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August 18. 1985

Dear Ron,

I understand that Ned and Ann Slaughter are heading your way soon. They are long-time friends of ours in Charlottesville, and I am sure that they will have a grand time visiting there. Jan and I have often talked of planning to pop by to see you some day but have never been able to work it out.

As you can see from the mistakes, I am typing this myself. Years ago while in law school I taught myself touch typing in anticipation or hope of being a law clerk for Hugo Black and thus having to type cert memos. However, I have not typed much over the years since. I am taking it up again because I am giving serious consideration to acquiring a fancy talking computer that will enable me to write and edit alone. To be able to pursue the writing process without the use of another human being would be magnificent. To operate this equipment I need to be able to type well. So I am now practicing, and the best way to use my practice time productively is to write letters to people I know. Hence you are the beneficiary of these faltering efforts to reveal this skill.

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In recent years I have been plowing along with the usual sorts of law review articles. But I find myself increasingly drawn to fiction. For several years a novel has been developing in my mind, a piece here and a piece there. 1976-1985 It is coming to the point that the writing of it is becoming an almost irresistible urge. Thus if I do get this computer I may launch into that project. I am reluctant to start it because of great uncertainty on one part that I can pull it off. When I set out to write a law review article I am confident that I can do something that is at least respectable and that it will get published somewhere. There is no such assurance with fiction. I could easily invest hundreds of hours over a year or two and then have nothing but worthless ramblings. So I am hesitant. It may be that one must take the risk here as in so many other areas of life. In any event, I will probably not have the equipment, if at all, for a few more months.

We have just finished another session with our judges, winding up the second term for the third class in the program. We begin receiving applications for the next class this fall. Law school classes begin this week. I have never become accustomed to August beginning for the academic year. The University is getting a new President this fall. He is Robert O'Neill, a Radford Law School graduate who will teach one course in the law school here each semester. Since March I have devoted a substantial amount of time to planning the inauguration of October 2, inasmuch as I am chairman of the Committee on the Inauguration. The details are legion. I think I know the chief of protocol at the State Department must feel. It should be an impressive occasion, if I do say so myself. I must say that I do enjoy a bit of pomp and ceremony from time to time.

I hope this is all moderately legible. Surely the typing will improve as I move along with daily practice. I hope that your affairs are going well with you and family. Love, Dan