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BOOK REVIEW

ONE LIFE IN THE LAW: A SIXTY-YEAR REVIEW by *Robert A. Leflar*,
Fayetteville, Ark.: University of Arkansas Press. 1985. Pp. 280.

JOE E. COVINGTON*

This book is a record of how much one person can accomplish in a lifetime of devotion to the world of law and comments on the philosophy and development of the legal process based upon years of study of and participation in that process.

In the clear and succinct style for which he is noted, Professor Leflar gives us fascinating insights into the mind of a man who has had one of the most remarkable legal careers in this century. The book helps us understand how much can be accomplished when a person who possesses great gifts uses these gifts with single minded devotion over a long period of time. The book contains both an interesting account of events in Professor Leflar's life and recommendations for changes in areas of the law in which he has been active.

As one who was privileged to work with and study under Professor Leflar, I particularly enjoyed reading his accounts of events in which I participated. But his book should be of interest to a much wider audience than those who were fortunate enough to know Professor Leflar personally. The book contains incisive comments about Harvard Law School in the thirties. In the process of explaining his admiration for Dean Roscoe Pound, Leflar helps us understand the life and contributions of this great man. His comments on legal philosophy are engaging and challenging. He makes persuasive recommendations for improving federal court procedure. Leflar has always possessed the ability to express complicated ideas in a straightforward clear manner. This gift is evident in the book and should make it accessible and interesting to non-lawyers.

He makes imaginative suggestions for changes in substantive law. For example, he asserts that courts should entertain defamation suits for the sole purpose of clearing the name of the defamed person.

Of particular interest is the description of how the first black student was admitted to the University of Arkansas School of Law, the first black admitted to the law school of a southern state university. It is difficult for those who did not live through these times to realize how formidable a task that was.

* Dean Emeritus and Phil Sheridan Gibson Professor Emeritus of Law, University of Missouri-Columbia. B.A., 1932, LL.B., 1940, University of Arkansas-Fayetteville, LL.M., 1941, S.J.D., 1952, Harvard Law School.

Through skillful planning and administration along with the cooperation of the student, Silas Hunt, Leflar accomplished the integration of the law school without incident. His accomplishment takes on added luster when it is compared to the way other public servants handled similar incidents during that period.

One of Professor Leflar's most important contributions has been his leadership and administration in establishing annual seminars for appellate judges where appellate judges study legal philosophy, judicial techniques and opinion writing. He began these seminars at New York University in 1956. He was director for the program for many years and continues to participate in the annual sessions. Currently the majority of appellate judges nationwide have attended one of the seminars, resulting in raising the level of judicial competence in this country.

Professor Leflar is uniquely competent to cover this wide range of subject matter. He taught "tough law" for almost sixty years and in many law schools where he was always regarded as one of the most popular professors. He is still teaching at the age of eighty-four, but accepting no salary. Leflar was a visiting professor at the University of Missouri in 1936-37 and students who sat in his classes then remember him warmly. He was invited to continue teaching at Missouri, but he decided to continue as a member of the law faculty of his beloved University of Arkansas.

Professor Leflar is the author of a treatise on conflict of laws, now in its third edition, a co-author of a casebook on conflict of laws and the author of dozens of law review articles which have received wide recognition. He has been a member of the Arkansas Supreme Court, dean of the University of Arkansas School of Law, chairman of two Arkansas constitutional conventions, draftsman of significant legislation, and speaker at dozens of bar association meetings and legal seminars.

The life, achievements and thoughts depicted are those of a tireless worker, yet Professor Leflar is not a secluded scholar. Those who know him are aware of his gregarious nature and his enjoyment of good fun. Reading this book will be time well spent.