

THE RIGHT LEADER AT THE RIGHT TIME

Andrew Benton*

A leader for a perilous time.

A number of years ago, when I learned that Professor Hellman would assume the deanship of the Oklahoma City University School of Law, I was heartened and greatly encouraged. Professor Hellman had a heart for the student and a loyalty to the University and its School of Law. As a graduate of OCU Law and a seasoned university administrator, I had a somewhat unique insight into the challenges he would face.

With all due respect to the University and its leadership, too much reliance was placed on the financial contributions of the Law School. I knew that would be a challenge in the relationship with ABA accreditation requirements. In fact, the ABA does tend to meddle but its intent is good: graduate schools can become the proverbial “cash cow” for stellar undergraduate programs if not managed carefully; and, in fact, in the absence of that management the aspirations of a fine and growing law school will remain unfulfilled.

It was my privilege to view Dean Hellman’s leadership as a member of the Board of Visitors for the School of Law for a season. He was on point, he was courageous, and he was right in his advocacy on behalf of law students, alumni, faculty, and a community reliant upon OCU Law for legal talent. He was also unfailingly kind and welcoming of ideas and earnest efforts to assure the future of OCU Law. Bravely, he dreamed big dreams for a new physical facility and garnered the support of the OCU administration. I marvel at that bold move, which I think, will prove Archimedean in its impact.

Too often those who serve in leadership capacities remember the hard times with great clarity and the sincere accolades offered very

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2020]

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appropriately with a sense that they were unearned. Dean Hellman was the right leader for an important time in the history of OCU Law. He was my professor, he was my dean as an alumnus, he was my fellow laborer in higher education, and he was - and is - my friend. OCU Law is remarkably better for the time he spent in that hallowed place.