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W H. Bigham

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Professor Harold G. Maier at Pepperdine

*W. Harold Bigham**

A curious concatenation of events brought Hal Maier and me together, once again, in school year 2000–2001 at Malibu and Pepperdine. We had labored concurrently in the Vanderbilt vineyard for a decade and a half, where we were close friends and colleagues on the Vanderbilt Law School faculty—a time of thrilling growth and maturing in the law school. We went our separate ways at the end of the '70s, but on the invitation of a former Vanderbilt student of both of us, Pepperdine Dean Richard Lynn, whom I had recommended for a faculty position at Pepperdine years earlier, Hal Maier was asked to be the Straus Distinguished Visitor for the year.

Knowing as I did his remarkable pedagogical skills and his significant contributions to research in international law, I wanted to make sure his prowess was “bruted about” in the Law School environs. He did not disappoint; Dean Lynn did well when Hal was invited. The students at Malibu enjoyed, and benefited from, the presence of one of the world’s leading scholars in the often arcane field of transnational law. And while Hal Maier enjoyed the beach, the Law School, and Southern California, I thoroughly enjoyed being two doors from my old friend, where he always seemed to be doing research and writing—when he was not talking on the phone to some prominent scholar.

Pepperdine and Malibu were the perfect places for indulging in a recently acquired hobby that I knew nothing of: photography. The marine layer, Santa Monica Bay, the beaches, and the campus were all grist for his “shutterbug mill.” He took beautiful pictures that all of us enjoyed, attracting even the attention of the larger Malibu art community, to say nothing of the University community that came by just to gaze at his office wall. Just before Christmas, at the twilight of a beautiful Malibu day, as he was leaving the campus, he took a picture of Pepperdine’s Phillips Theme Tower and Cross because, as he put it, “Hal (Bigham) and Carol Ann would like that.” It now hangs in our den in Brentwood, Tennessee, as do other photographs he lovingly took that year at Malibu. These newly honed artistic skills just about round Hal Maier off as a “Renaissance person.”

I must tell you that our relationship was not always so smooth. By “Pepperdine visit time” he knew I was not serious, but nevertheless, I continued to harass him by arguing that there is no

* Professor of Law (Emeritus), School of Law, Pepperdine University.

such thing as “international law,” for nations do “what they are big enough to do.” This I had been doing to him since he conceived *The Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law* at Vanderbilt. He knew in his heart of hearts that I was not serious, but such blatant, perverse heresy went to the core of what he believed and would slaughter the horse he intended to ride through the Grove of academe. Too, Hal was pleased to be a Cincinnatian and ethnically of German descent. One day at Vanderbilt, in the old Morgan Room, I quoted one of my undergraduate professors, an unreconstructed, xenophobic Southerner and practicing bigot, who described “a German as a Yankee carried to a logical conclusion.” Mr. Maier was not amused, and let me know so. No lasting harm was done to friendship or collegiality.

A couple of days after his August arrival, Hal rode with my wife, Carol Ann, and me to Lake Arrowhead, California, the venue for our annual Pepperdine School of Law Faculty Retreat. Those who know him will not be surprised that we—mostly *he*—talked incessantly about former Vanderbilt students and colleagues. I thought at times he defended the indefensible, but happily, he does not share my innate cynicism; no one would, however, accuse him of naivete. He was a true Commodore, a 2,500 mile geographical interval and the lovely San Gabriel Mountains to the contrary notwithstanding.

Less than perfect health on both our parts prevented us from renewing our longstanding tennis rivalry which began many years earlier on the Vandy courts near the then-new, and much smaller, McGugin Center. The years, and vanity, may have raised my skill level quite a bit, but my recollection is that I was just a scintilla better than he. It drove him crazy, for he does not like to lose. In the academic world he has not, and the all-too-short year at Malibu was just one of many successful ones he has enjoyed. His former students and colleagues, on the occasion of his well deserved retirement, rise up and call him blessed.