

July 11, 2002

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Dear Ron:

I am sorely remiss in not having written you over the past year and a half. My only defense is a series of distractions.

First, let me address your appellate appeal question. I have not disengaged from the legal field entirely, although I am less intimately involved than formerly. Actually, I am tentatively committed to do a second edition of my appellate courts casebook during the coming year, with a new co-author, Tom Baker, now at the Drake University Law School. But back to your question, I am not aware of any time limitation on the taking of an appeal as short as five days. The shortest I know of is ten days. Certainly as a matter of sound procedural policy, five days is absurdly short, especially in the circumstances that you describe. I am not acquainted with the European law situation to have any view as to whether you might succeed in your proposed challenge to the French rule. However, it seems worth a try. Sorry I cannot be of more help on this.

I was particularly interested to learn from your May letter of your varied practice activities. In some ways you seem to have an ideal mixture of matters – the practice of law with a genuine human dimension. I was also interested to learn that the VQR reaches all the way to France. My piece on Cahaba is a slightly edited version of the first chapter of a little book I did on my mother's family in that place – self published about a year ago. I am now considering doing a piece for the VQR entitled "Hugo Black and Thomas Jefferson."

The latter thought occurred to me recently at the 4th Circuit Judicial Conference when I was a member of a panel consisting of four former Black clerks who reminisced about the Justice. There was one law clerk from each decade of his service. I have participated in two other conferences within the previous months. One was a Bench-Bar conference sponsored by the Mobile Bar Association, and the other was the annual conference of the Federal Circuit. I have another Federal Circuit conference scheduled for this October.

As far as writing goes, I had drafted eight chapters of a new novel by last fall but then became drawn off on other matters and have made no further progress. This actually may have been a blessing, as I had reached a dead end and did not know quite where the story was going. In recent weeks I have begun

to have some fresh ideas and hope to get back into the project in the near future. Also, I am winding up a little book about my father's family, to be self published, similar to the one I did on my mother's family and Cahaba.

For the last two or three years there has been an effort to establish a sister city relationship between Charlottesville and Besancon. It has been spearheaded by a woman who used to work for me and whom you once met, named Louisa Dixon. At her urging I went to Besancon last October for three days and met with various local officials and two members of the law faculty at the University there. It is a place not normally visited by American tourists but seems to be an attractive town. The Charlottesville mayor and others from here are going over there in September with the hope of formally establishing the sister city relationship.

Grasping the passage of time is always difficult for me. So the thought that you have been out of law school for 40 years is one not easily digested. I regret that you were not back for your reunion. The class elected to establish a scholarship in the name of Al Turnbull who retired last month after more than 30 years as Director of Admissions. That is a remarkable record in that position. Walter Waddlington also retired last month. As retirements continue over the years, there are fewer and fewer members of the law faculty with whom I am well acquainted. There are dozens of new members whom I scarcely know at all. Although I come into my office typically four days a week, the office is located in the former Darden School building. All active law faculty offices are in the Withers-Brown building, so I rarely see anybody even though I am here regularly.

Your reading all of Dickens' works reminds me that from time to time I have found it a fascinating challenge to read all of a particular author's writings. Thus I undertook to read everything written by Tugenev (sp?), the first Russian novelist to be recognized in the West, and all the writings of Thomas Wolfe. With a few minor exceptions, I have read everything written by William Faulkner. Reading all of Dickens would be a real undertaking, and I admire you for the effort. My recollection is that I have read only three of his novels, plus, of course, *A Christmas Carol*.

Jan's Parkinson's continues to progress. She still gets out and around, and we flew to Dallas recently to visit our daughter who lives there. However, it is increasingly difficult for her to get out for any function in the evening. The most unfortunate aspect is the impact on her speech and memory.

I always enjoy hearing from you, so keep me posted.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Meador