

Maine Law Review

Volume 47
Number 2 *Tribute to Dean Edward Settle
Godfrey III*

Article 10

January 1995

Ed Godfrey and the University of Maine School of Law

Donald N. Zillman University of Maine School of Law

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.maineraw.maine.edu/mlr>



Part of the [Judges Commons](#), [Legal Education Commons](#), and the [Legal History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Donald N. Zillman University of Maine School of Law, *Ed Godfrey and the University of Maine School of Law*, 47 Me. L. Rev. 321 (1995).

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.maineraw.maine.edu/mlr/vol47/iss2/10>

This Tribute is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at University of Maine School of Law Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Maine Law Review by an authorized editor of University of Maine School of Law Digital Commons. For more information, please contact mdecrow@maine.edu.

ED GODFREY AND THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SCHOOL OF LAW

*Donald N. Zillman**

Wise observers of the academic tribute have noted that tributes often are as much about the author as about the subject. Authors praise virtues in themselves or reargue causes that they have advocated as praise for the nominal honoree. And so it may be with parts of my tribute and the others offered to Ed Godfrey. But these self-indulgences are by and large rare. What comes through loud and clear is the respect and love his colleagues have for Ed.

I write as the outsider in this symposium. Ed has become my mentor late in my professional life. We first met in 1985 at the University of New Mexico. Ed was in one of his frequent stints as a Distinguished Visiting Professor. I was there for a visit of a few days. Ed obviously was admired widely though at the time I did not fully understand the scope of his prior career. He was sometimes Dean Godfrey, sometimes Justice Godfrey, sometimes Professor Godfrey, but mostly Ed. To my great fortune that first brief contact did not prove to be the last. Linda and I have thrived on the Godfrey legend since we arrived in Maine.

Some people are defined more by titles than by who they are. Within the world of legal education we have scholars remembered for a few ideas and an impressive résumé of books and articles. That is not Ed. We have the joiner types whose tombstones could record dozens of AALS and ABA Committees and whose frequent flier mileage earns trips to warm places. That is not Ed. There have recently become the career Deans, three years here, five years there, a résumé always ready to FAX. That certainly is not Ed.

Ed Godfrey is rather against type in the modern world of legal education. His life is the Maine Law School and the legal health of the State of Maine. He brought to Maine the habits of a skilled lawyer and teacher. He imposed them on the school that he founded, on the Supreme Judicial Court on which he served, on the adopted state that he loves and that loves him like a native.

How badly these virtues are needed today in the legal profession and in society. We could offer few better ethical guidelines for our students and ourselves than, "Would Ed Godfrey do it?" Would litigator Godfrey allow incivility to mark his relations with opposing council or the judge? Would senior partner Godfrey fire the career member of the firm whose profit margin was not up to that recommended by the latest consultant's study? Would attorney Godfrey

* Dean and Edward Godfrey Professor of Law, University of Maine School of Law; B.S., J.D., University of Wisconsin; LL.M., University of Virginia.

call a press conference or make a talk show appearance to enhance his hourly rate? Would professor Godfrey lead one faction of faculty against another for the sake of ideology or ego?

This year has been rich in honors for Ed. The Law School graduating class of 1995 has invited him to serve as their speaker. With every respect to the distinguished Senators and sitting Justices whom I have introduced in that role, I am looking forward to the finest graduating speech I have yet heard. Of equal meaning is Ed's recognition as the recipient of the University of Southern Maine's Honorary Degree. The words I wrote to USM President Pattenaude in endorsement of that award speak for us all:

Ed Godfrey was the founding Dean of the University of Maine School of Law. In a remarkable decade he formed the institution, secured national accreditation, opened the Maine and regional job markets to its graduates, and established the School's record of service to the State of Maine. The immense respect in which Ed Godfrey was held by the legal and governmental communities of Maine was then shown by his appointment to the Maine Supreme Judicial Court. Justice Godfrey served a distinguished term.

Upon his retirement from the Court, Ed Godfrey returned to the academy. He has graced the University of Southern Maine and the Law School with his presence since then as Dean Emeritus. Ed maintained an active teaching schedule, pursued scholarly and community projects, and served as an invaluable member of faculty. Last Fall Ed announced that this would be his final teaching semester at the Law School. This Dean reluctantly, but understandingly, agreed that at age 81 Ed was entitled to this relief from active duty.

Ed Godfrey offers the chance to recognize both a person of statewide and regional stature and an individual who has built public higher education in the State of Maine. I further suspect that USM could make no more popular award. Ed Godfrey is beloved and honored by leaders and citizens throughout Maine. To a generation of law students, many of who are now judges, practicing lawyers, elected officials, and business leaders, Ed remains Dean God.

This award would honor the man. But, it is just as certain that this man would bring luster to the award.

"Enough sentiment," Ed would say. "Let's talk substance." Mike Bresnick in the following student article has done a splendid job of capturing the history of the founding of the University of Maine School of Law. The history of the University of Maine School of Law is Ed Godfrey. May we ever live up to his example.