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Judge Rubin's Contributions to Legal Education

*Frank L. Maraist**

If asked about Judge Alvin Rubin's contributions to education, most members of the Louisiana legal community would first remember his continuing education presentations and his long tenure as an adjunct professor at the LSU Law School. For many years, he was one of the most sought after speakers on CLE programs for Louisiana lawyers and judges, and he served as an adjunct professor of law at LSU for forty-five years.

These contributions to legal education, however, were but the tip of an iceberg. Outside Louisiana, Judge Rubin was recognized as a great jurist-scholar, a prodigious author of legal works, and a far-sighted observer and critic of American legal education. As with his other endeavors, his participation in legal education was diverse and accomplished, intellectual and pragmatic.

The author recalls Judge Rubin as a more personal teacher. In the 1950s, young associates with the Baton Rouge law firm of Sanders, Miller, Downing, Rubin and Kean were trained in the practice of law by "sitting at the knee" of Alvin Rubin, then the firm's managing partner. For a period of about a month, the neophyte's practice of law consisted of research, pleading drafting, title examinations and other basic legal chores, all performed under the close supervision of Judge Rubin. Young lawyers beginning their careers at Sanders, Miller during those years harbored doubts about their ability to practice law, doubts which were reasonable in light of their exposure to only one attorney who was so brilliant and thorough. During that time, Rubin also prepared a title examination tract that became the unofficial "Bible" for those engaged in what then was a major portion of the practice of law.

During those same years, Alvin Rubin taught classes at the LSU Law Center. His appointment as an adjunct professor was both natural and unusual. Since Rubin had been valedictorian of his graduating class and Editor-in-Chief of the Law Review, it was natural that Dean Paul Hebert would turn to him for assistance in teaching the large post-war classes. However, Rubin's entry into law teaching was also unusual. He was pressed into service by the sudden illness (an appendectomy) of Dean Ira Flory, and was given a weekend to prepare for his first class as law teacher—a course in Evidence.

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Judge Rubin's pre-bench contributions to legal education were not limited to the law school and the lecture circuit. He served as chairman of both the Labor Law and Immovable Property, Probate and Trust Law sections of the Louisiana State Bar Association and as chairman of the American Bar Association committee on Estate and Gift Taxation, Tax Section. He also served on advisory committees engaged in the preparation of the Louisiana Trust Code and the Louisiana Administrative Procedure Act.

After his appointment to the federal judiciary, Judge Rubin continued his leadership in legal education, both at the law school and continuing legal education levels. He continued to teach as an adjunct on the LSU Faculty; during his forty-five years as an adjunct (which certainly must be a record), he taught such varied courses as tax law, estate planning, admiralty, maritime personal injury, legal negotiations, law office practice, and constitutional law. During his eleven years on the federal district bench in New Orleans (he subsequently returned to Baton Rouge after his elevation to the U.S. Fifth Circuit), Judge Rubin commuted once or twice a week to Baton Rouge to meet his classes, often taking a bus and using the trips to prepare for class and to rest up for the following day on the bench.

Judge Rubin also held the position of Lecturer at the Duke and Southern University law schools, lectured at the Georgia, New Mexico, Tulane and Utah law schools, was a Distinguished Judicial Visitor at the Iowa, Notre Dame and Connecticut law schools, and was a member of Visiting Committees at the Chicago, Harvard, Miami and Cornell law schools. He was also active in the moot court programs at many law schools, including LSU, Brigham Young, Harvard, Loyola, Tulane, Southern California and Utah.

Judge Rubin's greatest contributions to legal lore, of course, were his many fine opinions, particularly in the maritime area. However, he also co-authored four lawbooks (including a Louisiana Trust Handbook with his wife, Janice), and was the author of over forty articles and tracts on Louisiana and American law.

During his judicial tenure, Judge Rubin remained active in American Bar Association activities, particularly those concerned with education. He served on a Special Committee on Law Students, was chairman of another Special Committee to Draft Model Rules for Court Appearances for Law Students, and served for six years on the Board of Editors of the ABA Journal. In 1989, he was appointed to the ABA's Task Force on Law Schools and the Profession.

As a highly sought after CLE lecturer, Judge Rubin served as speaker, moderator or chairman of innumerable programs throughout the United States. Perhaps his favorite projects were his work in continuing judicial education and in continuing education in the area of

maritime law. He served on the Board of the Federal Judicial Center from 1987 until his death and chaired the Board of Editors of the Judicial Writing Manual published by the Center. He also served as a member of the Board of Editors of the Manual for Complex Litigation and headed other committees providing programs on continuing judicial education, primarily for the federal judiciary.

Although he had limited exposure to maritime cases as a practitioner, Judge Rubin became one of the nation's leading maritime judges. In addition to teaching admiralty and maritime personal injury law at LSU and elsewhere, he founded and chaired a bi-annual Seminar on Maritime and Personal Injury Law which draws outstanding speakers and large crowds of attendees to the LSU Law Center.

This giant of the legal profession had many other accomplishments in education, both at the law school and at the post-law school levels. Indeed, had he chosen legal education as a full time mission, Judge Rubin's achievements in the field undoubtedly would have surpassed most, if not all, of the accomplishments of the "pure academicians." But no one profession or subprofession was challenging enough for this man of boundless energy and unsurpassed abilities. Legal education, like other aspects of our profession, is fortunate to have shared some of his talents.

