

# Tribute to Mrs. Dorothy E. Lord

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### Recommended Citation

*Tribute to Mrs. Dorothy E. Lord*, 72 Cornell L. Rev. v (1987)

Available at: <http://scholarship.law.cornell.edu/clr/vol72/iss3/1>

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## TRIBUTES TO MRS. DOROTHY E. LORD

Mrs. Dorothy E. Lord, better known as “Skip,” began working for the Cornell Law School twenty-three years ago. For the past twenty-and-one-half years, Skip has served as the backbone of the *Cornell Law Review*, providing a necessary measure of continuity as the Law Review secretary. On February 12, Skip celebrated her birthday and the start of her retirement. As the following tributes demonstrate, Skip Lord shares a special place in the hearts of those who came to know and love her.

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I first knew Skip Lord in 1965-66, my first year on Law Review, then called the *Cornell Law Quarterly*. During that year, I was deeply immersed in the business of being a “competitor” (as we were then called). I did not know Skip well then; she was just the person who did such a fine job putting together all the thousands of footnotes that the competitors cite-checked late into the night.

I was elected editor-in-chief in the spring of 1966. When I received the reins from my predecessor, Mike Mecasas, he took me aside and offered advice based on his experience. He suggested that I maintain a very businesslike relationship with the Law Review secretary. He pointedly advised that I should always call the secretary “Mrs. Lord” and never use the nickname “Skip.” Being a fledgling editor, I accepted his advice and, a few days later, put it into practice. I believe I got through no more than three “Mrs. Lords” before Skip gave me one of those looks that only Skip can give—the kind that says “Who does this guy think he’s putting on?” Skip made it abundantly clear to me that she did not intend to be called Mrs. Lord; her name was Skip. From then on Skip was always Skip to me.

I got to know Skip much better that year. Skip and I worked closely together, and I counted on her to be “in charge” during those times when I was in class or otherwise occupied. The Board of Editors agreed to expand from four to six issues; we formally changed our name from “Quarterly” to “Review”; and Skip had even more footnotes and pages to type.

After graduating and leaving Cornell in June of 1967, I did not see Skip again until the winter of 1975 when I was a visiting professor at the law school. Shortly after settling in from my move from Washington, D.C., I decided to walk down the Law Review corridor and re-live old times. When I entered the secretarial office, it did

indeed seem like old times. Skip recognized me instantly. I responded, of course, as I had been well trained to do, with a “Hi, Skip!” Eight years had passed. Yet at least one thing had stayed the same—Skip was still there, still in charge, and still smiling. Then and now, she provided a continuity that has been most important in the ongoing success of the *Review*.

In 1982 I again spent the summer in Ithaca as a participant in a seminar for the National Endowment for the Humanities. Again, shortly after settling in, I embarked on a nostalgic stroll down the Law Review corridor. As I passed through the swinging doors leading from the law library, I saw a figure walking toward me from the other end of the corridor. The figure, while some distance away, and before any light of recognition had dawned on me, said “Hi, Bill.” The figure of course was Skip, and of course I called her by that name. It was as if no time had passed, and I was simply taking a break from my editor’s duties in 1967. I knew then, as I had known in 1975, and as I know today, that Skip will always be Skip. We are all the richer for having known her and associated with her by that name.

*William A. Kaplin*  
 Editor-in-Chief  
 Volume 52 (1966-67)  
 Professor of Law, Catholic  
 University of America

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Our Board of Editors quickly discerned that the arrogance and obstinacy of the preceding Board was matched only by the indolence and fatuity of the class behind us. Only years later did it dawn on me that perhaps every editorial board feels that way. Most, no doubt, delude themselves. But in our case we had probative evidence. Didn’t Skip Lord, who saw them come and saw them go, assure us that we were special? Even after putting up with dozens of succeeding boards—each of whom, I feel sure, had at least some redeeming value—didn’t Skip still greet us with a warmth that could only be reserved for her favorites? Or can it be that, like a good mother, she made each Board feel that it had an uncommon claim on her affection?

Skip was the gravity that kept our feet on the ground, even when our heads occasionally were in the clouds. When we decided to break tradition—changing from “Quarterly” to “Review,” modernizing the cover and format, accepting the Bluebook in full, calling the second-year class “associates” instead of “competitors”—we dared not proceed without Skip’s blessing. To her credit and our relief, she embraced most of the proposed changes while wisely

counseling restraint on others. More important, she reminded us from time to time—perhaps with a shrug of her shoulders or a squint of her eyes—that we must not allow our cosmetic improvements to divert us from our substantive responsibilities, that we had articles to edit and deadlines to meet.

What I knew then I see even more clearly in hindsight: we could not have generated our volume of the *Law Review*, nor could we have enjoyed such satisfaction in our work, had Skip not served with us.

As she begins her richly deserved retirement, Skip takes with her the enduring friendship and gratitude of all her former colleagues—and especially those from the Board of Volume 53.

*Mark L. Evans*

Editor-in-Chief

Volume 53 (1967-68)

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In the spring of 1971, soon after I was elected editor-in-chief of the *Cornell Law Review*, Skip Lord and I had a cup of coffee in the staff lounge. She shared with me her own thoughts about what it took to keep the *Law Review* offices running, and to get the *Review* out on time. I remember her telling me that deadlines were deadlines, and that the only way we could avoid the shame and disgrace experienced by a few other law reviews—some suffering almost a year's delay from originally scheduled publication dates—was if we all worked together as a team, each doing his or her part.

Skip Lord did more than her part to produce Volume 57. Each of the six editions that the *Law Review* published, on time, was in great measure owing to Skip's untiring efforts. Perhaps most unique was her ability to smile when faced with a page of original author's text which had been all but obliterated by multicolored ink inserts and edits made by various *Review* editors, and then to tackle that page with the dedication of a mountain climber starting her ascent.

Skip faced many such pages in connection with the production of Volume 57. Many years later, when Skip visited Oregon and we had a chance to have breakfast together, she told me that she still used a John Zenor/Derek Hunt-edited page from Volume 57 to show students and other secretaries just how difficult her work could be.

Even in 1972, fifteen years ago, Skip Lord was clearly not just a "secretary" for the *Law Review*. She was an essential link in the publication process, a harmonizer of different and sometimes difficult personalities, a gentle voice of conscience preventing delays, and a

friend to everyone who worked on the *Law Review*. She worked as hard as any editor. For us, *Law Review* was a two-year commitment before we embarked on a “real” career. For Skip, the *Cornell Law Review* has been a profession.

Skip, you deserve your retirement. I wish you the very best fortune in the future. Many a law firm where we ex-editors of the *Law Review* work would love to have had a secretary of your professional and personal skills and character.

*John L. Zenor*  
 Editor-in-Chief  
 Volume 57 (1971-72)

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During the months when I was there, Skip was the glue that held the *Review* together. She taught us how to get the *Review* out, and to do so professionally and with skill. More than that, however, the day-to-day example she set—of hard work, patience, and pride—is something that all of us with whom she worked can never forget, and will carry with us throughout our professional lives. In my mind, that has been Skip’s most important contribution.

*Mark Nozette*  
 Editor-in-Chief  
 Volume 59 (1973-74)

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Of all Skip’s invaluable contributions to the *Cornell Law Review* during my association with it, I valued above all else her unshakable grounding in common sense. As each editorial staff discovers soon enough, publishing a law review is a treacherous—some might say foolhardy—undertaking. One’s best efforts can all too easily be undone by a bewildering variety of pitfalls (not to mention the occasional pratfall) unrelated to the pure pursuit of legal scholarship. Conversely, uncritical assumptions about *any* review’s place in the overall development and understanding of the law leads inevitably to pretension, disillusionment, or (on alternate Fridays) both. My class experienced its fair share of these vicissitudes. Through all the upturns and downturns, however, Skip could be counted on to administer the proper infusion of common sense, usually accompanied by some rather offbeat humor. Whenever we managed to find a workable solution to the crisis of the moment while simultaneously retaining any perspective on our purpose as a review (not to mention a sound outlook on life in general), Skip Lord usually could be thanked.

So, thanks again, Skip.

*W. Mark Smith*  
 Editor-in-Chief  
 Volume 65 (1979-80)

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Skip Lord is one of those special persons who can make an experience richer. For years she helped make Law Review at Cornell something more than just an inevitable grind. Her presence has given the *Review* a much-needed touch of grace and kindness. Her sense of humor has also kept even the stuffiest editor from overestimating his or her importance.

Skip figures into most of my fondest memories of Law Review. Although my fellow editors had diverse opinions on most subjects, there was an unusual consensus about Skip, as evidenced by the attempt of about thirty whispering students to give her a "surprise" birthday party in the Law Review reading room. One should feel sympathy for future boards who will not share their Law Review experiences with Skip after she retires this year.

The *Review* will always be indebted to Skip for her contributions over the years. It is the kind of debt that can never be satisfied, only acknowledged by the collective best wishes of those editors privileged to have served with her.

*Donald Arthur Winslow*  
 Managing Editor  
 Volume 65 (1979-80)  
 Assistant Professor of Law,  
 University of Kentucky

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As new recruits to the *Law Review*, one of the first rules we were told was to treat the secretary, Skip Lord, with only the greatest respect. Even given many law students' occasional need to be reminded of their etiquette skills, I remember thinking it odd that we were being told this, as if the *Review* would somehow meet a horrible demise if this person should decide to leave.

Once I had been around the *Review* for a while, however, I came to understand why such a warning was given. Its message was unnecessary, because once you knew Skip you could not help but respect her. But the fear behind the warning was real: without Skip, life on the *Review* would have proven much more difficult for everyone. Boards of editors came and went, but Skip was there from year to year to pass on her accumulated wisdom and prevent past mistakes from becoming new ones. Skip was the *Review's* keeper of the flame, and whoever was on the Board of Editors could not imagine

life without her. Indeed, my first words as editor-in-chief to the incoming second-year students were, "Now, as for our secretary Skip Lord . . . ."

Skip, however, was much more than a great administrator and secretary. Each morning I looked forward to my cup of coffee with her and the chance to talk (though this all too frequently made me late for class because I wanted to wait to hear the end of the story or the punch line). But most important, Skip was always there when times, personal or professional, got rough. At a point in our lives when everyone was scrambling to get the best jobs and the choice clerkships, Skip was a reassuring example that happiness and respect take root in values far more important than starting salaries or grade point averages.

It is with mixed emotions that I wish Skip a fond farewell. I am happy, of course, that she will have the chance to take a well-earned rest and travel and see the country. I also must admit to some sadness, however, that the *Review* will lose a valuable part of its character—one which never can be replaced.

*Scott Sundby*  
Editor-in-Chief  
Volume 68 (1982-83)  
Assistant Professor of Law,  
University of California—  
Hastings College of Law

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*Review* members' affection and respect for Skip Lord is obvious in these tributes. Skipper has excelled as publications coordinator, accountant, public- and author-relations expert, and input artist extraordinaire. Her ability to bring order quickly to the tangled messes of arrows, slashes, and circles we make of manuscripts is notorious, but few are in a position to notice the frequent "Bluebooking" and tidying up that mysteriously occurs during Skip's typing.

Skip's most endearing qualities, though, lie beyond her famous *job description*. Although officers have been dumping their troubles on her for 20-plus years, she has cheerfully advised us on everything from handling irate authors and negotiating with the Law School's powers-that-be to romantic dilemmas and pet troubles. Inviting the entire editorial board (plus "significant others") over for a spaghetti feast, supervising a managing editor's recovery from junk-food addiction, and sharing homemade goodies (and oranges) are only a few of the ways that Skip has brightened our days on the *Review*. Anyone who has visited Skip is familiar with the collection of posters, epigrams, stuffed animals, greeting cards, plants—including one that nearly consumed the room—and what-have-you that graces

her office. Furthermore, Skipper is *spunky*: on those crazy days when we want to send two manuscripts to the printer, the express mail messenger will arrive in ten minutes, on-call never showed up, and the phone is ringing off the hook, Skip's "whoopie-sh—!" can be heard clearly above the din. And, by the way, who is Tilly?

We hope that you and Mick have many great trips in the "Love Chariot"—it's time to spoil yourself. Thank you, PIKS, for being our friend.

*Anne, John, and Whit*  
Volume 72 (1986-87)



