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Where's Another Harvey?

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Where's another Harvey?

"I used to think that a ship in the U.S. Navy was the greatest rumor mill ever, but my stay here has made me conclude otherwise. I have no thought of resigning at this time."

William B. Harvey 5/8/71

That's what William B. Harvey, dean of the School of Law said last spring to quell rumors that his sabbatical to Kenya was simply to get him out of the way while he could be squeezed out. Events this week make it appear that the I.U. rumor mill is often more reliable than the official pronouncements.

No one is saying anything official this week to shed light on the circumstances of

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Harvey's resignation. Consequently the rumor mills are turning full blast. In essence, the rumors allege that Harvey's resignation was coerced by political factions that didn't like his legal-educational philosophy.

It is no secret that Harvey had his differences with the Indiana State Bar Association. Some stoic bar members didn't appreciate Harvey's educational techniques, his faculty selections, his admissions policies and his outspoken stand on political issues.

Acting Dean Douglass Boshkoff replied to these rumors at Thursday's public meeting by insinuating that they were creations of the press. This is not true. In the absence of any official statement, with everyone who knows anything about the resignation purposefully avoiding comment, The Daily Student reported the general sentiment that permeates the School of Law.

From the public reaction at Thursday's

meeting, it is obvious Boshkoff said nothing that would allay these rumors. In fact his flat "no comment" to all questions concerning Harvey's resignation probably gave some credence to the rumors.

The only thing anyone will allow themselves to be quoted on are plaudits for Harvey and regrets that he resigned. These are deserved, but hardly necessary. The School of Law is Harvey's memorial. It's a great school because he made it great, and it goes without saying he will be dearly missed.

However, the fact remains, Harvey has resigned. Boshkoff is right that the most important question now is who will replace Harvey. "It isn't going to help the selection process to start an argument over why Harvey resigned," said Boshkoff.

The resignation is going to be an element in the selection of a new dean whether anyone wants to admit it or not. If Harvey was dismissed it won't take long for word to get around legal academia. The rumor mills extend beyond I.U. and with everyone clamming up they will seem all the more credible.

If Harvey's resignation was an indication that I.U. succumbed to political pressures, those same political pressures are going to have an effect on the choice of his replacement. And no one could blame a liberal legal academician for being reluctant to take Harvey's position.

Perhaps it isn't necessary to drag all the dirty laundry out and publicize the full circumstances behind Harvey's resignation. Perhaps this would really damage the School of Law.

It is to Harvey's credit that he didn't go out slinging mud. He could easily have done so if he had wanted to. But Harvey, probably more than anyone, realized that the School of Law, as an institution, is more important than any of the individuals involved — himself included. Regardless of his personal feelings,

Harvey would do or say nothing that might damage the institution he had worked so hard to build.

The most important question isn't why Harvey left. What is important, as one law student put it, "is that we don't get some mediocre SOB who is just a front office man."

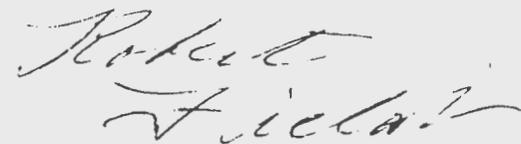
Obviously Harvey wasn't the greatest front office man. Yet this lacking didn't keep him from transforming I.U.'S School of Law into one of the best in the country. He did this by putting the interests of students above all others, and with an educational philosophy that put prime importance on freedom of expression and exposure to a wide range of viewpoints.

Sadly, in building a great law school, he rattled the bones of a few staid, old conservative lawyers in Indiana.

It is essential that I.U. make it evident that they are not retreating from the educational ideals espoused by Harvey. It is imperative Chancellor Byrum E. Carter and the Board of Trustees reaffirm their belief that open exchange of all viewpoints is the best education possible.

To maintain the support of the students and faculty, they should allow as much student-faculty input into the search and screening committees as possible. If we are to retain the great School of Law Harvey fostered, the new dean must be as esteemed and dedicated as his predecessor.

It's not going to be easy to find such a man. As Boshkoff put it, "There aren't too many William Burnette Harveys around."



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