

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

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Mr. Ronald P. Sokol  
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Dear Ron:

Thank you very much for your letter. It whets all the more my desire to pay you a visit. Much to my regret, however, the Vienna gathering, which was the ultimate objective of our European venture, has now been cancelled. This comes about largely as a result of the American apprehensions about terrorism, coupled with radiation (the latter being a factor because the group was destined also for the Soviet Union). I object strenuously to the cancellation of trips to Europe this summer on the ground of terrorism. We have nearly 50,000 deaths a year on American highways as a result of automobile accidents, and there are hundreds of murders in the cities. The risk of serious bodily injury in America is at least as great and maybe greater, than it is in Europe. But despite my protestations on this point, trips are being cancelled on all sides. In any event, because the Vienna gathering was a central event in our outing, we believe that we should not undertake the European trip, although this decision causes us to cancel our visit with you. I do hope very much that one of these days we can get there to see you, and we shall certainly continue to plan and hope in that direction.

It was good to get caught up on news of your family, and I was especially interested to hear of Daniel. Please assure him that I do exist in the flesh, although the flesh is showing the wear and tear of time.

I have just come back from a three-day meeting in Maine of an ABA Committee on Federal Judicial Improvements. I find this Committee to be increasingly frustrating inasmuch as the lawyers on it have very little real interest in doing anything significant about the system. The proposals that can get a majority agreement are simply tinkering measures. I will serve out the year remaining in my term, but I do not aspire to a reappointment. The Committee does meet in interesting places, and they eat well.

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Recently I had an unusual and more than ordinarily interesting experience. The Supreme Court Historical Society sponsors an annual lecture in the restored Supreme Court Chamber in the Capitol. About two months ago I was at a gathering with the Chief Justice, and he said that the Lord Chief Justice of England, who had been scheduled as the annual lecturer for this May, had since cancelled. The Chief wanted to know whether by any chance I would be available on short notice to give the lecture. I went into my attic and found a draft done 22 years ago on the appointment on L.Q.C. Lamar to the Supreme Court. After hearing it read I concluded that it would do as the lecture -- an almost incredible circumstance. In any event, after a bit of polishing and touching up to make the story of the confirmation fight a bit more dramatic, I did deliver the lecture in the old Supreme Court Chamber on May 12. It will be published in the annual yearbook of the society. You no doubt remember Lamar and my efforts at doing something with his life. In the course of getting ready for this lecture I also reread nearly a dozen other drafts I had done on various phases of his life, many of which bore your editorial comments from more than two decades ago. My interest has now been revived, and I may undertake to put all of this in some sort of publishable form. At least I will give it further thought.

Again let me say that Jan and I greatly appreciate your invitation for a visit in August, and I do wish that it were possible for us to be there this year. Perhaps in another year or so we will at last make it.

Sincerely,



Daniel J. Meador

DJM/ebg