
DEDICATION

“Whereas anyone who keeps the law and teaches others so, will stand high in the Kingdom of Heaven.”

Matthew 5:19

Robert E. Shepherd, Jr. was born on September 22, 1937 in Richmond, Virginia. Although he spent portions of his childhood in Iowa, Delaware, New York, and Tennessee, he returned to Virginia to attend Washington and Lee University in 1955. As an undergraduate, he began what would be a lifelong blend of academics and athletics. He played guard on the Washington and Lee football team and wrote about the team’s exploits as sports editor of the school newspaper, while also making the Dean’s List and serving as captain of the debate team.

After three years at Washington and Lee, he entered the University’s law school, where he took his academic success to a new level. He won the Burks competition for Oral Argument and served on the National Moot Court Team, as associate editor of the Washington and Lee Law Review, as Chief Counsel for the Mock Trial, and as Secretary of the Student Bar Association. He proved that he had a life outside academics by serving as an Assistant Trainer for the University’s football team and by getting married during his third year in law school.

Upon graduation he was commissioned as a Captain in the Army Judge Advocate General Corps. His duty assignment was in the Army Appellate Division where he argued numerous cases before the Army Boards of Review and the United States Court of Military Appeals. Upon discharge from the Army, he was awarded a Commendation Medal.

He entered private practice in Richmond in 1964 and focused on criminal, juvenile, and family law—areas that remained part of his expertise throughout his life. In 1971 he joined the Virginia Attorney General’s Office where he represented the Commonwealth in criminal appeals and post-conviction proceedings. He won most of his cases, but he was most

proud of a case he lost—*Loving v. Virginia*, 388 U.S. 1 (1967), where he was charged with defending Virginia’s criminalization of interracial marriage.

He became “Professor” Shepherd in 1975 when he was appointed Associate Professor of Law and Director of the Juvenile Court Clinic at the University of Baltimore Law School. He found that he enjoyed teaching—almost as much as he enjoyed Maryland crabs and easy access to Oriole games. Of course, he never forgave the Colts for abandoning Baltimore and moving to Indianapolis. After he moved from the University of Baltimore to teach at the University of Richmond, each year he would take a group of Richmond students to Baltimore for an Orioles game and a dinner of Maryland crabs.

In 1978 he was appointed Professor of Law at the T.C. Williams School of Law, University of Richmond. Throughout his career he taught courses in Children and the Law, Family Law, Evidence, Juvenile Law, Sports and the Law, Education Law, and Contracts. He also served as Director of Clinical Programs and of the Youth Advocacy Clinic. In 2001 he retired from full-time teaching and was appointed an Emeritus Professor of Law. In the course of his “retirement,” he continued to teach Family Law, Contracts, and Children and the Law. In the final months before his death, he returned to Washington and Lee as a visiting professor.

As an academic, he received numerous awards, including Outstanding Faculty Member at the University of Baltimore Law School, Distinguished Educator at the University of Richmond in both 1981 and 1986, and the Willie L. Moore Distinguished Service Award from the University of Richmond Black Students Association. He also received recognition for his pro bono activities, most prominently the Livingston Hall Award in Juvenile Justice from the American Bar Association in 2005 and the Harry L. Carrico Professionalism Award from the Virginia State Bar in 2003.

He has left a legacy of pro bono service and academic excellence that may never be equaled. He has also left a legion of friends and admirers whose lives have been enhanced for having known him. Perhaps his most lasting legacy will be the thousands of former students who will always remember him as one of their favorite teachers.

- *Ronald J. Bacigal*

Professor of Law
University of Richmond
T.C. Williams School of Law