

# Michigan Law Review

---

Volume 96 | Issue 8

---

1998

## Ted St. Antoine: An Appreciation

Benjamin Aaron  
*UCLA School of Law*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://repository.law.umich.edu/mlr>



Part of the [Legal Biography Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Benjamin Aaron, *Ted St. Antoine: An Appreciation*, 96 MICH. L. REV. 2196 (1998).

Available at: <https://repository.law.umich.edu/mlr/vol96/iss8/4>

This Tribute is brought to you for free and open access by the Michigan Law Review at University of Michigan Law School Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Michigan Law Review by an authorized editor of University of Michigan Law School Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact [mlaw.repository@umich.edu](mailto:mlaw.repository@umich.edu).

## TED ST. ANTOINE: AN APPRECIATION

*Benjamin Aaron\**

In seeking to encompass the many facets of Ted St. Antoine's complex life and career, one thinks of other persons to whom he can be compared. John Maynard Keynes comes immediately to mind. Although Ted may never attain the worldwide renown and influence of the great British economist, the two men share several significant traits. Like Keynes, St. Antoine is an internationally prominent and respected scholar in his own field. Like him, also, Ted is a bon vivant and a lover of the arts. He can generally be relied upon for information about the best places to eat, especially in his beloved New York City, and listening to his discourses on the quality of food and wine offered by his favorite restaurants throughout the world is the next best thing to dining with him. But Ted does not live by bread alone: museums, art galleries, concerts, and theaters are all part of his natural habitat. On the frequent occasions when he visits various cities at home or abroad, he counts every day lost that does not include a visit to at least one museum or gallery, dinner at a good restaurant, and attendance at a concert, play, or musical.

Ted is also eternally curious and in search of new experiences. This eagerness has, at least on one occasion, led him astray. As he tells it, he was in a town in New Mexico to give a speech. Having some time on his hands, he rented a car and began exploring the countryside. At one point he noticed a sign reading "Las Vegas 150 mi." Ted had, of course, heard much about Las Vegas, but he had never been there. Who knows what thoughts crossed his mind at that juncture. Had he, perhaps, read about that wicked Babylon's casinos in the *Christian Science Monitor*, which once described them as "gold-belching pits of evil," and succumbed to the irresistible desire to observe, and perhaps even to participate in, the wanton rites conducted there? Whatever the reason, Ted did not hesitate; he set forth immediately for Las Vegas. It was only when he reached that dusty New Mexican town several hours later that he realized he was in the wrong state.

Ted's academic and public service career confirms the adage: to get a job done, give it to a busy person. The series of tough jobs he has undertaken and successfully completed — many of them during the years he served as Dean of the University of Michigan Law

---

\* Professor Emeritus, UCLA School of Law. A.B. 1937, University of Michigan; LL.B. 1940, Harvard. — Ed.

School — is simply mind-boggling. From 1987 to 1991, for example, Ted served as the reporter, or principal draftsman, for the Uniform Law Commissioners' Drafting Committee on the Uniform Employment Termination Act. One can scarcely imagine a more daunting task. The variety of professional groups and concerned individuals participating in the discussions about the form and content of the proposed statute indicate the conflicting interests involved: the American Bar Association's Sections of Labor and Employment Law and of Torts and Insurance Practice, the AFL-CIO, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, the National [Plaintiff] Employment Lawyers Association, the Association of Trial Lawyers of America, the American Civil Liberties Union, the American Arbitration Association, the National Academy of Arbitrators, and other interested groups and individuals, including legal scholars and attorneys practicing in the field. Under the circumstances, Ted was required to serve not only as principal draftsman but also as mediator and conciliator seeking to reconcile the opposing, strongly held views of the participants. Just how formidable the obstacles he had to overcome were is illustrated by the fact that during the first reading of the proposed act in 1989, with the uniform state commissioners sitting as a committee of the whole, a motion was made even before the initial reading to discharge the drafting committee on the ground that the entire project was an exercise in futility and a waste of the commissioners' time. The motion was defeated, but not overwhelmingly. Despite this omen of additional trouble ahead, Ted and his colleagues persevered, and in 1991 the commissioners approved the employment termination proposal as a model act. The credit for this considerable achievement must go largely to Ted. It took a person of his tact, patience, interpersonal skills, fortitude, and indomitable will to bring it off.

Another example of Ted's extraordinary capacity to take on difficult projects and bring them to a successful conclusion is his work during the period from 1995 to 1997 as chairperson of the National Academy of Arbitrators' special committee on the common law of the workplace. Originally conceived as a "compendium" of arbitration law and practice similar to a legal "restatement," the project was opposed from the start by a significant number of Academy members. Their concern was that the committee was likely to produce a work purporting to set forth an authoritative statement of the orthodox position on substantive and procedural issues in arbitration, as to some of which there is no clear consensus within the arbitral community. Even without such intent, they asserted, the published volume would likely be so construed by judges and practitioners. Once again, Ted proceeded to carry out his assignment. He prepared a proposed outline of the volume, assigning specific

chapters to various Academy members, and made sure that the enterprise got under way. Then, in response to those opposed to the project, he modified the original concept so that it became a statement of prevailing practice, but one accompanied by a presentation of contrary views. Finally, he served as editor of the finished product, which the Academy's Board of Governors approved in 1997, and prepared the manuscript for publication — not an easy task, considering the widely differing styles of the contributing authors. This bare account of the history of the project, however, can provide no real sense of the intensity of feeling, both for and against, that it generated among Academy members. Throughout, Ted exhibited the same characteristics that had served him so well in the uniform state law project, and again he successfully completed his task.

I shall conclude this tribute to Ted St. Antoine by reflecting briefly on twenty-three years of shared experience with him as a member of the United Auto Workers Public Review Board. Throughout this period, Ted has brought to the deliberations of the Board a keen intelligence, a broad knowledge of labor law and industrial relations practices, and incisive analytical skills. Beyond that, however, his sense of humor, modesty, objectivity, willingness to listen and respond to arguments contrary to his own, and unvarying courtesy and good manners have contributed immensely to the success of the Board's work. In the executive sessions of the Board, some of which can be quite heated, Ted's contributions are sometimes forceful, but always good-humored and low key. He can be very persuasive, but he is never doctrinaire and is always willing to change his mind for good cause shown. One could not ask for a better colleague.

The occasion of Ted's retirement from active teaching is reason enough to dedicate this issue of the *Michigan Law Review* to him. Let us hope that he retires from nothing else, for the various fields in which he has participated so effectively would be greatly diminished by his withdrawal. He still has much to contribute to the general welfare, and if I know Ted, he will continue to do so.