

ROBERT A. WEEMS

Frank S. Thackston Jr.

Bob's late brother, Billy, and I were friends before we both entered law school and perhaps for that reason Bob was one of the first law school classmates that I met.

And since Bob, Billy, and I had virtually all of our classes together, the three of us, and others, thereafter spent much time discussing appellate cases, our professors, politics, current events, and, of course, sports.

I have a clear recollection about an observation that I formed about Bob at some point during the time we were law school classmates: Bob Weems would surely become a judge, for when he became a judge he would be a tremendous member of the judiciary!

To be sure, our law school class was blessed with more than our share of people who were academically and intellectually gifted—and Bob certainly was one who had those qualities—but Bob, I observed, possessed those gifts and more:

The ability to clearly see, articulate and express a coherent response to perplexing issues, which many of us found to be complex and often incomprehensible.

The capacity to recognize—and effectively rebut—flawed, but seemingly reasonable and frequently passionate argument about legal issues, put forth by Bob's peers, present company included.

Those characteristics, as stated, lead me to the belief that Bob was uniquely suited to become a jurist.

But, after Bob joined the faculty at the law school, during my attendance to the annual seminars that Bob and Guff Abbott so skillfully provided to our Bar, I realized my assessment as to how Bob's unique talents could be best utilized was misguided.

Bob's unusual qualities are not best suited for judicial membership—instead, Bob's gifts best equip him *to teach*, to give

students insight, by way of example, as to how to analyze, to reason, and to explain.

Hearing former student after former student over the years tell me that Bob was one of the best teachers they encountered during their law school experience established the accuracy of the observations just expressed.

The law school is, by virtue of Bob's retirement, losing an important faculty member. Our Bar is losing a valuable contributor to legal education. Students who will miss being exposed to Bob's observations about the law, about torts, wills, evidence, etc., have no way of knowing what they have missed—and that is truly regrettable.