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## TRIBUTE

### PROFESSOR CHARLIE CANTRELL: JOB WELL DONE

Alvin C. Harrell\*

Charles L. Cantrell is a spectacular teacher, scholar, friend, and (sadly, now) former Oklahoma City University School of Law (“OCU Law”) faculty colleague. It is probably obvious that your author dislikes retirements, but that is especially true in the case of Charlie, whose friendship and support of Oklahoma City University (“OCU”) have been so important for so many years. Both the school and I owe Charlie an immense debt of gratitude, and Charlie’s retirement in 2015 leaves gaps that cannot be filled.

Charlie came to OCU in 1981 after an eclectic career that included stints as a private practitioner in Waco, Texas; a municipal judge in Beverly Hills, Texas; an assistant professor of law at Marquette University; and the owner–manager of a barbeque restaurant in Waco. He also served as an examiner for the Wisconsin Bar Examination and as chair of the University of Wisconsin Law School Honors and Scholarship Committee. To your author, it seems likely that Charlie’s sound judgement and broad perspective are at least partly the result of his varied work experience, which is unusual in academia. But Charlie’s

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academic credentials are also impeccable, including undergraduate work at both Texas A&M University and the University of Texas, a J.D. from Baylor University, and an LL.M. from the University of Texas. In all, Charlie's background reflects an unusual and admirable mixture of practical experience and academic excellence. It is a combination that will be very difficult for this or any other law school to replicate in future years.

At OCU, Charlie taught (and focused his research and legal writing on) Constitutional Law and Criminal Procedure, with a few substantive detours along the way. He published well over fifty books, articles, chapters, and supplements, mostly in his teaching areas but with enough variety to reflect his broad perspective and engaging intellect. For example, Charlie's publications include articles on property law, armed conflicts, and even bank accounts.<sup>1</sup> One of my personal favorites is Charlie's article in the *Oklahoma City University Law Review* on the American system of federalism,<sup>2</sup> one of several articles in this journal that also reflects Charlie's support for, and contributions to, this school.

Charlie was instrumental in bringing to the OCU curriculum an increased emphasis on Texas law, including an expanded availability of courses like Texas Criminal Procedure, and he advocated for additional course offerings focused on Texas law. He is a member of the Texas Bar Association, and he sponsored the Texas Legal Society at OCU. Given the expanding volume and complexity of laws and regulations in the United States, which result in competing curricular needs that cannot all be satisfied, Charlie's retirement may mean the loss of some of these specialized course offerings. To an extent, such things are inevitable; but still, it is another reason for us to recognize Charlie's contributions to OCU.

The matters noted so far, about Charlie's career and his contributions to OCU, are well known, and the appreciation for Charlie is widely shared. But Charlie has supported OCU in other ways that may not be so widely known. Charlie has remained collegial and actively supportive of OCU through all of the ups and downs of academic life—not a small feat given the pressures of academia and the opportunities to be diverted from productive endeavors. Through it all, Charlie has been stalwart in doing

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1. For an example of the latter, see Charles L. Cantrell, Note, *Joint Tenancy Bank Accounts Inter Vivos Rights*, 23 BAYLOR L. REV. 141 (1971).

2. Charles L. Cantrell, *Restoring the Balance in Federalism*, 10 OKLA. CITY U. L. REV. 1 (1985).

more than his share to support the school and the students.

One example that your author is acutely aware of concerns the efforts some years ago by a small group of OCU Law faculty, including Charlie, Professor Vicki MacDougall, and your author (along with members of the adjunct faculty and others), to offer the students an indigenous, comprehensive, and fully live bar-examination preparation course called the Oklahoma Bar Review (“OBR”). This was a continuation of the former OBR offered for a number of years by the late Professor John TeSelle, a law professor at the University of Oklahoma and the University of Tulsa and later a bankruptcy judge in the Western District of Oklahoma. Participation in the OBR involved a significant effort, including the preparation and updating of dedicated written materials tailored to Oklahoma law, and multiple hours of preparation followed by presentations on weekends several times each year.

Charlie never wavered in his support for the OBR and his dedication to helping students pass the bar exam. More than one student reported to your author that Charlie’s OBR presentation was the reason the student succeeded in passing the bar exam. It does not take many of those encounters before one realizes how important Charlie was to the educational experience of the students. While ultimately the live-presentation OBR gave way to the internet age, your author will always appreciate Charlie, Professor MacDougall, and the others who worked so hard—and contributed so much of their valuable time and expertise—in this effort to provide the fullest possible support to our students.

So for OCU, Charlie’s retirement represents a loss that is irreplaceable in many ways. On a more personal level, I am happy to say that Charlie and I remain friends, and Charlie is continuing to provide valuable research and advice with regard to cultural icons of mutual interest (including the recent television series *Justified* and *Banshee*, with their focus on reasoning and legal analysis as a means of dispute resolution). Those who understand your author’s high regard for contracts law and the Uniform Commercial Code (“UCC”) will not be surprised that my one regret for Charlie is that he, despite having some interest in the subjects of commercial paper, bank deposits, and collections,<sup>3</sup> was never able to teach any of the really good courses in law school (on the UCC)—instead being relegated to subjects like Constitutional Law and Criminal Procedure. Such a loss—Charlie would

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3. See Cantrell, *supra* note 1.

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have been an outstanding addition to the commercial law faculty. But other than that, congratulations, Charlie, and thanks for a job well done.