

In Memoriam: JOHN C. STEDMAN 1904 - 1983

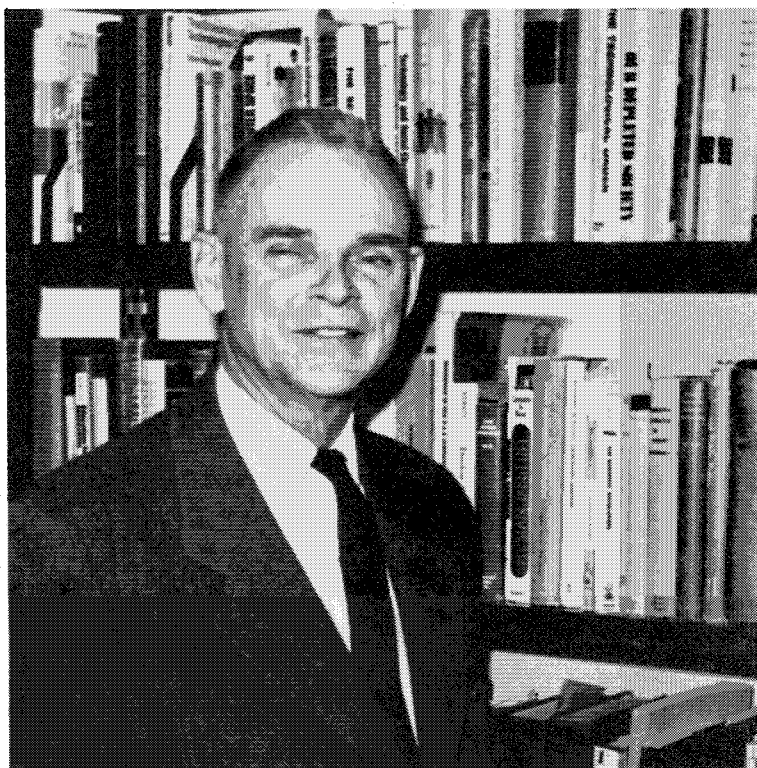
Fifty-two years ago a barn burned down in Door County and John Stedman, who had been on the verge of buying the farm on which it stood, decided to go to the University of Wisconsin Law School rather than become a cherry farmer. On December 2, 1983 John Stedman died, having been a member of the Law Faculty of his alma mater since 1935. Had anyone realized the contributions John Stedman would make to the university, and to the law of intellectual property over his long career, he himself would have been tempted to set that barn afire.

John C. Stedman was born on November 3, 1904 in Berlin, Wisconsin but grew up in Sturgeon Bay. He received his BA at the University of Wisconsin in 1928, and returned to Madison to earn his LL.B. at the law school in 1934. He served, during his last year of law school and for a short time thereafter, as "secretary" to Justice Fairchild of the Wisconsin Supreme Court, one of the first law clerks to a Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice. Shortly after his graduation he went to Minneapolis where he entered practice with the firm of Junell, Driscoll, Fletcher, Dorsey & Barker — now one of that city's most respected firms, Dorsey and Whitney. He shared an office there with another young lawyer who would achieve some success in his career; his officemate was Harry Blackmun who would eventually become a Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

His first exposure to private practice was brief. In 1935 the dean of the Law School, Lloyd Garrison,

prevailed upon him to return and join the faculty. It was in that same year that he met and married Patricia Mason, a Madison native; together they were to raise five children over the next 48 years. In 1939 he went to Columbia University to work on an LL.M. and it was there that he developed his interest in patent law, an interest which was to become the focus of research and public service for more than forty years. In 1941, unable to join the army because of blindness in one eye, he went to Washington to serve in the Office of Price Administration. It turned out that his government service was to keep him in Washington for 8 years and include service in four government offices, including two divisions of the Justice Department. During the course of that time he produced a three-volume study on research and development by government contractors which substantially affected the development of government policy in this area, and became the standard work relied upon by government agencies when dealing with the problem of inventions financed with public money. He participated in formulating the policies of the Antitrust Division in cases in which patents were involved, as well as playing an important role in a number of other projects of substantial public significance. In 1950 he returned to Madison to stay.

Even by conventional measures, John was an extremely productive scholar; he published more than 40 articles in journals and as chapters in books. But his true productivity is not so easily measured. In ad-



dition to the journal articles he was the author of many legislative memoranda which became part of the legislative history of laws relating to patents and antitrust. He was, for example, the editor of a series of thirty Studies of the Patent Law done for the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Patents, Trademarks and Copyrights; this project spanned the years 1956-1961 and those who were involved in the studies know how much the project owed to John. He also gave dozens of speeches, many of which remained unpublished, and carried on an extensive correspondence with people interested in patents, copyrights, and antitrust law. Although much of his work before his retirement from classroom teaching in 1974 dealt with patent law, he became very interested in the 1976 revision of the copyright statute and the implications of that effort at law revision. He served as the Chairman of the A.A.U.P. Copyright Revision Committee, for example, and was a consultant to the National Science Foundation. His contributions to an understanding of the implications of the new copyright law, especially as it related to photocopying by libraries, led the American Library Association to dedicate their June 1983 session on copyright law to John. Wisconsin Congressman Robert Kastenmeier, Chairman of the subcommittee that reviews all patent and copyright legislation, has said that John Stedman was a "unique resource" and a "fresh and independent thinker" — traits of

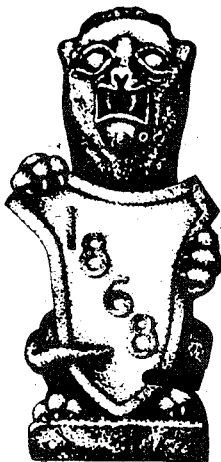
special significance in a world filled with spokesmen for special interests.

A remarkable thing about John Stedman, though, is that if you ask people who knew him and his work what they remember most vividly about him, they speak first not about his fine teaching, or his exemplary scholarship, but rather of what an extraordinarily gentle person John was. He was a man of exceptional balance and perspective. He was a person with great compassion, who always revealed his concern for others in the respect he showed them. He was scrupulously fair. In addition, he had a great sense of humor and revealed it in his writing, as well as in conversation. All of these traits made him a valued member of the university community; his balance and fairness led to requests that he serve on innumerable committees. He was always ready to help a student or colleague and never asked for the credit he so richly deserved. He was modest to a fault. Another side of John was his love for the outdoors; he took great pleasure in his farm near Baraboo. He was an avid skier; he gave up downhill skiing in his 70s!

Someone who knew John said that it was his firm conviction that every person who encountered John Stedman was better off for it. We should try to find out what day that barn burned and celebrate it as a private holiday.

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41st Annual Spring Program

May 4-5, 1984

Madison, WI

Friday evening . . .

Benchers Society Dinner

Address by Prof. Robert O'Neil, UW President on First Amendment Protection of Free Speech.

Saturday morning . . .

Spring Program Seminar (9:30 a.m.)

Saturday noon . . .

Annual Meeting and Luncheon, Featuring:

Election of Officers

Presentation of Distinguished Service Award

Recognition of reunion classes (1934, 1939, 1944, 1949, 1954, 1959, 1964, 1969, 1974, and 1979)

Watch your mail for details