

THE BOW-TIE ERA OF LEWIS AND CLARK LAW SCHOOL: DEAN JIM HUFFMAN, 1993–2006

BY
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In 1993, our law school—then in its 109th year—made a decision that in retrospect may seem inadvertent but was quite beneficent: we opted for bow-ties in the dean’s office. For the next thirteen years, we were graced with a bow-tie beneath our dean’s smiling face. We clearly made a wise decision in 1993: for behind that bow-tie was Jim Huffman, my friend since the day I met him in 1977, at lunch in General Miles’ stable in northwest Washington, D.C.

Huffman presided over the greatest era of growth in the history of our law school, and he certainly has a claim to being the greatest dean in our law school’s history, although it is a precarious claim, as our best days are clearly ahead. But Jim’s claim is a substantial one: he built astonishing buildings, most prominently Wood Hall, making our physical facilities the match of any law school in the country (and no law school anywhere in the world has a better setting, as we are adjacent to a wondrous wilderness park), promoted diverse scholarship, and enhanced faculty collegiality. The Huffman years saw our law school mature into one of the best schools in the West and, we think, the nation—at least if you care about the quality of instruction, and you can ask our students about that.

During Huffman’s tenure, we were regularly rated as the finest environmental law school in the country, a status we earned over thirty-five years of promoting environmental law in our curriculum, our publications, our clinics, our moot courts, and our conferences. We have successfully defended that ranking against a considerable amount of competition that has arisen from many sources in the last decade or so, due in no small measure to Jim’s willingness to support expansions of our environmental faculty, clinics, staff, and curriculum.

Our flagship publication, *Environmental Law*, antedated Huffman’s arrival on the law faculty by three years, due to the prescience of our legendary faculty member, Billy Williamson, who founded the publication in 1970. But Huffman was quite prescient himself, founding the Natural Resources Law Institute in 1974, which produced more than thirty years of fellows, including faculty at our school (Dan Rohlf and myself), Buffalo (Errol Meidinger, who is now back at the law school, serving his second

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fellowship in '06), and Vermont (Pat Parenteau). The Huffman years also saw several of our students become faculty members at other law schools, including Indiana-Indianapolis (Dan Cole), Florida State (Robin Craig), North Dakota (Jim Grijalva), Idaho (Barb Cosens), Calgary (Arlene Kwasniak), and Griffith University in Australia (Jan MacDonald), to name just a few.

Highlights of the bow-tie era were enhanced faculty scholarship, a multiplication of clinical opportunities, inauguration of a new business law program, including an excellent curriculum in intellectual property, and the founding of two scholarly journals: *Animal Law*, now in its thirteenth volume, and the *Lewis and Clark Law Review*, now in its tenth. Huffman dramatically expanded summer research grants for faculty as well as research assistant positions for students. The result was an unprecedented outpouring of scholarship, particularly from a talented and energetic group of young faculty that were hired during the Huffman years. New clinics were founded in U.S. environmental law, international environmental law, animal law, victims' rights, and business law. Our U.S. environmental law clinic—the Pacific Environmental Advocacy Center—is now staffed with five attorneys, whose casework is reshaping environmental law all over the West and indeed the country.

Perhaps the bow-tie era's most important environmental law program development was the hiring of Janice Weis as our program director. In fact, Janice was the first person Jim hired as dean. It was a pivotal hire, as Janice has for over a dozen years provided coherence, energy, and creativity to the nation's premier environmental law program.

A significant accomplishment of the Huffman years was the establishment of a vibrant business program that involves almost half of our faculty. The new law review has quickly established itself as a force in legal scholarship circles. Both it and the business program make clear that our law school is far more than merely the highest-rated environmental law school in the county, a goal of Huffman's deanship.

The real hallmark of the Huffman era was Jim's instinctive entrepreneurial spirit. The response of some deans to faculty initiatives is to ask: "Why do this? Justify it." Jim's attitude was: "Why not? Let's go ahead unless there are good reasons not to." Want to establish the International Environmental Law Project? "Fine." How about a National Crime Victims Rights Center? "Sure." What about a National Center for Animal Law? "Let's do it."

There was a downside to Huffman's deanship, however. Before he became dean, our faculty softball and basketball teams were powerhouses, and Jim and I and other faculty and students frequented the Northwest's whitewater rivers on our jointly owned raft, including the Deschutes, Rogue, and Snake Rivers. The deanship (and perhaps my moving to Central Oregon, which occurred about the same time) effectively ended those teams, and our rafting days dwindled. While there's always hope for another whitewater trip if Jim ever brings the raft back from his Montana ranch, the advancing years

make it unlikely that the four-time “B-league” faculty basketball champions can be reconstituted.

The bow-tie era was a remarkable period of growth for our law school, inspired by Jim Huffman’s vision, optimism, collegiality, and good humor. He leaves a large legacy upon which his successor may build. Not to mention a long shadow of some fine neckwear.