

Michigan Law Review

Volume 84 | Issue 3

1985

James Martin: Friend and Co-Author

David G. Epstein

Emory University School of Law

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



Part of the [Legal Biography Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

David G. Epstein, *James Martin: Friend and Co-Author*, 84 MICH. L. REV. 344 (1985).

Available at: <https://repository.law.umich.edu/mlr/vol84/iss3/4>

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.

JAMES MARTIN: FRIEND AND CO-AUTHOR

*David G. Epstein**

Jim Martin was a friend. Friends meant a lot to Jim. Being Jim's friend meant that at the end of your first week as a Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Michigan Law School, Jim insisted that you come to his home for a gourmet dinner, even though it was below zero outside and Jim had never cooked anything more ambitious than microwave cuisine. Being Jim's friend meant that he pushed for your appointment to the Michigan law faculty, even though the appointment would probably result in your taking his commercial law courses. Being Jim's friend meant that he tried to share his passion for science fiction and classical music with you, even though your tastes ran more to mysteries and country and western music. Being Jim's friend meant that he agreed to co-author a commercial law casebook with you.

Basic Uniform Commercial Code Teaching Materials was a kind of acid test for our friendship. We had very different work habits. I would try to work on the book each day and send Jim some material to review each week. Jim would tend to ignore the project for months at a time and then work on the book around the clock for a week or two. We had different ways of saying things. My best guess is that "watch your tokus" was not a phrase regularly employed in Jim's upper-class, Catholic home in suburban Chicago. We had different ideas about cultural allusions — Will Chandler and Sonny Pruitt had not been a part of Jim's life; Gandalf the Grey had not been a part of mine. And, we had very different views about what law students could and would do.

At the time, the differences seemed important to me. I started thinking that Jim and I would not be able to do a book together. Jim, however, was never worried. Jim saw immediately what I realized only over time: Having a good friend was more important than having your way on every aspect of the book.

In time, we were able to agree on the important questions. We agreed that Article 9 was easier for students to learn than Articles 3 and 4 and so should be covered first. We agreed that *Basic Uniform Commercial Code Teaching Materials* be structured so that a student could master the basics of the UCC by working through the Code outside class; we developed problems that could be answered from the UCC and our textual material and included answers in the book. We

* Dean, Emory University School of Law. — Ed.

agreed that it was better to be silly than to be dull and included a full-page Bugs Bunny cartoon illustrating section 9-504(2), a hypothetical involving a negotiable warehouse receipt covering the oats from the Zee family — Mary and Doe, and a picture of Jim White with long, flowing blonde curls.

Doing a casebook with Jim was a special experience. Being Jim's friend was a special experience. Jim was special.