IRVING E. FASAN

Irv Fasan and I arrived at the Law School together in the fall of 1971. Since that time, we have been colleagues and friends. In saying good-bye to Irv as a colleague, I am not saying good-bye to him as a friend. Nevertheless, I think the reasons why Irv is my friend are important in assessing his contribution to the Law School as a teacher and colleague. I am going to talk about these things, rather than the minutia of teaching and publication.

Irv is passionate in his conviction that lawyering must be informed by a moral vision. A lawyer without a vision of lawyering as vocation is either a tool of his clients or worse yet, his clients are tools he uses to serve his own desires. The lawyer's moral vision must be supported by those habits of virtue, which taken together are called character. Without a strong moral character, any vision, however noble, will dissipate under the burden of the ambiguities and temptations of the profession. Irv believes that the first function of a law professor is to assist students in formulating a moral vision of lawyering as a first step in becoming a lawyer of character.

We claim to use the Socratic method in law school. Socrates described himself as a mid-wife's son still practicing his mother's profession. A Socratic mid-wife seeks to help a student to develop a conscience strong enough to speak with authority when moral puzzles arrive.

Irv Fasan's vision of a law professor is a vision authentically in the Socratic tradition. He emphasizes matters at least as important as close questioning and sharp analysis in the formation of a lawyer. Whether Irv's students have always understood what he is trying to do, I do not know. I know that we, his colleagues, have not always understood or appreciated the values that he defended. The lack of understanding and appreciation may have made his job more difficult. If it did, he never complained. He soldiered on, defending his vision of professional education.

By articulating and defending the values for which he stood, Irv continually reminded us that a law school is a professional school. We are supposed to teach more than the technical skills of lawyering, the tricks of the trade. Tricks of the trade without strong moral character are mere tools for the exploitation of others. Every professional school needs an Irv Fasan to remind faculty of the ultimate meaning of their task. Irv has played that role at the Law School for twenty years. Though he now retires from active participation in the faculty, the memory of his time here as an active faculty member,
and his continued presence as a friend, will remind all of us that we are not at a training camp for mercenaries.

J. Patrick Green
Professor of Law
Creighton University