. But I also take glee in knowing that behind the sober facade of this accomplished scholar, there still lurks the spirit of a fun-loving boy.

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