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TALBOT D'ALEMBERTE

DR. BERNARD SLIGER*

IN LATE December, 1988, a press conference was held on the Village Green of the Florida State University College of Law. The Governor of Florida, the Chancellor of the State University System and a leading Florida developer joined me in announcing the establishment of the LeRoy Collins Center of Public Policy. This new center, with an endowment of \$4 million, a unique constituency, and a broad but critical mission, epitomizes the contributions which Talbot "Sandy" D'Alemberte has made during his years as Dean of the Florida State University College of Law. Appropriately, the Collins Center also symbolizes the values of Dean D'Alemberte and will serve as an enduring reminder of the lessons he has sought to teach all of us.

First, Dean D'Alemberte has insisted that we cherish and preserve the best of our past. Born in Tallahassee and reared in nearby Chhattahoochee, Florida, Sandy is the heir of a rich family heritage of leadership and public service. His office is dominated by a magnificent roll top desk with innumerable drawers and cubby holes. Originally it was the property of his great uncle, Chief Justice James B. Whitfield, who was Clerk of the Supreme Court of Florida from 1889 to 1897. It was later used by his grandfather, G. Talbot Whitfield, who also served as Clerk of the Supreme Court of Florida from 1915 to 1939.

The Village Green, a set of four historic houses linked by a colonnade and joined to the new rotunda on the College of Law building, was Sandy's dream and his project. He obtained \$4.8 million from the Florida Department of State/Historic Preservation Division to restore the structures and complete the accompanying construction. Today, these once gracious homes serve as offices, seminar rooms, and units such as the Collins Center and remind visitors that much of our past has present utility as well as sentimental value.

Second, Dean D'Alemberte has rephrased Wisconsin President Van Hise's famous line and tutored us in the lesson that "state government is our campus." The Village Green literally joins the university campus to the Florida capitol complex and physically represents how closely the University and the College of Law are tied to the priorities and needs of the state.

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As Dean of the College of Law, Sandy D'Alemberte established in 1986 a Policy Studies Clinic which, with legislative funding, has enabled faculty and students to research problems in the state that require a legislative or executive agency's response. In the same spirit, Sandy also joined the Supreme Court of Florida in funding the Dispute Resolution Center, which studies and evaluates the use of dispute resolution alternatives. The new Collins Center will broaden and expand this trust of relating university research to state needs.

In 1986, the College of Law, under the Dean's direction, began a Continuing Legal Education program. Prior to this time, similar efforts had not been successful and continuing legal education had been largely in the hands of the Florida Bar. Dean D'Alemberte's program, which works in cooperation with the Florida Bar, is highly successful and sponsors legal education conferences on campus and in major cities throughout the state.

Dean D'Alemberte also has been sensitive to the announced priorities of the state. The new emphasis on Florida as a major participant in international endeavors led him to strengthen the summer program in law at Oxford University in England, establish a new summer program in law at Barbados, West Indies, and organize a Caribbean Law Institute funded by the Agency for International Development and located at Florida State.

These emphases on experimental and international themes have provided a background for the Dean's lesson on the importance of planning for the future. It is especially appropriate that the Collins Center will be housed in one of the historic structures of the Village Green, but will have as its principal mission the task of developing and recommending policies to shape the future. At the news conference announcing the Center, retiring U.S. Senator Lawton Chiles, who will direct its work, stated that the Center would follow the path set by Governor Collins who "always made his decisions based on the future . . . sometimes at very high personal costs." Collins' decisions, said Chiles, "were based on faith in the future, faith in our state, and faith in our people." D'Alemberte, who shares Collins' faith, has worked to bring the Center into reality, so that the future might benefit from having the best expertise available as participants in its design.

The Collins Center of Public Policy will be located at Florida State, but it will be a State University System program. This, too, is an expression of Dean D'Alemberte's vision of a university. Many colleges of law seek to operate in isolation from the rest of the university and the university system. This has not been the case since Sandy has been Dean at the College of Law. He has worked closely with the

older and larger College of Law at the University of Florida and has been very successful in molding the Florida State University College of Law into a highly respected and quality institution which complements her sister school down state.

Further, the Collins Center is symbolic of the quality higher education made possible when private contributions are used to supplement public funding. Dean D'Alemberte secured \$4.8 million to construct the Village Green, but the historic homes were private gifts and much of the cost of moving, renovating, and furnishing the structures was paid from funds that were donated by the private sector. In addition, two of the four million dollars in the Center's endowment came from the private sector.

The theme that quality is dependent upon private supplements to public funds has been a constant one with Sandy D'Alemberte. Consequently, he has been able to raise \$1.8 million to endow the Edward Ball Eminent Scholar Chair in International Law, the Tobias Simon Eminent Scholar Chair in Public Law, and the Langford Family Eminent Scholar Chair in Municipal Corporations. The \$1.8 million in private funds has been matched by \$1.2 million in state appropriated funds creating a one million dollar endowment for each of the three chairs.

Finally, I believe it is appropriate to make some remarks about Sandy D'Alemberte as a man. Sandy, like John Kennedy, is for lack of better words, a "pragmatic idealist." He sees the political, fiscal, and human weakness realities that most accept with "resignation," or perhaps as Thoreau suggested, with "confirmed despair." However, he sees not only "what is," but also what "might be" if the obstacles of accepted reality were overcome.

In five years, Sandy D'Alemberte has changed the physical shape of the College of Law by providing it with a unique Village Green which expresses a pride in the past and a faith in the future as well as a commitment to wrestle with the problems of the present. He has also expanded the academic horizons of the college by enhancing its excellence, giving it new international and state government thrusts, and by providing a rich resource of private funds.

When you review the record of Dean D'Alemberte's accomplishments, you cannot help but be impressed—and you cannot help but wonder what might have happened in another five years!

