

# JIM HUFFMAN: FREE MARKET AND *LAISSEZ FAIRE* IN THE DEAN'S OFFICE, 1993–2006

BY

SUSAN F. MANDIBERG\*

It is no secret that Jim Huffman is a free market, *laissez-faire* kind of guy. With a great sense of integrity, he brought that philosophy to bear on his thirteen-year run as dean of Lewis & Clark Law School. He spent his deanship supplying what was most demanded by our students and faculty and inspiring us to expand our vision and the diversity of our accomplishments.

A free market is, of course, the opposite of a controlled market, and Jim was a master at eschewing control. He inherited a faculty that took pride in (and stubbornly guarded) its prerogative to govern the school, and Jim's deanship brought the model of faculty governance to its apotheosis. Jim had many ideas about new directions for the law school, and often his colleagues agreed. But even when he was skeptical (or frankly opposed) to the ideas bubbling up from the faculty, Jim allowed the market to determine which initiatives would succeed, graciously adding his support and his efforts as dean to the winners. Jim nurtured the strong, collegial faculty that is one of the hallmarks of Lewis & Clark Law School.

Jim's sense of a healthy free market includes a large dose of entrepreneurial spirit. In his years as dean he not only displayed that spirit repeatedly, but also stimulated a like response in the faculty and student body. Some of the results have been in curriculum, including the growth of a vibrant intellectual property program, the blossoming and consolidation of our business law program, and the establishment of the National Crime Victim Law Institute and related course offerings. Some of the results have enhanced scholarship: the welcoming in 1994 of *Animal Law* (which has impressively belied the view of some skeptics that the topic should not be taken seriously), and the experiment of the *Journal of Small and Emerging Business Law* in 1996 and its transition to the *Lewis & Clark Law Review* in 2005 in response to market demands for a general topic law review. Jim's entrepreneurial spirit also enhanced opportunities for our students who enter public interest law at approximately twice the national average: the school developed a pro-bono program for students, saw dramatic growth in the ability of our Public Interest Law Project (PILP) to fund summer placements, and adopted and rapidly expanded Oregon's first Loan

---

\* Professor of Law, Lewis & Clark Law School.

Repayment Assistance Program (LRAP) for graduates in public interest careers.

The modern practice of law increasingly demands law school graduates with real world capabilities, and Jim presided over an explosion in the Law School's practical skills offerings. Our three environmental and natural resource clinics came into being and prospered on his watch: the Pacific Environmental Advocacy Center (PEAC) in 1996, the International Environmental Law Project (IELP) in 1997, and the National Center for Animal Law in 2001. The same is true of our business law clinics: the Low-Income Taxpayer's Clinic (2000), the Business Law Practicum (2004), and the Small Business Legal Clinic (2006). Jim nurtured an expansion of our clinical internship seminars, which today include animal law, business advising, corporate counsel, criminal law, environmental and natural resources law, federal Indian law, intellectual property, and judicial placements.

Jim's support for moot court competitions was especially noteworthy. With his support, our Environmental Moot Court team has consistently been one of the best in the country, and our Appellate Advocacy, Client Counseling, Federal Tax, Intellectual Property, Jessup International Law, Native American Law Students Association, and Negotiation teams have also excelled. In addition, in true free market fashion, Jim supplied the means for dedicated students to attend national moot court competitions even where there was no formal in-school or regional competition; for example, because of his support, Lewis & Clark has sent a number of teams to the Hispanic National Bar Association National Moot Court competition.

Jim's commitment to the free market of ideas also left its stamp on the law school. Although he rejects market control, he certainly believes in market incentives, and thus tangible support for faculty scholarship increased by orders of magnitude under Jim's leadership. Importantly (and characteristically), this support was independent of the content of the projects: Jim encouraged everyone to pursue their own intellectual paths as rigorously as possible and supported and rewarded work in all areas and all viewpoints. At the same time, he was a forceful and eloquent voice—both on campus and nationally—for his own perspectives. He enhanced the ferment of ideas and the level of exchange at the law school by consistently providing speakers and visitors whose views might challenge more widely-held beliefs on campus. He stimulated discussion and debate about both mundane and controversial topics. Impressively, Jim fostered an atmosphere in which this type of exchange remained respectful and collegial—one in which neither the faculty nor the students divided into armed intellectual camps that could not hear one another's points of view. Jim embodies the ideal of a colleague with whom one can hotly debate a heartfelt issue, never come to agreement, and emerge with a clearer head and a still solid friendship.

Jim was also a success in supplying what was needed to meet the increasing demand for the quality education Lewis & Clark had to offer. The academic staff grew in number during his tenure, and so did the size and

quality of the space available to house this staff and its programs. Significantly, his leadership brought about building additions that respected the environment and blended in with the extraordinary natural setting of the law school's facilities; because of this sensitivity, faculty and students can walk on a path through a wooded setting on their way to classes, the library, and study areas.

In his years as dean, Jim brought the law school bricks and mortar, programs and people. But beyond these, his legacy for the law school is a cooperative, entrepreneurial spirit infused with excitement in and respect for ideas, combined with civility and regard for one another. This mixture has been the force behind the growth of Lewis & Clark as a unique educational institution that is producing the type of lawyers so needed in America's twenty-first century.