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INDIANA UNIVERSITY
Maurer School of Law
Bloomington

New dean talks about training, public perceptions of lawyers

IU Newspaper 7/26/85

Blaming the lawyer for losing a case in court is like killing the bearer of bad news. When people have a lawyer represent them in court half are going to lose, and, in many cases, it is not the lawyer's fault.

These are the opinions of Morris S. (Buzz) Arnold, new dean of the Indiana University School of Law on the Bloomington campus. Arnold talked about public perception of the law profession as reflected in recent polls. He thinks the low esteem in which lawyers are held, according to the polls, is unjustified.

On the question of ethics in the profession he thinks too much was made of Watergate and the role

"The truth is that ethical problems lawyers face are not measurably different from those other people face. If you want to teach ethics in college that's fine. But let's start with all undergraduates and not just students in one discipline."

lawyers played. The resulting emphasis on teaching ethics in law schools prompted this response from him:

"Nobody needs a course in ethics to know you don't burglarize a building. You don't need a course in ethics to know you don't steal your client's money or break election laws. The truth is that ethical problems lawyers face are not measurably different from those other people face. If you want to teach ethics in college that's fine. But let's start with all undergraduates and not just students in one discipline."

In regard to the academic community, Arnold has had the advantage of looking at higher education from the standpoint of both administrator and professor. Discussing the role of faculty, Arnold believes that it is good for faculty to be involved in university administration.

On the other hand he added, "I was an associate dean for a year and vice president for two years at the University of Pennsylvania, but I still found time to do some teaching. I carried a full teaching load when I was associate dean."

Arnold does not intend to lose touch. He plans to maintain an open door policy. He likes students and he gets along with them, he said. He plans a number of events involving student leaders and students in general.

Here are some other questions and responses from the interview:

Q. Are law schools producing enough lawyers?

A. How many is enough? Anyone who wants to be a lawyer should have that opportunity. The more lawyers we have the more competition there is, and the greater the chance that fees will come down.

Q. Is too much emphasis being placed on producing legal technicians?

A. I am a strong believer in cross-disciplinary work and in using the sciences and humanities to cross-pollinate legal education. I think most law schools, and that certainly includes this one, long ago realized we need to turn out whole people—not just techni-



Photo by Jerry Mitchell

Morris S. (Buzz) Arnold, new dean of the IU School of Law at Bloomington

cians." (Arnold is a medieval history scholar as well as an expert on the history of law.)

Q. What is your opinion of so-called law stores?

A. I think storefront lawyers are an important force in the legal community, and they ought to be. I like them very much. I was a member of the Volunteers for Central Arkansas Legal Services and did a great deal of the work that storefront lawyers do.

"The more lawyers we have the more competition there is, and the greater the chance that fees will come down."

Q. Should the appointment of Supreme Court justices be influenced by their political philosophies?

A. Appointments should be political in this sense: the president ought to pay attention to the constitutional philosophy of his appointees. It is his right and duty. It is up to him to keep the Constitution on track. The president should have some sense of what equality means as used in the Constitution, and he ought to appoint people who share his view.

One question remained in the interview: what is the origin of the nickname "Buzz"? It was given him by his grandfather when Arnold was six months old. It was originally "Buzfuz" from the character of the same name in Dicken's *Pickwick Papers*. It was later shortened to Buzz.

By Edward J. Moss