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## A Tribute To Irving Younger

Dean Robert A. Stein\*

Irving Younger's brilliant career as a teacher of trial advocacy and evidence is renowned in this country and abroad. For thirty of his fifty-five years, this native New Yorker turned Minnesotan, taught the art of the courtroom and the intricacies of evidence law to more law students and lawyers than any other teacher who ever lived. Law students at New York University, Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, and Minnesota had the rare good fortune to sit in his classes and listen to his fascinating lectures.

Professor Younger, as knowledgeable about James Joyce and classical music as he was with the law of evidence and the courtroom, brought a broad perspective to the education of the nation's future lawyers. He was a superb teacher who delighted in his teaching and loved and cared about his students. The advent of videotape brought his rare gifts for drama and his knowledge of courtroom proceedings to virtually every trial lawyer in the country and demonstrated his great ability to make complex legal issues understandable and interesting.

Irving Younger's legal career was as varied as it was successful. He tried law suits for Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison, a large New York law firm, and as a partner in a small firm with his wife, Judith, Younger & Younger. He served as an Assistant United States Attorney and was the youngest person ever elected as Judge of the Civil Court in New York City. As a partner in Williams & Connolly of Washington, D.C., he tried some of the most important tort cases of the 1980s.

Professor Younger loved films and arranged a bi-weekly movie series in the Law School featuring films that presented legal issues. He would introduce each film by discussing the legal issues involved in the story. Sometimes he had to stretch a little to find legal issues in some of the great movies he loved

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to show. In an interview he confessed, "You can show any movie and relate it to the law in some way."

Irving Younger was a dean's dream professor. He would cheerfully teach any course or accept any other assignment he was asked to undertake. But he often said, "I think it would make most sense for me to teach courses in which the largest number of students could enroll." He never complained about the huge exam-grading burden that imposed upon him.

Despite a demanding national lecture schedule, Irving made himself constantly available to his students. Irving was a master of the chautauqua, and he developed a number of highly entertaining and educational lectures. He delivered for the law students here all of his well known lectures, including "The Trial of Alger Hiss," "The Trial of Ulysses: The Case Surrounding the Introduction of James Joyce's Novel in the United States," and "Whatever Happened in *Erie v. Tompkins*." We were privileged to hear them all.

Irving Younger also delighted in stories about the law, about the great figures of the law during his lifetime — most of whom he knew well, and about the human drama of the great cases of this century. He loved to tell stories about lawyers and law cases, and he could enthral his listeners — whether in a law class or at a dinner party — with his marvelous ability to dramatically tell a story. In one of his most famous lectures — "In Praise of Simplicity" — he concluded by saying:

I want simplicity for the law because I love the law. And if this my praise has seemed to you fond and foolish, call it lover's folly, please, and forgive me for my love's sake.

But his interests were not limited to the law. Irving Younger was extremely well-read and able to draw upon a rich background of learning for his lectures. He was particularly knowledgeable about Shakespeare and often included Shakespearean quotations in his lectures. Indeed, after his health began to decline, Professor Younger reread all of the works of Shakespeare, as well as many other great works of literature. Since arriving at this University, he participated several times in law and literature programs.

He enthusiastically accepted an assignment to chair the Lectures and Colloquia Committee of the Law School, and in this capacity, he brought scholars and scientists from other disciplines to share their work with the Law School community. In his last year, he arranged for Kenneth Lynn, author of the acclaimed book, *Hemingway*, to deliver the biennial John

Dewey Lecture in Philosophy and Law. Several years ago, when our Law School fund drive passed the million dollar mark for the first time, we presented a "Thanks a Million Seminar" for our alumni, and Irving agreed to teach it. He presented a lecture on scientific evidence that began with a wonderful story about the discovery of radar. Irving and Judith Younger's circle of friends include individuals from a wide variety of fields and professions and not just the legal profession, although their friends include a large number of lawyers and judges.

Among his many loves, Irving Younger loved this Law School and community. It was quite a step for him to come to Minnesota after deciding to leave the law firm of Williams & Connolly in Washington, D.C. He had never lived very far from the east coast. In an interview after he had been here a while, he said that before coming to Minnesota he was not sure he could be happy living more than a thousand miles from the nearest mackerel.

The Youngers decided that they wanted finally to settle down in this community and in this Law School. Irving Younger loved the Twin Cities and frequently said that this Law School was one of the best kept secrets in the country. Having committed to the Twin Cities, he was extremely generous of himself with groups here. He accepted virtually every invitation to speak to bar, University, and community groups in the Twin Cities. Only three weeks before his death, he moderated a debate in St. Paul among the candidates for the Democratic nomination for President on the eve of the Minnesota precinct caucuses. He would often advise me of these engagements saying that he was "flying the flag" for the Law School.

Irving Younger died on March 13, 1988, at the age of 55. The national legal community lost a giant. The Law School lost a beloved teacher, colleague, and friend.

