



UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA SCHOOL OF LAW

Daniel J. Meador

James Monroe Professor of Law Emeritus

April 21, 1997

Mr. Ronald P. Sokol
Sokol Law Offices
14, rue Principale
13540 Puyricard
FRANCE

Dear Ron:

As you can see, I am long overdue in responding to your letter of last January. Since receiving it, I have attended a three-day conference sponsored by the ABA at the University of Alabama Law School on the Civil Justice Reform Act of 1990. My assignment was to deliver the "keynote address," a rather pretentious label for some opening remarks. The conference on the whole was quite good, with many "heavy hitters" from around the country.

I have now just returned from Korea and Hong Kong. The Korean trip was sponsored by the Korean Veterans Association. They do three every year as a show of gratitude to Americans who served in the Armed Forces in Korea during the war. There is quite a waiting list for the trip, and I have been in line for over a year-and-a-half. From the moment of arrival in Kimpo Airport until departure, we were totally taken in hand by the KVA. There were well-organized tours everyday and a splendid banquet, at which each American veteran was presented with a medal and a certificate of appreciation. It was exactly 44 years ago that I departed Korea, and I had not been back since. It is quite simply a different place. There is relatively little similarity between the city of Seoul today and the city that I saw last in 1953. Although I got a great deal out of the trip that will help me with my novel (almost complete) the frustration was at an unusually high level because of my great desire to see the scene. We went to the military demarcation line and looked in the faces of North Korean guards within three feet. That situation is indeed grim. The line is no joke. If one steps over it, he is either shot or taken as prisoner. There is no turning back. It is not at all like the East-West German division, where one could actually go into East Germany albeit with some extraordinarily tedious inspection processes at the border. This is a totally sealed situation. But again, like East Germany, my view is that it cannot last. The only question is how and when.

Your information about Neville Clark was quite interesting. If you have opportunities, without undue effort, to obtain a further line on him I would be interested in knowing it. Mary Lee Stapp telephoned me about two or three weeks ago to say that she is going back to England in May. She made the usual statements about Neville thinking this and thinking that and about the South Carolina ETV people doing this and doing that. I have the impression that if I had made a tape recording of a telephone conversation two or three or four years ago I could replay it now and it would not differ greatly from her current conversations. In short, I sense little real movement on the Golden Mean Project. I agree with you that the idea is extremely worthwhile, and I would hope that it could be pursued, but I have little hope of its coming to fruition.

As to Hong Kong, I wanted to go there to see it in its last days as a British colony. While there seems to be considerable uncertainty about what might happen after July 1, my impression is that the residents there--at least the ones I had an opportunity to hear from--are not especially concerned. This will indeed be an

Mr. Ronald P. Sokol
April 21, 1997
Page Two

interesting situation to watch. Having been to Hong Kong now for three days, I have no great desire to return. I am glad I saw it, but there is nothing there that particularly attracts me back.

The Law School building and reconstruction project proceeds apace. The front lawn has now been completed. The first dinner in the new pavilion in Clay Hall will take place on Law Alumni Weekend in May. The three major aspects of the project that remain to be completed are Hunton & Williams Hall across the rear, the library, and the Spies Garden, which is now in a quadrangle framed by the four law school buildings. You should make it a point to come back and see this radically altered situation. It is vastly better than what we had.

Your comments about wanting to do something else struck a sympathetic chord with me. I have had similar feelings and still do, although, like you, I'm not quite sure what it would be, other than what I am doing now. In August, I am on a panel at the ABA in San Francisco where half a dozen lawyers will discuss "new careers." Each has done something else after years in law practice. I am billed as a "novelist," which is ridiculous, but I will try to play it out with a straight face.

I have just read Wartime by Paul Fussell. It is well worth reading. I think you would enjoy it. It presents virtually every aspect of human behavior involved in the Second World War. If you have not read his The Great War in Modern Memory, you should certainly do so.

After I finish the novel on which I am now working, my plan is to try my hand at what I would describe as memoir/history. There are several facets of my life experiences that I would like to attempt to treat in memoir fashion, some intermixed with more general history. With this in mind, I have signed up for a one-week workshop in memoir writing at the Iowa Writers' Conference in July. Iowa runs one of the oldest and perhaps the best writers' conferences in the country. I have never before been to a writers' conference, so I am looking forward to this experience.

Jan joins me in sending our best wishes to you and Janko. If you get to the States, you must plan to come here to see the new Law School setup.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Meador

DJM/ebg