

REMINISCENCES OF DEAN WILLIAM F. RYAN

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Rare indeed would be a law school graduate who would not rank the three years of law school among the most intensive and formative years of his or her life. Law school demands most of one's time and attention, and often pushes the student's mental capacity to limits previously unknown. The intensity is both systematic and personal. The only certainty, it seems, is uncertainty, and that is everywhere, whether in what the law is or what it should be.

For those of us who attended UNB Law School during the period 1950-71, one individual probably had a greater impact on us than anyone else there. That person was Dean William F. Ryan. Relative to today, faculty and students were very small in number. Everyone had to take at least two courses from the Dean. Moreover, it was a time prior to the democratization of universities, so the Dean personally selected the full-time faculty and part-time lecturers.

For the two of us personally, the experience changed our lives in ways we never imagined when we first entered law school. After graduate school, we both returned to UNB as Assistant Professors. Dean Ryan remained as Dean for the next three years. In these two critical three-year periods, Dean Ryan's influence was immense. It was not, however, all "milk and honey". There were battles to be fought, some to be won, some lost. As students, and later as faculty, we were not always on the side that showed goodness and mercy. Nor did we think God was always on the Dean's side.

We have decided that the best way for us to share some of our experience with this remarkable person is to use a diary format. Although neither of us actually kept a diary, the events seem as vivid as yesterday's. What has dimmed over time are dates. Some we could establish. Others are really approximations. Italic type indicates actual as opposed to estimated dates. Sometimes the warts show a little more than we might like (especially ours), but they too were part of the person who changed our lives forever. Sometimes, a diary entry is more applicable to one of us than the other but, in all cases, as classmates, close friends and collaborators throughout, we shared the experience in some sense. We suspect that those of you who met Dean Ryan at a different time and place will find that our account rekindles your own similar memories and feelings. For those of you who never had the pleasure of meeting him, we would like to introduce the person who was at the heart of our legal education.

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September 1964

Sept. 9 First Contracts Class: So this is the Dean. He certainly is all business. It turns out that there is no truth to the rumour that he would begin by telling us to take a good look around the room: "Look to your left, look to your right. Chances are that one of you won't be here next year". What the Dean did make crystal clear is that this is a professional school. Law students might still enjoy the Beatles, but they are not to "scream" over them like teeny-boppers. From this day on we will be wearing jackets and ties. The Dean certainly has the full attention of all twenty-nine of us.

For next day we are to read three cases, beginning with *Hadley v. Baxendale* (1854), 9 Exch. 341, 156 E.R. 145. The Dean explained the meaning of the "citation". The detail is overwhelming – sometimes the date is within round brackets, sometimes within square ones, sometimes the comma comes before the date, sometimes after. Then he proceeded to lecture on the organization of the legal system and court structure.

Sept. 11 Second Contracts Class: The Dean went through the procedure in a civil action, from starting an action right through pleadings, examinations, trials and appeals. He also got into the history of the legal system as it was before the *Judicature Act*. Even the terminology was different back then, e.g. the statement of claim used to be called the declaration, and the defence was once called the plea. The demurrer is the "so what plea". The Dean explains demurrer by acting out the role of the defendant. Boy, can he ever act! Pacing back and forth at the front of the room, and speaking ever so carefully and deliberately, he takes an entire pass of the room to say, "Assuming that everything you say is true ..." Then he stops, turns around, searches our faces with a penetrating peer, and asks, in a sharp and menacing manner, "So What?" "Throwing down the gauntlet" is a phrase whose flavour I can now taste. I also wonder, is the Dean just acting?

Sept. 14 We are into the cases! The first one is *Hadley v. Baxendale*. It is clear that the Dean expects us to master both the technical and the theoretical, and above all to determine whether the judge "got it right". In *Hadley v. Baxendale* itself there is a big difference between the Reporter's summary of the facts of the case and the Judge's statement of the facts, and it makes a big difference depending on which facts one takes. Unfortunately, most of the class did not notice this, and the Dean took one student right to the end of the garden path on it. Lessons: (1) be very careful about the facts of the case; (2) be even more careful of the Dean.

- Sept. 21 Some unlucky student, in answer to a question from the Dean, began his answer with, "I feel that ... "; The Dean cut him short. Lawyers and judges do not "*feel*". They "*think*".
- Sept. 23 The Dean cut one of my fellow students to shreds today. Having worked up his nerve to actually challenge the Dean on one issue, he ran up against a point of agency law, and said, as any first year student might: "I would be in a better position to make my argument if I knew more about the law of agency." The Dean stopped pacing, fixed him with the fiercest stare, and said, most unkindly: "That's right, Mr. ... , and until you do, I suggest that you keep your mouth *shut*."
- Sept. 24 Our number has dwindled from twenty-nine to eighteen. (Forget about next year, the rumoured "look around you" speech could have focused on next week!)

October 1964

- Oct. 2 It takes about three hours to prepare for one of the Dean's classes. And one had better prepare. The "hit" chance is high in a class of eighteen.
- Oct. 5 The Dean's question routine can be quite unsettling. Quite often he will address a question to the class at large. Instead of then waiting for volunteers, or scanning the class to choose someone, he goes to his class list and peruses it, leaving us waiting with bated breath for what seems a very long time. When he finally calls the name, first he peers eerily at the student through his thick dark-rimmed glasses; then he frowns at him; then he looks sternly at him; then he squints, with cheeks risen, nose squinched and mouth firmly fixed; finally he throws his left arm overhead and then slowly bends it back to scratch the back of his head.
- Oct. 9 The Dean commands our full attention. Everyone is in fear of him. But it is not just fear that keeps us from being bored in contracts. The Dean is a very interesting speaker. And he makes his points very clearly. He is very good at getting the basics across to everyone, but at the same time leaving us with something to think about, with extra twists for those who really want to pursue an idea. Moreover, the Dean is a great entertainer. He often plays the roles of the parties involved, switching with ease from plaintiff to defendant, appellant to respondent, counsel for one side to counsel for the other, and judge. He can be very funny and, as one of our particularly nervous classmates says, the Dean's humour is doubly effective because it releases some of the great tensions in the room.

Oct. 15 The Dean opened with this: "In many cases the lawyer uses the 'yes but' approach. This is a healthy approach. The lawyer says, 'Yes, your Honour, I know that is true, *but* in this case ...'. He is furthermore also trying to distinguish cases. The legal approach is always to insist on being relevant and accurate and to make distinctions."

We did another one of what the Dean calls his "dream cases", *White & Carter Councils Ltd. v. McGregor*, where the plaintiff refused to accept the defendant's repudiation, went ahead and displayed the ads on the garbage bins and then brought an action for the full contract price. This is the third "Dean's dream case" to date, the others being *Groves v. John Wunder Co.*, where the cost of grading the land as per the contract was five times the market value of the land itself, and *Matheson v. Smiley*, where the surgeon sued for services performed in an unsuccessful attempt to save the life of someone who committed suicide by shooting himself (and yes, that someone was Smiley). The Dean's dreams are our nightmares.

Oct. 22 I just received a formal printed invitation from the Dean's office to a Dinner for the Dunn Scholars. It is to be held on October 29, the anniversary of Sir James Dunn's birthday. It is "Black Tie", whatever that means. Lord Beaverbrook (a good friend of Sir James Dunn who later married Dunn's widow) died this past summer, so perhaps this is mourning dress?

Oct. 23 One of the Dean's favourite questions is, "Is this case rightly decided?" For example, today he asked, "Was *White v. Bluett* rightly decided? Why was the son's promise to his father to stop complaining not good consideration? Surely the son had a privilege to complain. He could complain all he wanted and no legal sanction would come down on him. The judge said the plea was *clearly* bad. The plea *may* be bad but it is not *clearly* bad."

Oct. 24 I am not too happy to find out what "Black Tie" means. Such trappings may be common for the faculty, but certainly not for me, nor, I expect, other Dunns, for whom this Dinner is being held.

Oct. 30 *The Great Northern Railway v. Witham* is a leading case on tenders. Brett J. keeps referring to "the contract". "What contract?" asks the Dean. "The trouble with Mr. Justice Brett is that he is loose in his language."

November 1964

Nov. 10 The *High Trees* case is one of the “most controversial cases in the last twenty years” (our lifetimes). Denning (a “controversial judge”) was willing to hold the plaintiffs to their promise to accept a smaller sum in discharge of a larger sum even though there was no consideration for their promise. Denning distinguished *Foakes v. Beer* on the ground that the House of Lords had not considered the “logical consequence” of the “fusion of law and equity”. “I am not sure whether courts would be unanimous in this”, says the Dean. “As a matter of fact, I am *very unsure!*”

As for Lord Mansfield’s statement in 1765 that consideration was for the “sake of evidence only”, so that written promises are enforceable, the Dean has one word: “*Oh?*” His tone and facial expression speak volumes.

Nov. 13 It turns out that the Dean has some favourite judges. And guess what; Mansfield and Denning are high on his list. Lord Mansfield was “one of the great English judges” who “made one of the last great assaults on the doctrine of consideration.” As for Lord Denning, the Dean lights up at the mere mention of his name. The Dean was in England at the time of the *High Trees* case, and wow, what a stir. It is obvious that the Dean loved it (yes, loved it – *felt* it – emotionally as well as intellectually).

Nov. 18 One of those classes where the Dean suddenly looks at his watch at the end of the hour and, in mid-sentence and without further ado, slams his book shut and zips out of the room before we even realize it’s over.

Nov. 23 I need eye-glasses. I will get black-framed ones like the Dean’s.

Nov. 24 Smoking is permitted in the student common room and outside Somerville House itself, but nowhere else. The Dean is dead against smoking, but even he cannot get students to obey the rules. He regularly does a sweep of the building and puts all the ashtrays in the closet in his office. But they soon re-appear, thanks to our janitor, Harold Partington.

Nov. 25 I was working at a library table in the Dunn Room today while smoking a cigarette (in the library!), when suddenly the Dean appeared. Down went my cigarette under the large table, where I held it in my hand, hoping for his quick departure. Unfortunately, and no doubt deliberately, the Dean came and took a book from a shelf near me and stood there to peruse it. In no time at all smoke could be seen curling up from under the table, the only thing more obvious being its smell. While I pondered my quandary, the Dean just as suddenly closed his book and left the room.

He never said a word! However, that is enough to cure me from smoking (in the Dunn Room).

Nov. 26 I am back to smoking in the Dunn Room. However powerful the Dean, nicotine is king.

Nov. 30 Today the Dean brought the house down with a story about Kekewich, whose name came up in one of the cases. Kekewich was not a distinguished judge, said the Dean. On an appeal from one of his decisions, counsel is said to have opened with, "My Lords, this is an appeal from the judgment of Mr. Justice Kekewich ...", whereupon one of their lordships interrupted with, "Oh yes, and are there any other grounds of appeal?"

December 1964

Dec. 1 Another shake up day. We will have a contracts test before Christmas. The Dean says a typical exam question might be: "Assumpsit for goods sold and delivered. Explain." He says we should be at the stage where we can write for 15 minutes right now. Looking at our cases for today's class, the Dean says we should be able to reconcile *Clark v. Hagar* with *Pearce v. Brooks* in no more than three sentences.

January 1965

Jan. 15 We were into acceptance today, and one of my fellow students who had not read any of the assigned cases ... BIG MISTAKE ... did something even more stupid. He asked the Dean a question. Actually a series of questions. It seems that someone had just mailed him some unsolicited merchandise with an offer to buy it or return it. Our class discussion on acceptance prompted him to ask about his legal situation in this case. He said that he was wondering whether he should contact the sender if he did not want the merchandise; would he have to return it to the sender, or at least hold it for the sender to pick up; and what if he used the merchandise or for that matter threw it out? Needless to say, some of our assigned cases were very relevant to all this. "Very interesting questions, Mr. ...", said the Dean. "Now tell me about some of the cases that came to mind as you were asking yourself these questions." The disaster was complete.

Jan. 29 The Dean posed the problem of the unilateral offer followed by revocation, but after substantial performance. The offer was \$10 to the first person to touch the top of the flag pole. He then accepted his own offer. Watching him accept his own offer and climb an imaginary flag

pole right there in the classroom was a marvel in itself. Just before he reached the top, he changed roles and played out the role of the offeror. Shaking his finger at the vision of the person near the top, he revoked the offer with a glee of sadism that scared me. We all knew the finger would soon be pointing our way and one of us would have to wipe the smile and apply some law to this drama. We knew we were damned. We also knew we would never forget unilateral contracts.

February 1965

Feb. 9 At times the Dean seems almost giddy in class. He is diabetic, and we suspect that these giddy spells are a reaction to his insulin. One simply cannot imagine the Dean having a giddy spell otherwise.

Feb. 17 The Dean arranged to have Mr. Justice Ivan Rand deliver a series of lectures this term. Thinking they would have a broader appeal than just the law school, he arranged to have them in Carleton Hall "up the hill". Attendance at the first lecture was small but respectable; at the second, attendance was sparse. After the lecture, there was a reception at the Faculty Club. I walked over with the Dean. He was furious with the small turnout. His anger was variously directed at the lack of respect that law students showed toward the judge, their lack of support and concern for the reputation of the school and their lack of appreciation of a rare educational opportunity. I said something about leading horses to water but being unable to make them drink, and changed the subject.

March 1965

Mar. 25 Could a man contract to fly to the moon? Yes, says the Dean, because it is possible to contract to do that which appears to be impossible.

April 1965

Apr. 15 Last contracts lecture. I am amazed at how scanty my lecture notes look. I hardly have any notes at all for some lectures. Moreover, my notes are just as likely to be found scribbled in the margins of my casebook or briefs as in my lecture notes proper. For instance, my lecture notes on intention consist of just one five word sentence – "Intention is an ambiguous word." But my casebook margins are scribbled full. The reason, no doubt, is that this course was just as much about *thinking* as it was about contracts, and it's very hard to both think and write down a whole lot of notes at one and the same time, especially on those (fairly frequent) occasions when I was in the thick of things because either I had been "hit" or had waded in on my own. I have reams of notes in some of my other courses, but I feel

that I have a good understanding of contracts. Did I say *feel*? ... No ... *Think!*

September 1965

Sept. 7 One of my classmates, upon running into the Dean in the hallway, asked him if he had a nice summer. "Not particularly", replied the Dean. And that was the end of the conversation! So now a lot more students believe the story that made the rounds last year, of the time the year before when the Dean was on sabbatical in England, and he ran into one of his students on the steps of Saint Paul's Cathedral. The Dean did not say hello.

October 1965

Oct. 15 The lectures in Conflict of Laws with the Dean are often testy. At some time in the past, the Dean has taught practically every course ever offered in the School. The course in Conflicts gives him a forum to find out how we measure up, and also – by our responses – how our lecturers in the other courses measure up. The second and third year classes are combined for this course. We are at a disadvantage. Sometimes we are studying conflict rules for courses we have not yet taken. Oddly, the third year class does not think it has any advantages. Today we were studying the validity of wills executed in foreign jurisdictions. Parenthetically the Dean asked why we would go to the expense of drafting a will if the client wanted to leave property exactly as set out in the Devolution of Estates Act. No one knew the answer. We all knew that we should have known the answer. Here were two-thirds of the school, supposedly some bright minds, but none able to respond. The pain that came over the Dean's face was telling.

Oct. 21 The Dean is to receive an honorary degree from Mount Allison University. Today the Law Students' Society put on a testimonial luncheon for him. The speeches were great, especially the Dean's, who likened his UNB "team" to a great baseball team, and ran through all kinds of great plays. He also surprised us with a recitation of batting averages of a few of his favourite players. He knew more baseball statistics than all of the rest of us put together. We expected that in the classroom, but baseball? Maybe the Dean has a life after all.

November 1965

Nov. 1 Conflict classes are still testy. The Dean reviewed a long decision of the House of Lords. Anything over twenty pages in the All England Reports usually receives only headnote treatment by the students, and the Dean knows it! He asked us what was unusual about one of the judgments that was read in the House. As usual no one knew. It seems the judge had died after he had written his decision and one of the Law Lords read it out of respect. It was not part of the formal record. Later the Dean proceeded to summarize one of the decisions. He was so disgusted with our lack of work, his summary was the complete opposite of what the judgment actually said. Matters were not improved when no one had the fortitude to correct him.

February 1966

Feb. 18 One of our classmates had a date last night. When he knocked at the door to pick her up, the Dean opened the door. Oh to have been a fly on the wall to watch the proceedings! It turned out that the Dean also had a date that night. It was with the girl's mother. Fredericton is a small town.

September 1966

Sept. 6 There is only one option in our entire program, a choice between Labour and Restitution. The Dean teaches Restitution. All but five of the second and third year students will take Labour. Restitution is a seminar which meets for two hours once a week for the year. The five in Restitution are expected to write three papers during the year, for presentation and defence, mostly defence. Even the Dean intends to present and defend a paper.

Sept. 21 Halfway through each Restitution seminar, the Dean's secretary serves us coffee and Peek Freans biscuits with jam filling. We have nicknamed them "Restitution cookies." We have come far.

November 1966

Nov. 16 We have practically completed two and one-half years of legal education and have only six months to go. This realization is cause more for sober reflection than celebration. In one sense, our stomachs are full, yet we have merely scratched the surface. We know so little. Is it us or is it the school? Graduate school will surely provide the answer. The Dean has given us his full support.

Nov. 24 I paid a rare visit to the Dean's office today. The Dean's office, which was Lord Beaverbrook's bedroom when he owned Somerville House, is off all by itself; not even his secretary is close. The path to it leads nowhere else, so there is not much traffic, and one feels some uneasiness at the approach. The door, of course, was closed. I knocked. After what seemed like a very long time, the door opened, part way, and there stood the Dean, peering at me somewhat quizzically. "Yes?" After two and one-half years here, one just does not drop in on the Dean.

January 1967

Jan. 11 Restitution is by far my best experience at law school. The subject cuts across many areas of the law – contract, tort, property, equity and criminal – and we are learning a lot about how things tie together. Best of all are the experiences of researching and writing papers, and presenting and defending them at the seminars. What fun it was to open my paper on waiver of tort with this quote: "Thoughts much too deep for tears subdue the Court; When I assumpsit bring, and god-like waive a tort!"

Not nearly as much fun were the thoughts that subdued me when the Dean shred my paper line by line before "throwing [me] to the wolves" (i.e. the other four students). What irony! I do take consolation in the fact that everyone else suffers the same fate. The most amusing episode to date involved a classmate's attempt to convince the Dean that his "statue" was a "typo" for "statute." The problem was that his paper focused on legislation and used "statue" several times on almost every page. The wolves were well fed that day. Even the Dean did not escape criticism when he presented his paper.

Jan. 17 Yale has accepted me in their LL.M. program and awarded me a full scholarship covering tuition and cost of living. I'm feeling on top of the world!

March 1967

Mar. 1 Dean Ryan brought the plans for the new law school to Restitution class. He had the architect change the size of the desks to accommodate the law student's notebook, casebook and a statute. He has left nothing to chance. As for his own office, his Somerville House office served as the model. His new office would certainly not be smaller and since his present office had a shower, so would his new one. The Office of the Dean of Law appears to be at least double the size of the President's Office. It is clear the Dean is excited (as much as he ever gets excited about anything) about the move. But there clearly are mixed emotions. It is not obvious he

really wants to be on the campus. The distance from "up the hill" to Waterloo Row has had its advantages. However, he has complained of the racket that the birds make flying about the feeders on the property next door, where the founder of the International Kindness Club lives.

- Mar. 10 The Dean had me in to discuss my interest in teaching and the possibility of my teaching at UNB! Such talk seemed more like an annointment than a possible appointment, so naturally there was no mention of salaries or anything like that.

September 1967

- Sept. 30 Columbia University. I think I have a better foundation than most. While my new classmates were taking advanced seminars in esoteric aspects of law, I was being taught the basics. I can handle this place. As for legal research and writing, it is no more difficult than Restitution class. The workload is no heavier, the students on average may be a little brighter, and the faculty may on average be a little better, but UNB did us proud. We got a good, no great, education there. Despite its size, UNB had a lot of respect in our class. (We even thought our class was better than the others in the school.) There was a spirit that permeated in an odd way, from the top down through the ranks to the one secretary and even the janitor. As a result, the Dean has snagged some good profs in the past.
- Sept. 30 Here I am at Yale. But my top of the world feeling has plummeted to the bottom. I feel very inadequate – out of my league – scared stiff. All I have to do is look around me and listen to know they made a mistake in choosing me! There is even one student here who speaks slightly faster than the speed at which I think. As for the professors and their classes, the level of challenge and workload reminds me of the Restitution seminar, except that every course is like that, not just one. At times I'm lost, as when the professor in my advanced torts seminar (Guido Calabresi, whose seminar is based on his draft book, *The Costs of Accidents: A Legal and Economic Analysis*) gets into blackboard graph-drawing arguments with a couple of graduate students with advanced economics degrees.

January 1968

- Jan. 10 Columbia. American Constitutional Law is going to drown me. It comes up in every course. Why did Dean Ryan not suggest I take Constitutional Law?

Jan. 31 Wonder of wonders, I am surviving at Yale. Things were not nearly as bleak as I had imagined. My confidence has returned. Thank God for Dean Ryan (and the other profs at UNB), who prepared me well.

May 1968

May 16 Imagining the Dean having a giddy spell was difficult enough, learning of his nomination for political office was equally astonishing. Politicians are an outgoing, social breed who seem more concerned with peoples' feelings and currying their favour than standing for principles. They are everything the Dean is not. Trudeau has made the constitution an election issue. The Dean will carry the banner for the Liberals in Saint John. He has even taken to wearing Trudeau-style sandals. Imagine, the Dean wearing sandals. The wonder of wonders. Most shocking of all, perhaps, is the realization that there is more to the Dean than the Law School and that he is, in fact, willing to leave the Law School.

June 1968

June 30 The New Brunswick Barrister's Society held its annual meeting in St. Andrews. Rumour has it that the Dean spotted Pete Mockler across the room. (Pete just completed two years of full-time teaching at the Law School and decided to return to private practice.) With his hand extended, the Dean rushed over in a very uncharacteristic manner to greet Pete. Pete said, "Bill, the election is over. You lost."

July 1968

July 1 We are back in Fredericton to take up the position of Assistant Professor of Law. I bumped into Alan Sinclair today on the front steps of the Law School and he asked how I was. I told him I was very happy about my appointment. He seemed surprised that I had joined the faculty. Communications did not always flow from the Dean's office with "all due dispatch".

July 1 The Dean has asked me to serve as the Assistant to the Dean (not Assistant Dean). I, of course, have accepted. There is no money for this, and no teaching reduction, but I consider it an honour.

July 15 Now the Dean has asked me to teach the Restitution seminar jointly with him! He is too busy to do it all himself, so he wants me to help out. This is going to be difficult. I shudder at the prospect of teaching with the Dean sitting at my elbow. He is the best teacher I know, while I will have difficulty just catching enough breath to speak.

July 25 The floor salary for assistant professors was raised from \$8,500 to \$9,000, so we got a \$500 raise, but no one had mentioned it. We found out today when we received our first pay cheque.

September 1968

Sept. 10 I attended a law teachers' workshop at McGill. The Dean did not say anything about reimbursement for expenses so I picked up the tab myself.

October 1968

Oct. 8 The official opening of the new law school, Ludlow Hall, took place in conjunction with Fall Convocation. The Dean put George McAllister in charge of the arrangements and left virtually everything in George's hands. Once he delegates something, the Dean does not interfere. In fact, one of my jobs was to prepare the brochure for the opening, and this included my writing the Dean's Message.

Oct. 30 The Norman Strax affair. An additional shock is our discovery that Strax, a new member of faculty just like us, was hired at a salary of \$11,000, which is considerably more than our \$9,000. That's hard to take for the three new law professors, with our academic records and our degrees from Harvard, Yale and Columbia. Have we been too trusting?

February 1969

Feb. 3 The Dean rarely misses morning and afternoon coffee in the Faculty Lounge. He often directs conversation, which frequently centres on some legal issue. It has dawned on us that some of this is really a test of our knowledge, and that far from being spontaneous, it is carefully thought out in advance. Chances are good that the Dean has boned up on any topic he raises.

March 1969

Mar. 11 One still does not drop in on the Dean, but he drops in on us from time to time, without even so much as a knock on the door.

Mar. 20 One of my fellow junior colleagues asked the Dean at coffee whether the University paid any travel expenses in connection with academic business. The Dean said such expenses would be eligible for consideration. The colleague then asked about my McGill expenses from last year. The Dean said they were eligible. So I made a claim and was reimbursed, without feeling particularly grateful to the Dean.

January 1970

Jan. 3 The Dean has designated me to sit as his representative on a University budget committee. At today's committee meeting I learned that the University pays a stipend, called a "summer supplement", to professors who do teaching or research here during the summer. This is the first that we have heard of this and it comes as a shock. All junior members of faculty spent all last summer preparing casebooks.

May 1970

May 1 We will be paid summer supplements this summer!

May 1971

May 1 The junior members of faculty have put the Dean in an awful fix. This year the University proposes to reduce the amount of the summer supplement. One of us has accepted the reduction (but not graciously) and will stay on campus for the summer. Another says he will stay on campus but plans to work less hours because of the reduction. Another one says he does not want the reduced amount and plans instead to drive across Canada for a vacation. A fourth person informs the Dean that he plans to claim the supplement but spend the summer in the United States, contending the supplement is just a part of his regular salary. The Dean cannot win on this one. The divisiveness offends his sense of fairness and equity. Relations may never be the same again.

The problem, as often is the case, is over money. That's something that never seemed to interest the Dean. Alan Sinclair said that he was once told by a friend in the Comptroller's Office to tell the Dean that he should pick up his pay cheques because some of them would soon be staledated. For the rest of us, money is a much more pressing issue.

May 15 The Dean is boycotting the Faculty Lounge. One misses the intellectual discussions he usually brings to what otherwise are often dull coffee breaks. His classes are as good as ever but he seems to be tiring of the administrative side. Faculty are always pushing for something. The Dean thinks we should be thankful for what we have. He often compares the school now with the one in Saint John. Many think his comparison misses the point.

June 1971

- June 1** It has just been announced that the Dean has been appointed a Commissioner to the Federal Law Reform Commission. There is an air of uncertainty in Ludlow Hall. There is also a feeling among some of us that maybe we have pushed and pulled a little too much. There is no rejoicing. The School will never be the same without him.
- June 18** Dan Hurley arranged a magnificent dinner in honour of the Dean's appointment to the Law Reform Commission. It was held in the Officers' Mess at Camp Gagetown. It was expensive but well worth it. The Dean reviewed the growth of the school and his pleasure with the success of the institution. His remarks concentrated on the faculty and the contributions they had made. Some of the accolades were much briefer than others. Everyone got the message.

June 1972

- June 30** The Dean dropped into the Law School this afternoon about 4:00 p.m. It was the Friday before the long weekend. He wanted to know why there were not many people around! In the evening, the Dean and a companion came to the house for a drink. George McAllister once said that the Dean had "a girl in every port". I always thought that was an exaggeration, but I was never certain.

The matter of retirement came up in discussion. The Dean said he doubted he would read law after retirement. He thought he might listen to a great deal of classical music. The music did not surprise me, but not reading any law did. I have heard of musicians who refused to play once they retired. It seems to be a trait of perfectionists. If you are not going to put your whole life into it, it is not worth doing. Dean Ryan tended towards the perfectionist.

April 1974

- Apr. 11** Dean Ryan has been appointed to the Federal Court of Appeal! He often asked whether one could serve as a judge in our society without ever having had a driver's licence. Now he has answered his own question.

October 1975

- Oct. 31** Mr. Justice Ryan delivered the first Viscount Bennett Memorial Lecture. He spoke on the subject of law reform. It was clear his old love for the School has not been lost. It was scarcely perceptible that he had ever left

the classroom. I was given the honour of thanking him. I was delighted to be able to say that he was a first class student, a first class teacher and a first class law reformer.

October 1988

Oct. 23 The first Dean Emeritus in the history of the University will be William F. Ryan, Dean Emeritus of Law. He always was Dean Ryan to most of us. Now it's official again. There is a possibility he will actually live in Fredericton for sometime each year. He has obtained a copy of the plans of the new senior citizen's complex, "Royal Court". The major obstacle seems to be his health and the close relationship he has developed with his medical advisers in Ottawa. His interest seems to be tending toward legal history. I wonder what happened to the music?

February 1989

Feb. 23 We had the opportunity to do a taped interview with Dean Ryan this morning. It was the second instalment. Chronologically we have made it up to about 1965. We should have undertaken the project earlier. Some things I fear are wishfully forgotten. Others border on the revisionist version of history. In general, however, the record was well worth preserving. It was clearly understood that the transcript is not to be released without his consent. We plan to finish the project on his next visit to Fredericton.

October 1991

Oct. 8 The Saint John Law Society held a dinner to mark the Law School's 99th birthday and kick off our centennial year. Dean MacLauchlan had prepared a video of interviews with those who have had the longest association with the School. Dean Ryan was, of course, most prominent. His vision to make UNB Law School a significant "middle power" in legal education is fast becoming the catch phrase to describe his term of office as Dean.

October 1992

Oct. 8 The Law School celebrated its 100th birthday with a Special Convocation. Dean Ryan received an honorary doctorate. He was the obvious choice. However, somehow time has again managed to stay one step ahead of plans. Dean Ryan is in poor health and could not attend the ceremony. His niece, Carey Ryan, accepted the degree and delivered his address on his behalf. Everything was first class.

July 1994

July 12 Dean Ryan's funeral service was deeply moving. It was a most appropriate service, focusing on Bill the Teacher. The only thing I wish had been added was a salute to Bill as the finest teacher in the history of the School (I said this in my last letter to him). When it came to teaching, Bill was the best there is. Thinking about it gives me a thrill.