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## William W. Bishop, Jr.

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*Supreme Court of India*

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## WILLIAM W. BISHOP, JR.

*Sudhir K. Chopra\**

I came to know Professor Bishop in 1984 when I moved to the United States to work under his supervision. I am more than fortunate to have had the opportunity to be one of his last doctoral students at the University of Michigan Law School.

Without a doubt, Professor Bishop was the best teacher I ever had. Whenever I went to see him for a planned ten minutes, I would invariably leave his office having spent hours and having learned many new things. He was an unlimited source of information which he communicated in a very simplified form. During our discussions about international law, Professor Bishop would begin by discussing the history of the problem, including the history of the nation states, and then move on to the political situations and options. Only after these elaborate preliminaries would he come back to the legal issues. The historical and political perspective he added to legal problems brought the jurisprudential discussion to a more realistic level. Professor Bishop's secret to turning difficult problems into simple ones lay in his thorough understanding of not only the law but the historical and political realities. He said that "though you may keep your head above the clouds, it is important to keep your feet on the ground." By adding his understanding of the real world and his practical experience to legal problems, he could make complicated writings simple, and could turn analysis of difficult legal issues into a game.

There are not many professors of international law in the world who can claim to combine his vision and scholarship with his humility. Professor Bishop was a rare teacher who cared about his students. He would never start a discussion without asking first about how things were in your personal life. He was always available to teach and help in every possible way. He was never short of time or too busy to teach. And he always encouraged students to undertake academic endeavors, standing by to provide support if needed. He never asked for work and never complained about delays but rather always tried to help with the causes of delay.

No words are sufficient to describe Professor Bishop's greatness as

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\* Advocate, Supreme Court of India; Foreign Law Consultant, State of Hawaii; Ph.D. Candidate (Law), University of Tasmania, Australia; Visiting Scholar 1984-1985, University of Michigan Law School. — Ed.

a scholar, teacher, and above all, a perfect gentleman. He was a rare combination of the highest academic distinctions and humbleness. A teacher, a friend, and everything one could ever ask for was there in Professor Bishop.

As I said, I knew him only in his last years, but I am very fortunate to have known him at all. Many scholars and many teachers will come, but only once in many years comes a man like Professor Bishop. He was a legend in his own right, who graced not only the Michigan Law School, but also this country, for over forty years.