

# Afterword

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What can one say of Charles Black that hasn't already been said? He is one of only two people I have known who is properly described as a genius. That term is much overused. It rarely fits even the exceedingly intelligent people to whom it is applied. Correctly used, it implies extraordinary ability in any number of widely diverse fields—like law, but also poetry, literature, art, music, and theater. It connotes dazzling speed—like the incredible ability to write a major, and magnificent, book over a weekend, or a great treatise . . . in three weeks! But most of all, genius entails the capacity to see things differently from others, and to be able to describe the insights derived with such power that thereafter others will have to start from that viewpoint, however much they may disagree with it.

Charles, of course, has all of these qualities, but these qualities are not all of Charles. Genius cannot explain his life-long passion for justice and his willingness, no, *need* to dedicate himself to it.

Genius cannot account for the love all feel for Charles—a love which found such extraordinary demonstrations in all that students and faculty did in the last weeks before his retirement. (In all my years at the Law School I have never seen anything approaching it.) What accounts for this love is Charles' capacity to give of himself, and all that he has, to students and colleagues—his unbelievable generosity.

Nor does genius explain another quality in Charles, and that is loyalty. In Charles one sees a loyalty to friends that transcends all political, ideological or scholarly differences—think of his loyalty to Alexander Bickel, to Robert Bork, and to Eugene Rostow, to mention only three from his own primary field. It is that kind of loyalty, one that is never factious, that makes a law school great. For it is essential to the interchange of *different* ideas, as against the all too frequent friendships and conversations that are limited to those whose ideas and views are also our own.

In Charles there is this special loyalty, but also and equally loyalty to the institution itself. Consider these past two years, when Charles, had he been reasonable, would have retired, as he could have, and joined Barbara at Columbia. Instead, because this is his school, he undertook, and cheer-

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fully bore, numerous inconveniences to teach *here*, up to the last day that University regulations would permit it.

Such loyalty, of course, inspires others, much as his scholarship, teaching, generosity, and passion for justice inspire us. Genius, generosity, loyalty, passion for justice, scholarship, teaching—what is it that the Yale Law School stands for . . . strives for? It is all epitomized in Charles Black!