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## Tribute to Professor Reed Dickerson

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## Tribute to Professor Reed Dickerson

EDWARD O. CRAFT\*

I welcome this opportunity to pay tribute to my friend, F. Reed Dickerson. Retirement as professor of law will mean, I hope, only a change of pace rather than withdrawal from rewarding activity.

In *Who's Who in America*, Reed is designated a lawyer and educator. To me he is much more than this. I view him as a member of a small elite group of international stature that understands and communicates to others problems of legal drafting (of which legislative drafting is an important subdivision) and suggested solutions to these problems.

My personal files produce titles of Reed Dickerson articles I found especially interesting:

*FPR No. 1, An Experiment in Standardized and Prefabricated Law*, 13 U. CHI. L. REV. 90 (1945); *Legislative Drafting in London and in Washington*, 1959 CAMBRIDGE L.J. 49; *The Diseases of Legislative Language*, 1 HARV. J. LEGIS. 5 (1964); *The Sad Story of Superbill, or What Happened to the Indiana Code of 1971?*, 5 IND. LEGAL F. 250 (1972).

I am also indebted to Reed for calling attention to this remarkable statement: "The legislative history . . . is ambiguous. . . . Because of this ambiguity it is clear that we must look primarily to the statutes themselves to find the legislative intent."<sup>1</sup>

Reed has made the point that in the interpretation of statutes it is as important to read the statute as it is to read about it, and

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1. *Citizens to Preserve Overton Park, Inc. v. Volpe*, 401 U.S. 402, 412 n.29 (1971).

noted that the tendency to neglect the specifics of statutes in favor of judicial commentary corrupts students, lawyers and even judges. He quotes: "A lawyer is likely to read a statute only superficially. Typically, he glances at it over his shoulder as he runs to see what the courts have said about it."<sup>2</sup>

I cite these materials as illustrative of Reed's work that has been of especial interest to me. His contributions have covered a far wider range.

It is noteworthy to me that Reed became interested in the use of computer technology in the law at the very beginning of its development. At the present time he is an editorial advisor for the *Jurimetrics Journal*, the journal of the Science and Technology Section of the American Bar Association.

I must point out that Reed is not only a lawyer, educator and member of the elite international group. He is and has been deeply interested in art and music. He is a member (and past president) of the board of directors of the Society of the Friends of Music of Indiana University School of Music. He also has the reputation of being a good jazz musician.

It has been my privilege to know and from time to time work with Reed Dickerson over a period of about thirty-three years, beginning when he became an Assistant Legislative Counsel in the Office of the Legislative Counsel, United States House of Representatives. Always considerate, gracious and hardworking, it has been a pleasure and rewarding to work with him. In my view he possesses the qualities of a true gentleman and a scholar. I join his many friends and colleagues in wishing him many busy enjoyable fruitful years in retirement.

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2. R. DICKERSON, *THE INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION OF STATUTES* 17-18 (1975) (quoting Driedger, *A New Approach to Statutory Interpretation*, 29 CAN. B. REV. 839-40 (1951)).