

Celebrating Law and the Arts

Alfred C. Aman, Jr.

TO COMMEMORATE OUR law school's 150th anniversary the school commissioned two works of art from distinguished professors at Indiana University – an original musical composition by David Baker and a silkscreen print by Rudy Pozzatti. Why should we turn to the arts to celebrate an anniversary in the law school? I believe law and lawyers owe much to the arts. In fact, I believe that every lawyer – every good one – is an artist. Every lawyer has to be able to see essential forms within unfamiliar patterns; every lawyer has to learn to see across genres, institutions, jurisdictions and conventions in order to create with the law. Every lawyer has to find fresh solutions – sometimes to old problems, sometimes to new ones. Sometimes defining the issues themselves is a high art.

Why do the arts hold inspiration for the law? To me, law and art both represent time, and they do so in similar ways. Like the arts, law defines the cutting edge. The future of the

knowable, the history of the imaginable, these are the time frames of the law. The law, like art, turns to the past in its search for models and insight into the present. The law, like art, is lasting.

Law and art alike teach us to appreciate the past while simultaneously freeing us from it. Music and the visual arts, like the law, require that we imagine the future. Through them, we see links between the past and the future. The arts also reflect and express something very basic and timeless – human feeling and emotion, essential aspects of the human condition – which is also the basic stuff of law.

The arts are entertaining, yes, but in a way that allows us to take the measure of the world, and with it, the dimensions of our very souls. The law, too, can be something like this. Helping to solve the great human problems of society with law takes creativity and sensitivity. The arts inspire these, by inviting us to think beyond words, and then to find the words.

Alfred C. Aman, Jr., is Dean of Indiana University School of Law, Bloomington. These remarks are adapted from a speech he gave on the occasion of the law school's 150th anniversary on Dec. 3, 1992. Dean Aman thanks Rudy Pozzatti, Indiana University Artist-in-Residence, and David Baker, Distinguished Professor of Music at Indiana University, for their commissions discussed in the text.

We tell our students that we are training them to think like lawyers – but that means educating them to think like artists: to keep technique firmly connected to judgment, rationality to dreams, tradition to innovation, routine to improvisation.

time. Like the practice of any art, legal education is never finished. At best, it is ever fresh, a language of connection to human experience that each attorney speaks with his or her own distinctive and wonderfully individual accent. As law becomes more global in the

RUDY POZZATTI, *IN CELEBRATION OF THE LAW*

Students should be seen and treated as aspiring artists, not technicians. Soon, as first-rate lawyers, they will have the technique necessary to handle the easy cases and answer the basic questions – but they will also have the creativity and judgment for the hard cases. They will know how to shape an amorphous set of facts that do not neatly fit a ready-made legal pigeonhole. Knowing the questions to ask is not just a technical skill. It is a creative, imaginative enterprise. Lawyers, like artists, must have the technique of their craft well in hand, but the goal is not technique for technique's sake.

As law teachers, we aspire to be artists, too, giving our students a feeling for the materials, knowing – or hoping – that the results of a legal education will unfold for them over a life-

coming century, the diversity of these accents will undoubtedly increase, placing even more weight on the creative and artistic elements of the legal imagination.

As legal educators, we aim to inspire an appreciation of the creative role of law and a sense of what it means to mix vision with skill, and wisdom with action. We aspire to stand for these qualities not only before our students and the academic community, but also for our alumni and alumnae at the bar and bench. We try to be good witnesses for these enduring values.

In the final analysis, we celebrate creativity and the arts because theory and technique alone are not enough. The living reality of human beings in need of law demands that we be artists. 