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## ROGER C. CRAMTON: SOME INFORMAL RECOLLECTIONS

*William Tucker Dean*†

Perhaps because I may have known him longer than anyone else on the Cornell Law School faculty, I have been asked to write some personal recollections of Roger C. Cramton. In 1959-60, when I was on sabbatical leave at the University of Chicago Law School, I first met Roger. Then an Assistant Professor at Chicago, he impressed me at once as a more than ordinarily capable University of Chicago Law School graduate, so I submitted his name to the Cornell Law School Faculty Recruitment Committee, but, alas, nothing came of it.

During 1959-60 Roger and his attractive wife, Harriet, were living in an apartment with their first three children around the corner from International House on the Chicago campus. I had the pleasure of being entertained there. The story of his original admission to the University of Chicago Law School, as I heard it at the time, is a striking one. This was early in the history of the Law School Admission Test, and admission to the University of Chicago Law School depended to a considerable extent on an exhaustive application plus an obligatory personal interview. In the fall of 1953 Roger presented himself to Dean Edward H. Levi, later to serve as president of the University and Attorney General of the United States. Roger had made several forays into graduate study without finding what he was seeking. Dean Levi talked to the young man, learned of his impressive record at Harvard College, and although by this time the Fall Quarter was well underway, told him to start attending classes. Three years later Roger graduated first in his class and had served as a managing editor of the *University of Chicago Law Review*.

After several years on the Chicago and Michigan faculties and as chairman of the Administrative Conference of the United States, Roger eventually found his way to the prestigious post of Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Office of Legal Counsel, which is much like that of chaplain to the Pope. Here he infuriated President Nixon by concluding that withholding appropriated funds was unlawful and his tenure at the Department of

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Justice ended. That made him available to Cornell. As soon as the news reached the papers, I suggested to President Corson that Roger Cramton be approached at once. Dean Ray Forrester had announced his resignation as dean earlier in the year, and a search committee composed of faculty members and one student, Margaret Gaffney '73, had been carefully considering potential successors. Happily, they too regarded Roger as a leading candidate.

Roger accepted an invitation to visit the campus and was an instant success. There were a series of small group meetings with faculty and students at which Roger asked perceptive questions that revealed more to him sometimes than his respondents realized. He soon became dean.

As Dean of the Cornell Law School Roger has had his resounding victories. Robert Summers has recounted some, but I know still others. For years, for example, the law library stacks had heavy, metal doors at the top and bottom of each stairwell on each stack level. They provided no fire protection, since there were no effective seals between the stack levels from floor to floor that could keep fire and smoke from spreading. So one day every door vanished, and the stacks survived. Roger had had them removed.

And who but Roger in a time of heavy pressure on available facilities would have dared to eliminate the women's rest room in the main office. Roger dared, and thus opened a corridor to the new administrative area in Hughes Hall for admissions and alumni affairs.

But even General McArthur lost the battle of the Yalu River in Korea, and Roger met defeat in the Moot Court Room. Discerning a need for more small classrooms, he saw the expanse of the Moot Court Room as divided, in his mind's eye, into a series of separate rooms, one of which would be a diminished Moot Court Room. As the tumult mounted against this modest proposal, he reminded the faculty that this matter lay entirely in his discretion, although he had courteously informed the faculty of his plans. The students joined the fray, followed by the alumni.

"Save our Moot Court Room!" Roger responded by suggesting a modification: sliding panels to subdivide, and then to be withdrawn. But it was still "Save our Moot Court Room!" The issue was referred to the next meeting of the Advisory Council and died gently in its hands.

Still perhaps in the future is the great Underground Library, to be hewn from the shale between the Myron Taylor courtyard

and Central Avenue and then to be re-covered with greensward. If it is built, it will then inevitably be known as Cramton's Crypt.

From the point of view of the average faculty member, and most of us must be average or statistical theory is confounded, the most striking aspect of Roger's day-to-day administration of the law school has been its openness. As against the Byzantine secrecy some deans find politic, Roger confided to the faculty more hard data about the law school, even about the budget, than anyone I can recall over the past 27 years at Cornell. The result has been, of course, mutual trust that eased all of us through the inevitable difficulties.

Now as you leave us for a sabbatical at the Duke Law School, Roger, we remember our disagreements but more often our agreements. We envy you your year where the sun shines in the winter too, and remain confident that you will come back to your colleagues at the Cornell Law School.