



# TO THE BAG

## AUTHORIAL RESTRAINT

To the *Bag*:

I must thank a tactful reader and apologize for an egregious error in my Winter-issue letter about the congruence of J. Harvie Wilkinson's and Alexander Bickel's views of judicial restraint, fifty years apart. David Roe, *The Temptation of the Justices*, 16 GREEN BAG 2D 123 (2013). Judge Wilkinson did not have Professor Bickel for con law, with me or otherwise, since he attended law school at the University of Virginia, not Yale. I hope both he and his law *alma mater* will forgive me. My memory of his aura when we were undergraduates at Yale must have transferred itself across the street to law school, saying something less than flattering about my absorption of legal rigor, much less Evidence class.

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## THE [T]-SHIRT

To the *Bag*:

As a contributing editor of *The Green Bag*, I was pleased to see Bryan A. Garner's recent essay (*A Legal Lexicographer Looks at Law Reviews\**, 16 GREEN BAG 2D 281) chiding most law reviews for the practices that prevent them from being entertaining journals of law. But I wondered whether he was testing us when he repeatedly referred to "t-shirts" (non-capitalization in original) and also proposed that law-review editors be required to "pass an editing test to show

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that they are proficient with the subtleties of English usage, not to mention punctuation and capitalization.”

It turns out that Garner has addressed variants of *tee shirt* in his indispensable usage manual. After recognizing that “most writers prefer *T-shirt*,” he declares that *t-shirt* is “acceptable (though it’s not recorded in most dictionaries).” He is right about the last point; even the permissive *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary* says (once you consult the explanatory notes) that *T-shirt* is “almost always capitalized initially.” But the dictionaries also explain that T-shirts got their name from their shape, which means that *t-shirt* should not be acceptable. A T-shirt is not shaped like a lower-case *t*. So a “t-shirt” is as incongruous to the mind’s eye as an “i-beam,” an “a-line skirt,” an “a-frame house,” an “l-shaped desk,” or a “violin’s F-hole.” I hope that the fourth edition of *Garner’s Modern American Usage* will not countenance such typographical chimeras.

Meanwhile, perhaps the *Bag*’s burgeoning range of non-law-journal goods should include a simple, short-sleeved, round-necked, buttonless garment that proclaims, “This is not a t-shirt.”

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