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## Tribute to Tom Collins

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# TRIBUTE

## TRIBUTE TO TOM COLLINS

JOHN E. DONALDSON\*

The editors and staff of the William and Mary Law Review have chosen to dedicate this Issue of the *Review* to Professor Emeritus Tom Collins. I applaud this action. Tom, whom I admire as a friend and colleague, is richly deserving of the honor. Coming on the occasion of his retirement, this dedication is a fitting tribute to a distinguished career of teaching, scholarship, and service to legal education. It is an appropriate accolade for an individual whose personal qualities have endeared him to associates and peers in academia as well as to current and former students, and an expression of gratitude for the contributions he has made to the growth and development of the Marshall-Wythe School of Law of the College of William and Mary.

Tom prepared for a career in law and law teaching by earning undergraduate and law degrees from Indiana University, where he was editor of the *Indiana Legal Forum* (now *Law Review*), and a master of laws degree from the University of Michigan, where he was a Cook Fellow. Along the way he served an enlisted term in the U.S. Army, taught high school courses, and gained valuable experience in the legislative process through his work, in part under a Ford Fellowship, as a Research Associate with the Indiana Legislative Council.

On completing graduate work at Michigan in 1970, Tom accepted an appointment as Assistant Professor of Law at the Marshall-Wythe School of Law. He attained the rank of Associate Professor in 1972 and Professor of Law in 1976. Tom came at a critical time

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in the history of the school—a time when it was seeking to transform itself from a small school with fewer than two hundred students, a severely limited curriculum, and a small, woefully understaffed faculty to one with a more-than-doubled enrollment, a significantly enlarged curriculum, and a substantially expanded faculty. Because the human, financial, and physical resources required for such a transformation, while promised by the central administration, were not guaranteed, Tom's decision to begin his teaching career here entailed a knowing acceptance of the challenges inherent in the vicissitudes that attend efforts to affect major structural change, particularly in the complex institutional setting of a college where the arts and sciences undergraduate program was primary, and the role of programs of professional education suspect.

The transformation of the law school, while not without difficulty or frustration, was in time successfully effected. Its history from 1970 forward is characterized by steadily increasing strength and renown. Professor Collins's efforts, devotion, and counsel have contributed substantially to the attainment of the standing and reputation the school now enjoys. For three decades he has demonstrated an unparalleled willingness to serve in whatever capacities needed, revealing a remarkable breadth and depth in his scholarly and professional interests. He has willingly accepted and ably discharged teaching assignments ranging across virtually the entire curriculum, embracing, among others, such courses as Administrative Law, Legislation, Civil Procedure, Constitutional Law, Comparative Law, Conflicts of Laws, Unfair Trade Practices, Criminal Law, Intellectual Property, Antitrust Law, Legal and Equitable Remedies, Jurisprudence, Mass Communications, and Mass Media Law. In addition, Tom, committed to the importance of international perspectives to a meaningful legal education, assumed major roles in the management and staffing of the school's off-campus summer law programs in London, Exeter, and Madrid.

At a time when law faculty members are increasingly perceived as specialists confined to the narrow areas of the law that compose their numerous respective disciplines, Tom, while developing a

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special expertise in media law, has grown and matured as a generalist with a keen interest in legal philosophy and jurisprudence. He has been a valued resource to many colleagues in his willingness and ability to react meaningfully to innovative thinking and approaches and in his active participation in faculty colloquia. In the course of his tenure Tom has held high expectations for the school. He has effectively expressed his views in faculty meetings and other organs of governance, and his insights and wisdom have assisted substantially the decision-making processes that have moved the school forward. In Tom, one could hardly wish more from a colleague.

Tom's research and professional service interests have focused on media and mass communications law. He has advanced those interests through a number of scholarly articles and reviews published in major university law journals, including those of William and Mary, Catholic University, Iowa, Missouri, and Texas. In his writings he has addressed such important topics as the scope of freedom of press, the fairness doctrine in the context of cable communication, the local service concept in broadcasting, and counter-advertising in broadcast media. His scholarship in these evolving areas of the law led to his service on the Executive Committee of the Mass Media Section of the American Association of Law Schools and to his chairing of that Section during 1987. Tom's expertise in media law, commercial practice, and evolving technology has enabled him to provide valued assistance to the College as member and chair of its Publications Council. It has also enabled him to serve the public through his contributions as a member and chair of his local Citizens Cable Advisory Committee. His scholarly and professional activities in advancing understanding, analysis, and development of media and communications law, and his service in sharing his expertise with other constituencies, have reflected positively on himself and the law school.

Tom's breadth of knowledge, boundless intellectual curiosity, commitment to teaching, genuine concern for the interests of students, openness and accessibility, stimulating classroom manner, and warm and engaging personality have gained for him the respect and admiration of students, who, in large numbers,

regard him as philosopher, friend, and mentor. In his relationships with colleagues he has been consistently gentlemanly, caring, cordial, respectful, and tolerant of differing views, including those who do not fully share his enthusiasm for Indiana basketball or the Washington Redskins. He has enlivened dialogue in the faculty lounge with insightful observations on politics, national security, legal "crits," and the views of Dworkin and Hart. He has been a positive force in the intellectual life of the law school community. Importantly, over the course of three decades his personal style has contributed significantly to the development and perpetuation of the cordial and friendly atmosphere and shared sense of mission that has come to characterize our law school community. We are fortunate that Tom, notwithstanding formal retirement, plans to remain active in the life of our community, participating in colloquia and other activities as he continues to pursue his interests in law.

Tom has earned the respect and admiration of those who know him by the manner in which he has confronted personal loss and overcome the consequences. Losing to untimely death, a loving wife and mother of his only child, Tom, early in his career, was challenged with the combined demands of academic duties and the responsibilities of being the single parent of an infant son. He met the challenge with remarkable success. In Tom we have a good colleague, good friend, and good person.

The Marshall-Wythe School of Law as an institution, legal education as a process, and the law as an evolving body of rules and principles have been enriched by Tom's career. Colleagues and students have been enriched by his association and company. Dedicating this issue of Volume 42 to him acknowledges our debt and gratitude.

