

1989

## A Tribute to Eugene F. Scoles

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### Recommended Citation

Ronald D. Rotunda, *A Tribute to Eugene F. Scoles*, 1989 U. ILL. L. REV. 835 (1989).

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## A TRIBUTE TO EUGENE F. SCOLES

*Ronald D. Rotunda\**

I first met Gene the day I started teaching, about a thousand years ago, in August of 1974. He was visiting from the University of Oregon, where he had just finished a term as Dean. Gene's office was near mine, and so we got to be good friends. I am honored to participate in this tribute to him on the occasion of his retirement from the University of Illinois College of Law.

Gene has had a long and distinguished career in the law. He started practicing law before I was born. He was an Assistant Professor (and then Associate Professor) at Northeastern from 1946 to 1949, and then an Associate Professor (and later Professor) at the University of Florida from 1949 to 1956. He became a Professor at Illinois for the next dozen years, Dean (and Professor) at Oregon from 1968 to 1982, and back to Illinois as a Professor (and then Max L. Rowe Professor of Law) from 1982 to 1989. He has been an Emeritus Professor at Oregon since 1982 and an Emeritus Professor at Illinois since 1989. During this period he also found time to be a Visiting Professor at such places as the University of Khartoum, Sudan, Stanford University, and the University of Virginia.

When I learned all of this, I asked Gene why it had been so difficult for him to hold down a job. He never really answered me directly.

As a young teacher, I found Gene to be a great help. He brought with him a great deal of knowledge, experience, and a love of teaching and learning. More importantly, his enthusiasm is infectious. He certainly infected me, and I hope that over the years I have been able to transfer this zeal to some of my students. If I have, Gene is, in no small way, the responsible party.

During my first semester of teaching, some students requested that someone offer a noncredit, volunteer course on Professional Responsibility. Tom Morgan and I worked on that course, and Gene Scoles graciously volunteered his time. That experience nurtured an interest in legal ethics that has lasted far longer than that first endeavor.

After Gene completed his one-year visit to Illinois in 1974, we were not able to attract him here again until 1982. But in the meantime, our paths kept crossing. Gene, who was a member (and later Chair) of the Professional Responsibility Examination Committee of the Multistate

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Bar Examiners, suggested that I be appointed to that Committee, and through his efforts, I was. For several years I worked with him and others on that Committee. It was a wonderful experience because of the wonderful people involved.

Gene has had a very full career—a well-known scholar with many articles and books to his credit; a former Dean and former President of the Association of American Law Schools; a promoter of law reform who has been active in the American Law Institute, and the Commissioners on Uniform State Laws; and the United States delegate to the Hague Conference on Private International Law, where he worked in preparing an international convention on the law applicable to decedents' estates. He is also a very delightful fellow. His teaching and scholarship and public service activities are etched in time and preserved in books. I leave you with one story to illustrate his delightful mischievousness, so that it is also preserved.

The incident started when I first came to Illinois. In response to a practical joke from Wayne LaFave, Gene concocted a plan. A few weeks later, when Wayne was out of town for a few days, he and another professor bricked up Wayne's office. (To be sure, they used wallpaper with a brick design instead of real brick, but the office door still disappeared into the wall.) Wayne found his office with not much effort when he returned. (Though I think he had a little more trouble finding his mail, for the mail slot had been wallpapered over too.)

Gene's easygoing and genial ways helped tense, beginning teachers relax. I believe that it was Edward Levy of the University of Chicago who once said that faculty politics is so brutal because the stakes are so small. Gene is one of the people who has the ability to put things in proper perspective, to recognize when the stakes are small, and to take life a little less seriously. It is not enough to do one's best to be a good teacher and scholar: we should also enjoy our career in the law.