

# INDIANA LAW REVIEW

VOLUME 20

1987

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# Indiana Law Review

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Volume 20

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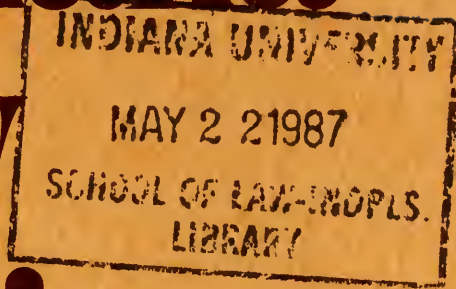
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# Indiana Law Review



Volume 20 No. 1 1987

## Dedication

Gerald L. Bepko

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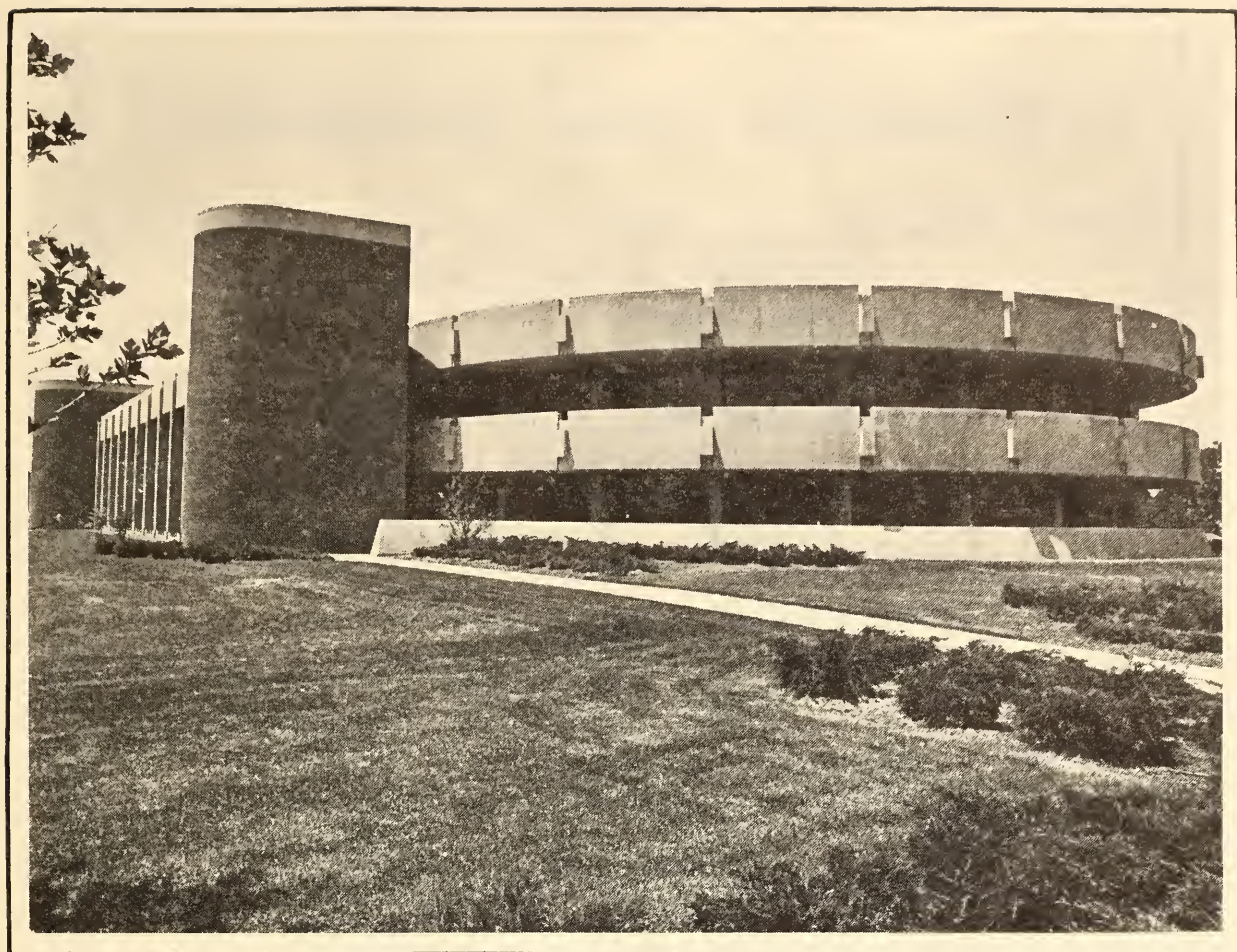
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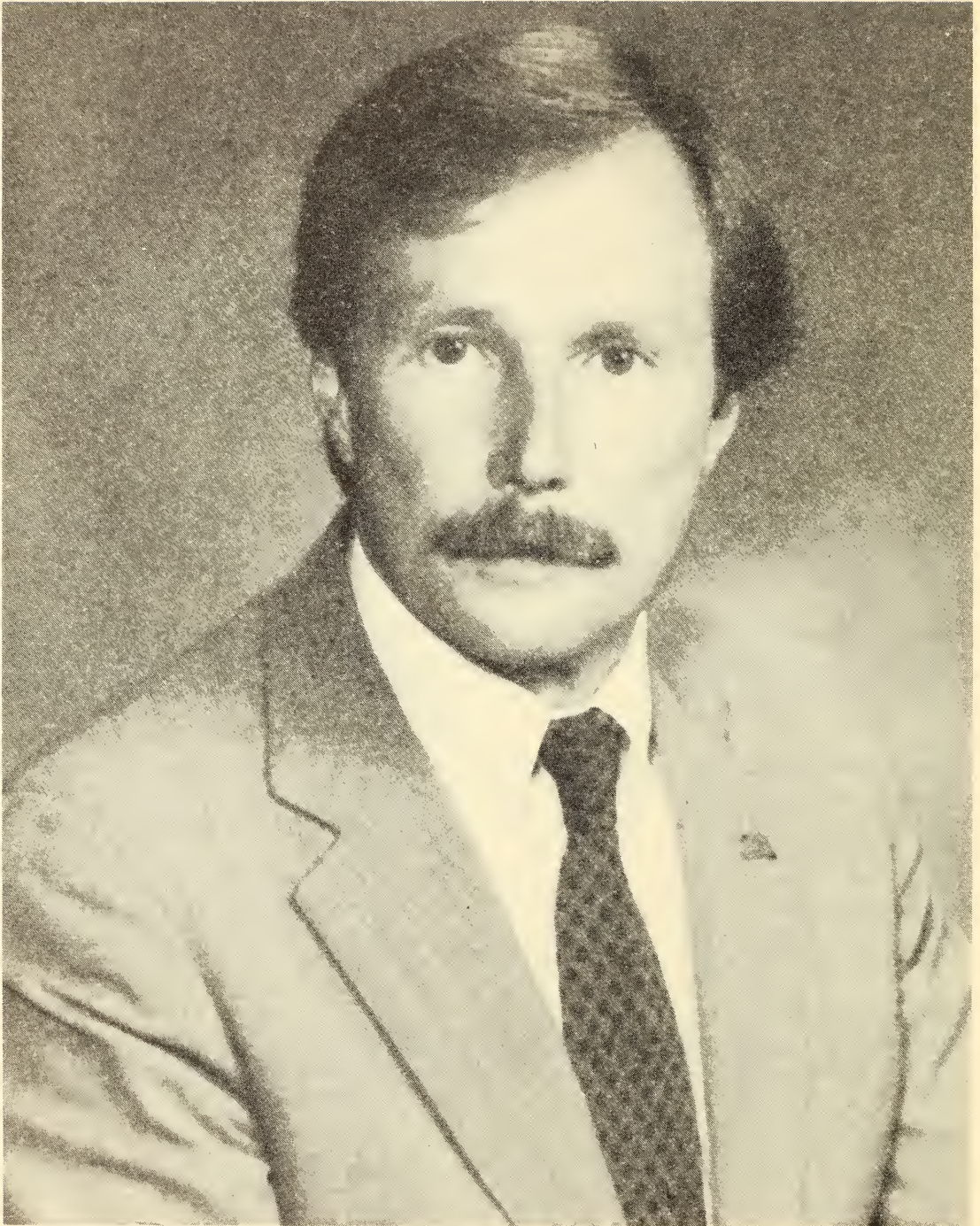
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GERALD L. BEPKO

## DEDICATION

I am honored to have been asked to comment on the significance of Gerald Bepko's appointment to the position of Vice President of Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis. His selection to this post is a source of great enthusiasm and deep satisfaction for all who sense the importance of this excellent university.

Two days after being asked to write this dedication, I came across an ancient dispute resolution technique, the shadows of which sometimes reappear during heated moments in federal court.

The information came to me while I was helping our sixth-grader review for a test in social studies. It seems that the early Eskimos, who were indeed wise in prizing self-control while simultaneously allowing the world to ventilate, developed a process referred to as "name-calling." When two people were in dispute, the tribe set up a contest in which the two faced off and were encouraged to be as foul-mouthed to one another as was humanly possible. (Imagine the partisan cheering on the sidelines!) This barrage of abuse went on until the crucial, telling moment: when one of the participants finally grew red-hot and lost his temper. The price of such loss of self-control was vanquishment: the one who lost control lost the contest.

This dedication assignment and that piece of historical information miraculously coincided, allowing me to find a beginning for this assessment of Jerry's unique gifts, which hold so much promise for the University. I'll begin by observing that Jerry would have been a good Eskimo. In all my experience, I have never known him to lose his temper. That capacity will probably prove to be more significant in terms of his ultimate success as a university administrator than anything else.

Jerry's ability to undergo great provocation without losing either perspective or control is related to a number of other aspects in his character. There is, first of all, a twinkle in him, a droll, self-effacing wit that is wonderfully easy and wonderfully understated. But there is also in that wit a certain quickness, like the flash of gold discreetly hidden, which signifies a mind ready to communicate fully and efficiently without trekking through endless details. Jerry is not only humorous, he is also fully alert, and it is that alertness which informs his political instincts so adroitly and enables him to foster collegiality among the faculty and cooperation in the community. He perceives and knows how to merge and mobilize various factions, and he knows instinctively how to maneuver

this already great institution, whose leadership he has assumed, toward even more noble accomplishment.

Jerry's abilities don't end with his adeptness at mobilizing people and at tapping into their potentialities for the good of the University. He remains, on a personal basis, both sensitive and loyal. While he is very good at getting people to help the University, he is also a genuinely nice person. His upbeat, contagious enthusiasm makes you want to sign on to help. People wound up wanting to give their services to the Indianapolis Law School because they wanted to do right by Dean Bepko. I know, because I have many times myself been the subject of his appeals to speak, to do seminars and committee work and so forth. But even when you're being enlisted in such projects, Jerry has a masterful touch: first, he does not exploit those who would help; second, he does not push willing helpers into areas in which they have no legitimate background or business; and third, he senses when he might be coming to the well once too often; he is careful not to cross that fine line beyond which he risks asking too much.

At a time when the fortunes of the Indianapolis campus and the city of Indianapolis are closely intertwined, and when the University can profit richly by drawing upon civic expertise and leadership throughout Indianapolis, this level of prudent regard for individuals is essential. It promises to the University that inestimable gift: lasting goodwill.

In canvassing Jerry's extraordinary fitness for his new appointment, I must mention another trait which I think stands at the center of his ability to mobilize people: his personal modesty. Jerry is not a flashy man, and the lights of his ego are toned down enough to let others do most of the shining. And just as human beings almost instinctively attack and seek to bring down the flashy egotist, so they are moved in some inner way to augment and assist the soul who is modest. Jerry's modesty draws people to him, and through him, to the University, and all this gives him great potential to serve the cause of education.

Many of the characteristics which we see so clearly in Jerry — his easy self-control, his sensitivity to others, his prudence, modesty, and self-effacing wit — are each traits which point in a certain direction. They add up to a superior sense of human balance which we sometimes call detachment, and which leads a human being to levels of objectivity and clarity that, when possessed by persons in public life, serve everyone's interest.

One final word: Some will not be aware that in his past, Jerry Bepko was for a time an FBI agent. I suppose there are a few who would find in that a flaw, undervaluing the high sense of justice that motivates most, though, of course, not all, agents. As for myself having been a United States Attorney and an assistant United States Attorney and having put together many cases with a variety of agents, I have come to know that



the best agents exemplify that same persistence, discretion, loyalty, and balance that are Jerry's mark as well. I have always thought I would like to have had the opportunity to try a case with Jerry on my side. In the larger sense, I know now that I have gotten my wish.

The Honorable Sarah Evans Barker  
Judge, United States District Court  
Indianapolis

