

PREFACE

On Friday, June 3, 1994, John Victor Decore, Q.C., was killed in a motorcycle accident while on a trip to Fairmont, British Columbia. His untimely death was a blow not only to his family, but to his many friends in the Alberta legal community.

John Decore spent his childhood years in Vegreville, Edmonton and Ottawa. After graduating from the Faculty of Law at the University of Alberta in 1960, he married Maureen Hewco and moved to Toronto, where he obtained his LL.M. in taxation. In 1961, he returned to Alberta and joined his father, John Sr., the former Chief Justice of the District Court of Alberta, in the practice of law. He was later joined by his brothers, Laurence and Leighton, and practiced with them as the firm "Decore and Company" for twenty-three years.

In 1989, John joined the law firm of Duncan and Craig where he practiced until his death.

John Decore was very involved in the community, and throughout his legal career, he gave generously of his time. A simple list of some of the offices which he held in various organizations gives a strong indication of the degree of his participation. He held the following offices:

- President of the University of Alberta Students' Union (1959-60);
- President of the Alberta Branch of the Canadian Bar Association (1987-88);
- President of the Law Society of Alberta (1987-88);
- President of the Parkview Community League (1977-78);
- President of the Ukrainian Business and Professional Club (1969);
- Regional Vice-president, International Commission of Jurists (1984-90);
- Founding Member, Friends of the Faculty of Law at the University of Alberta, and that body's first President (1977-78);
- Director, World Junior Basketball Championships (1990-91);
- Executive Member, Arthritis Society of Alberta (1980-81);
- Lecturer at both the Faculties of Business and Law at the University of Alberta (1965-66 and 1974-76).

In his remarks at a memorial luncheon, John Decore's great friend, Don Bishop, Q.C., spoke of John's life as one which was "by any measure a remarkably full tapestry of accomplishment, fellowship, friends and happiness."

Following John's death, a group of his friends, led by the Honourable Mr. Justice David McDonald, Sol Rolinger and Don Bishop, decided to establish the John V. Decore Centre for Alternative Dispute Resolution in the Faculty of Law at the University of Alberta. The creation of the Centre recognizes John's long-standing commitment to the Faculty of Law.

John Decore's widow, Maureen, made a very generous lead gift to the campaign to raise funds for the Centre. Two of John and Maureen's children, Karen and Lyndon, have worked hard with the Committee to ensure that the fundraising campaign is a success.

Thanks to the generosity of John's family and friends, the Faculty of Law is proud to be home to the new Centre. John's friend, Joe Vaitkunas, provided the outstanding architectural plans for the renovation. Another of John's friends, Al Olsen, provided his services on a volunteer basis as project manager, and helped to ensure that the renovation was completed on time and within budget.

The Centre consists of two large hearing rooms suitable for arbitrations and four smaller break-out rooms suitable as witness holding, briefing, board retiring or mediation rooms.

The Alberta Arbitration and Mediation Society, which is the body authorized to certify arbitrators and mediators in Alberta, has entered into a lease with the Faculty of Law. The Faculty and the Society will share the Centre. The Faculty will use the facility as a teaching space for courses in alternative dispute resolution, client counselling, labour arbitration and techniques of negotiation. On those days of the week when the facility is not being used for teaching law students, the Society will rent out the rooms to persons conducting arbitrations or mediations. The revenue which is generated will be used to help the Faculty to develop its offerings in Alternative Dispute Resolution.

In an article in the *Financial Post* on September 26, 1995,¹ the federal Deputy Minister of Justice, George Thompson, is quoted as having said that he "will be directing employees of the Department to include alternative dispute resolution clauses in contracts, allowing parties to avoid the courts where there is a disagreement over interpretation" of a contract. The federal Justice Department is also considering several policy changes which will eliminate barriers to using ADR. Further, the Department plans to screen draft legislation to see where alternative dispute resolution can be incorporated.

These developments on the federal level are likely to be repeated at the provincial level. The result will be a greatly increased use of ADR techniques.

The Faculty of Law wants to be on the cutting edge of this significant new development. Our students are very keen about the possibility of an increased emphasis on ADR. We believe that the John V. Decore Centre for Alternative Dispute Resolution will help us to take a significant step ahead in helping our students to prepare for the future.

¹ J. Middlemiss, "Ottawa's Lawyers Told to Settle Out of Court More Often" *The Financial Post* (26 September 1995) 10.

On behalf of the Faculty of Law, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Maureen Decore and to Lyndon and Karen, and to the members of the organizing committee. The establishment of the Centre is a cornerstone of the Faculty of Law Campaign 75, and we are grateful for the leadership which has been shown.

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