

Philip C. Sorensen

ALBERT L. CLOVIS*

Phil Sorensen graced Ohio State's law faculty for twenty-two years—from 1973 until his retirement in 1995. He was a fine teacher, a serious scholar, an effective and compassionate administrator, and a marvelous colleague. Phil brought a lot with him when he joined the faculty—a keen intelligence, a firm commitment to justice and fairness in all matters, a great intellectual curiosity, a warm and elegant personality, a delightful sense of humor, and a rich background.

Phil was a Nebraskan—a graduate of the University of Nebraska and its law school. He had served in the Coast Guard and had significant legal experience—he had been a clerk for U.S. District Court Judge Robert Van Pelt, and had practiced law in Lincoln, Nebraska for five years. He also had political and governmental experience—he was elected Lieutenant Governor of Nebraska in 1964, and two years later lost a close election for Governor, a position I have no doubt he would have served with great integrity. And he had lengthy experience as an administrator in the not-for-profit world, serving as executive director of Cummins Engine and Irwin-Sweeney-Miller foundations and as chairman of the Project on Corporate Responsibility.

At the College of Law, Phil taught courses in Taxation, Business Organizations, Torts, Legislation, and Nonprofit Organizations. He wrote about liability issues facing religious and other nonprofit organizations. He became the President's Club Professor of Law, and served effectively as associate dean (in those bygone days the college had only one associate dean). A passion of Phil's during his later faculty years was the establishment of a socio-legal studies program at the college, and doing so in partnership with Oxford University's socio-legal program. In this connection, he served as the first director of the Socio-Legal Center (now known as the Center for Interdisciplinary Law and Policy Studies) and fostered many and varied exchanges between Oxford and Ohio State faculty members—all to the significant enhancement of the intellectual life of the college.

Perhaps Phil's greatest contribution was as a colleague. Those of us who taught with and worked with Phil loved our interchanges with him. He was knowledgeable about many things; he was thoughtful and helpful; he was always interesting, and talking with him frequently led to smiles and laughs. We learned so much from him. Most of us admired Phil—not only for his fine work as a law teacher and scholar—but also because of his many other talents, interests, and achievements. Among many things, he was a good, and a competitive, athlete; a wonderful sculptor; and a devoted family man. We miss Phil, and we are very grateful for the privilege and the pleasure of having known him.

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