

## A LETTER OF THANKS FOR ROBERT A. WEEMS

*Heber Simmons III*

It is a rare thing in a person's life to be able to make a true difference in the lives of others. Bob Weems has made such a difference. It is my sincere hope that as he moves into retirement that he will know how thankful we all are to have had the privilege and honor to know him, and to have been blessed by his friendship, his talents, his wit, and his exemplary devotion to Ole Miss.

Bob Weems is as fine a man that I know or have ever been acquainted with. My respect for him and for what he stands for was discovered many years ago, when I was a struggling first-year law student at the Ole Miss School of Law. At that time, he was teaching torts and evidence. I had the pleasure of having him as my professor for both of these classes.

Despite his best efforts at teaching, it was my dedication to the books that was lacking at the time. It was a time that required some soul searching, as they say, and to determine what was best for all concerned. For reasons unknown, I felt drawn to him and sought his counsel on what to do . . . the options being to go forward or take some time away from school and figure it all out.

I opted for the latter, leaving Oxford and moving out to Austin, Texas to work for almost two years. During that time, I reflected many times on the counsel he had given to me on the day I had sought him out . . . to be sure I was doing things for the right reasons. Somewhere along the way during my time away from Oxford, that counsel finally resonated with me, and I made the decision to come back and finish law school. I realized that what he was trying to say to me was if you are going to do something, do it to the best of your abilities. And in order to do that, you have to be doing it for the right reasons!

Upon returning to law school, the first person I went to see was Bob Weems. I told him then, as I have told him many times since, that it was his words of wisdom, his patience and his

support that had, in essence, brought me back to Oxford. In truth, his counsel had meant more to me than words could describe. The best way to describe these intangibles is as a form of “tough love.” It was something that he knew, but that I had to learn on my own. Yet he had a way of expressing this that created tremendous respect in me for him . . . as a teacher, a counselor, and as a friend. His friendship and counsel have been constant. His support has been unwavering. It was not required of him. He gave it freely. It made a difference.

Since that time, we have shared many stories, fishing trips, and our mutual love for Ole Miss. I can see him right now with a smile on his face (which goes from ear to ear) as he lifted up his first trophy bull redfish. He will now have time to catch many more. I trust they will bring many more smiles.

Bob Weems is respected and truly loved by many. The stories of his wit in class are legend. He has been recognized by the students six separate times as the Outstanding Law Professor and was selected as the University’s Outstanding Teacher in 1994. This did not just happen, it was earned.

For me, Bob Weems made a difference. My thanks to Janice and his children for sharing him with us, and to Ole Miss for recognizing the man he is and the outstanding qualities he possesses. He has given himself unselfishly to his family, his friends, and his students. For all of us, he has made a difference.

Thank you Bob.