

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

WILLIAM W. OLIVER

(October 6, 1921 – March 13, 2011)

Indiana University Maurer School of Law lost a treasured colleague when William (Bill) W. Oliver died on March 13, 2011 after a long illness. Bill was an inspiring and challenging teacher, as well as an accomplished business person and devoted family man. He was an institution at the Law School, and a credit to Indiana University and the State of Indiana.

Born in the coal mining town of Hazard, Kentucky, Bill was the youngest of five children. He served in the Army Air Corps during World War II, and graduated from University of Kentucky in 1946. In 1949, he received his law degree *cum laude* from Northwestern University Law School, where he was elected to the Order of the Coif. For six months after graduation, Bill served as a junior instructor at Northwestern.

After his stint as an instructor, Bill worked as a trial lawyer for the Bureau of Internal Revenue until 1952. Then, in response to a call from his former dean, he accepted a clerkship with Chief Justice of the United States Fred Vinson, who was a fellow Kentuckian. Following Justice Vinson's sudden death in 1953, Bill finished his clerkship under Chief Justice Earl Warren. It was a time of great transition in the country, and under Chief Justice Warren, Bill was instrumental in writing the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, which banned segregation in public schools.

Upon completion of his clerkship, Bill decided to enter the world of legal academia. He was proud to join the faculty of the Maurer School of Law, which he believed was "the finest teaching law school in the country." Bill was a gifted and passionate teacher in the constantly evolving realm of tax law. During his forty-one years at the Law School, he taught courses in income taxation, estate and gift tax, international taxation, accounting for lawyers, insurance, contracts—indeed, so many courses that he thought that one class of students might have taken as many as nineteen credit hours with him. In 1960, he was honored with the Law School Gavel Award, given by the senior class to the person who has been their greatest influence during their time at the Law School. During that same year, he received the Indiana University Foundation Teaching Award. Bill retired in 1992, and served as of counsel to Mallor Clendening Grodner & Bohrer. He also continued to teach for many years and regularly visited his office at the Law School.

Bill's legacy in the classroom was profound. One former student wrote to Bill, "To the extent I am able to accomplish anything today, it is against the backdrop of the training and encouragement that I received from you and your colleagues." He inspired one former student, Barton Kaufman, to donate an endowed chair in Bill's name. The William W. Oliver Chair in Taxation was established in 2003. Kaufman remembered Bill's classes as the most challenging

work he did during Law School, and the Oliver Chair ensures that Bill's extraordinary work will never be forgotten.

Bill was also a prolific scholar. He published articles on tax law and estate planning in scholarly journals throughout his career. His final work, published in 1995, was *Why We Should Abolish the Income Tax: A Guide to the Principal Proposals*, which explores the complexities of income tax law and the role Congress has played in shaping it.

In addition to his storied career as a law professor, Bill managed to excel at another career as founder of the Oliver Winery, the oldest and largest winery in Indiana. Bill started making wine in his basement as a hobby. He established a vineyard north of Bloomington, and was soon producing grapes far in excess of his needs as a hobby winemaker. At times, Bill combined his roles as vintner and law professor by lecturing at the vineyard while his students pruned vines, harvested grapes, and constructed the winery's first public tasting room.

Before opening Oliver Winery to the public in 1972, Bill was instrumental in the creation and passing of the Small Winery Act of 1971 in Indiana, which permitted direct sale of wine to the public. Oliver Winery, now under the leadership of Bill's son, produces award-winning wines and is a popular destination for wine enthusiasts.

Bill was also a dedicated public servant. He operated the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program with law students, performed *pro bono* work on behalf of college students, served on the Bloomington Sister Cities Committee, and was active in the Kiwanis Club and the Bloomington Chamber of Commerce. He was named Sagamore of the Wabash by Governor Robert Orr, and was twice named a Kentucky Colonel. The Kentucky Colonel is the highest title of honor bestowed by the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and Bill was incredibly proud of this honor from his beloved home state.

Above all, Bill was a devoted family man. He was preceded in death by his wife of fifty-five years, Mary Oliver. Mary and Bill were partners in every sense of the word. They established Oliver Winery together, raised a family, and traveled around the world. Bill leaves behind his son, also named Bill, who now runs Oliver Winery and with whom Bill enjoyed participating in hot air balloon races. Bill is married to Kathleen Oliver, and they have three children: Wesley, Gibson, and Dasher. Bill is also survived by his daughter, Barbara Oliver, son-in-law Eric Reinertsen, and granddaughter Megan Reinertsen, all of Clearwater, Florida.

In the name of his many friends, colleagues, and former students, I request that this resolution be presented in the Bloomington Faculty Council.

Lauren Robel
Dean and Val Nolan Professor of Law
Indiana University Maurer School of Law