

Memorial Resolution of the Faculty of the University of Wisconsin–Madison on the death of Emeritus Professor Robert H. Skilton

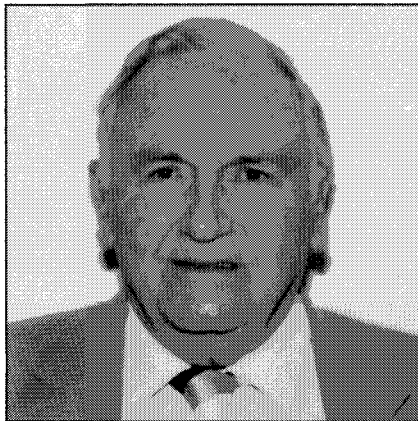
Emeritus Professor Robert H. Skilton died on August 15, 1992 at the age of 83. In the 23 years of his tenure at Wisconsin, he served as the mainstay of the Law School's commercial law curriculum.

Bob Skilton was born in 1909 and raised in Philadelphia. He earned four degrees from the University of Pennsylvania, including a law degree in 1934 and a Ph.D. in Political Science in 1943. In 1936 he married his wife Margaret (Peggy), who survives him along with a daughter, three sons (all lawyers) and nine grandchildren. Before attending law school he served as an instructor in English at Swarthmore.

Upon graduation from Law School, Bob practiced law for three years with a Philadelphia law firm, but the teaching profession beckoned, and from 1937 to 1953 he taught business law at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School. His teaching was interrupted by commissioned service in the Navy from 1943–1946. Wisconsin offered him a research grant in 1951. He joined the Law School faculty in 1953.

Bob decided to retire in 1976, but he continued to teach as a visiting professor at other law schools for a number of years after his official retirement at Wisconsin. These included teaching stints at Southern Illinois University School of Law, McGeorge School of Law at University of the Pacific, Wayne State University School of Law and Willamette University College of Law. He ended his teaching career at Wisconsin by responding to our emergency need for a commercial law teacher during the 1983–84 academic year.

Bob Skilton was a prolific scholar and



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a nationally recognized expert in commercial law. During 1978–80, for example, he served as chairman of the American Bar Association's Uniform Commercial Code Subcommittee on General Provisions, Sales, Bulk Transfers and Documents of Title. His many law review articles dealing with various aspects of secured transactions under Article 9 of the Uniform Commercial Code are of particular significance and, in the aggregate, constitute a comprehensive treatment and analysis of that subject area. His deep knowledge in criminal law, securities law, and constitutional law enriched his ability to convey the topical importance of the ordinary commercial transaction.

Professor Skilton was a popular classroom teacher, notwithstanding the fact that he taught courses at first regarded by students as unexciting—subjects such as Commercial Law, Insurance Law, International Business Transactions, Contracts and Restitution. Students and colleagues respected his vast knowledge of business

law, his keen analytical skills and his habit of enlivening the class by reciting poetry from memory to illustrate points of law. From time to time, he also taught Constitutional Law and, in later years, Sports Law. The latter subject was a natural outgrowth of his long-time interest in sports, and particularly, his devotion to the often hapless Philadelphia Athletics. He also enjoyed bowling as a member of the UW Faculty Bowling League.

Bob Skilton's positive contributions as a scholar and teacher will be felt for a long time to come, and those of us who knew him well will cherish the memory of his great sense of humor, his congeniality, his scrupulous honesty and his love of the law.

In 1947 a little volume of his poetry was published containing both the serious and the irreverent. Among the latter—

*A's collarbone was cracked when he
Was battered by a drunken driver
Ungenerously, his lawyer, B,
Took half the settlement as fee.*

*So A, without much more ado,
Broke B's own collarbone in two.
"Since you have split the claim," he said,
"I'll share my injuries with you."*

We mourn Bob's passing.

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

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