Other Suggested Reading: An Essential Bibliography on Drug Law and Policy
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The Law School and the Profession: A Need for Bridges

Judge Frank M. Coffin*

It is singularly appropriate that a judge address the twin subjects of the law school and the profession... for he is equally remote from both. And, though he might be expected to recuse himself because of lack of expertise in either field, such a defect has never yet prevented the bench from giving its opinion. Moreover, distance from and lack of intimate participation in either academia or the practice of law might at least contribute some objectivity and perspective. In any event I shall follow the example of Winston Churchill who began an address to the French people with perhaps more courage than prudence, saying, "Prenez garde. Je vais parler francais."

I propose that we have a look at both the institution of the law school and the profession of the law, and their relationship to each other, past and present, with the aim of identifying what it ought to be in the future. It seems to me that we are in a time of challenge and flux when the law schools of the nation are seeking a clearer sense of mission and when the profession is in the throes of an unplanned and unpleasant transformation. The great question is whether the law school and the profession have anything to contribute to each other.

We begin with a brief retrospective view of the law school. In the mid-nineteenth century, it was a placid place where quiet inspiration was largely gained from reading and listening. Senator Hoar of Massachusetts describes, late in life, his experience at Harvard Law School at mid-century:

The youth breathed a legal atmosphere from morning till night all the year round. He had the advantage of most admirable instruction, and the resources of a complete library. He listened to the lectures, he studied the text books, he was drilled in the recitations, he had practice in the moot courts and in the law clubs. He discussed points of law with his companions in the boarding-house and

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