

Professor Norman Joseph Singer

Obituary

(University of Alabama, School of Law)

Excerpt

Norman J. Singer, 78, died on October 31, 2016. He was Professor Emeritus of Law and Anthropology at the University of Alabama, and for 40 years held full tenured professorships in both departments, though he was proud that he never took salary or benefits from Arts and Sciences.

Professor Singer had a wide-ranging international career as well. After graduating from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, he worked for a year in Stockholm. ... He returned to the States, graduated summa cum laude from Boston University Law School. ... [During his stay for] four years [1964–1967] in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, ... Prof. Singer was a member of the first law faculty in Ethiopia ... where two sons were born. Prof. Singer joined the University of Alabama Law School in 1971, and in 1975 received the SJD from Harvard, with an anthropological/legal dissertation on traditional legal systems in Ethiopia

Excerpt from:

News posted online by University of Alabama School of Law

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Among his many projects, he lent his legal expertise to restructuring land tenures in countries with poorly functioning (or non-existent) private land tenures. He was a prolific scholar, having authored 26 books/monographs, seven book chapters, 21 journal articles, 26 book reviews, and five published reports. Perhaps his best-known scholarly work was the treatise, Sutherland on *Statutory Construction*, which he co-authored with his eldest son, Shambie Singer. He is survived by a loving and supportive family, including his wife, Anna Jacobs Singer; sons, Shambie, Jeremy (Nicole) and Micah (Ali); stepdaughters, Joanna Jacobs and Stephanie Jacobs; and three grandchildren.

In Memoriam: Professor Norman Singer (Email Excerpts)

To Anna <annajsinger@hotmail.com>

Dear Anna,

...

Norman regarded Ethiopia as his second home, and he did all he could to assist legal education. He was not only part of the efforts (of the late Dean Paul and many other young academics) during the take-off phase of legal education in Ethiopia (in the early and mid-1960's), but he also made exemplary efforts to actively assist legal education. ... He took the initiative of visiting all Ethiopian law schools in 2005 and encouraged volunteers in the US who were willing to teach law in Ethiopia. ...

Norman had a dream for Ethiopia's legal education. He reiterated his aspirations whenever we lost great legal minds (among Ethiopia's first-generation law educators) such as Yohannes Heroui and Selamu Bekele. One of Norman's emails (dated 7 December 2013) after Gash Selamu's passing away, reads: "I had hoped a few years ago that the plans which were being formulated would potentially produce a dedicated number of serious academics. I still have those aspirations." In the same email, Professor Singer stated his plans to come back to Ethiopia and reinvigorate various efforts of legal education enhancement. Norman concluded his email saying: "In any case, *before we all get too old to do anything we should aim at getting some activities going now that can be carried forward by acti[ve] members of the teaching community in the future.*"

The momentum of the seed sown in the 1960s during the formation of the first law school (in which Norman was among the active participants) is rolling on. However, it is much lower than the pace it could have had. Yet, we will keep up Norman's aspirations and we hope that the law teaching-and-research community would ultimately reach at the height it deserves in competence, energy and integrity.

* * *

... Norman wanted --to make sure the future of Ethiopian law teaching was secure and progressing. It remained a principal concern (along with his family and friends) until the very end. ...

Anna

* * *

Dear Anna,

Thank you for the message and the kind words. ... [W]e will keep up the pursuits that Norman would have liked to see, had he been alive. As Reinhold Niebuhr had noted: we need "the *serenity* to accept the things [we] cannot change; [the] *courage* to change the things [we] can; And [the] *wisdom* to know the difference." ...

MIZAN LAW REVIEW



St. Mary's University

Cultural Problems in Research and Publications

Source:

Reform Document on Legal Education and Training in Ethiopia (2006) § 2.4.1/A

1. Lack of research, reading, and writing culture
 - Complacency with our work merely as teachers.
 - No sense of urgency about the need to engage in research and turn up research products.
 - No '*publish or perish*' attitude.
 - No attempt to work beyond the positive laws.
2. Lack of Institutional Commitment
 - In terms of budget, time, and resource allocation for R&P
 - In terms of reduction of teaching load or granting (Research Leave).
3. Lack of team spirit for Research and Publications
 - Among staff members;
 - Between staff and students;
 - Lack of collaboration among institutions.
4. Lack of innovation in diversification of publications, and problems regarding spheres of focus in research.
5. Raising the stakes too high in assessing the quality of publishable manuscripts (despite) shortage of (such) manuscripts.
6. Lack of tradition of salvaging "distressed" manuscripts through sympathetic editing without compromising quality.
7. Weak consumption of research products in the legal professional community and in government institutions, and poor state of constructive feedback.
8. Inadequate attention to relevance of research to the real life or actual problems of the society.

Vision of law schools

Law schools shall have vision towards elevating the standard and quality of legal education to the level of leading law schools in other countries, and towards preparing graduates who will have optimum impact in Ethiopia's development, democracy, good governance and social justice.

Mission of law schools

Law schools shall promote the intellectual and social conditions of Ethiopia by providing equitably accessible quality legal education and training programs through teaching, research and service to prepare competent and responsible members of the legal profession who actively contribute towards rule of law, democracy, human rights, good governance, social justice, equality, tolerance and development.

Source: Ethiopian Legal Education and Training Reform Document
(June 2006)

Address:

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