

Paul Gillies Lifetime Achievement Award Introduction, 5/9/19

To coin a phrase, it takes a village to receive a Lifetime Achievement Award. Therefore, I start my remarks by celebrating the person who was willing (most of the time) to share Paul and to support his work and myriad interests. Please join me in acknowledging Eileen Gillies. We thank you, along with Lee and John.

Okay, now for that other person: For me, it is an incredible honor to introduce Paul Gillies tonight. For almost 40 years Paul has been, in turn, my supervisor, my colleague and occasional collaborator, and, most importantly, cherished friend. I was going to add friendly competitor, but any comparison of our output suggests there never was much competition.

As befitting a Center gathering, Sam Hand is lurking here. Back in the Seventies Governor Dick Snelling wanted to publish a compilation of the inaugural addresses of Vermont's governors. Indeed, in **his** first inaugural Gov. Snelling drew from earlier gubernatorial addresses.

To explore the possibilities, the Governor dispatched a member of his Planning Office, Paul, to meet with Sam Hand. Sam thought the idea had merit. He just so happened to have a graduate student who didn't seem to be doing anything useful. Thus, I was assigned to explore the scope and cost of such a publication. It was ultimately determined that the research and publication would be too costly at that time.

Later, Paul was hired by Secretary of State Jim Douglas to be his deputy. Early in Paul's tenure the position then known as editor of state papers became vacant. Paul remembered me and played a role in my hiring. His, and Jim's, sustained support were crucial to turning the editor papers position into the office of state archivist. As an aside, years later we published the inaugurals of Vermont's governors as a full text searchable, online publication.

Paul subsequently played a major role in other Archives' publications including an online history of judicial review and an annotated publication of the Journals of the Council of Censors. The latter made accessible the deliberations on, and amendments to, Vermont's Constitution up to 1870. Without Paul's work those publications would not have happened

Paul seems to have crammed several life times into his research, writing, and public service. With Jim, Paul wrote a monthly column on municipal government issues, based on the questions they received from town clerks, select boards, and others. These were eventually compiled in the Book of Opinions, which became the bible for town officials and residents.

Paul wrote and published works on Vermont's right to know laws and their application. Again, these became crucial resources for Vermonters.

Paul provided historical and legal advice on Vermont's surveying and on town boundary issues. When state government moved to clear up its forgotten public rights of way, Paul became the leading expert on these 'ancient roads.' To do so he spent endless hours visiting town clerk offices around the state.

Paul wrote—and continues to write--a monthly column on Vermont's legal and judicial history for the Vermont Bar Journal.

Paul was a driving force in the Vermont Institute for Government and the Vermont Judicial History Society. To bring judicial history alive he created audience participation events in which historic cases were re-enacted.

Over the years I observed Paul interacting with these and many other groups. There would be wonderful exchanges of ideas among the group's governing bodies. And then, inevitably, there came a moment toward the end of the meeting when silence would descend. Slowly, every head in the room would turn toward Paul with the expectation he would put those ideas into force. He usually did.

Paul did not wait for others to translate ideas into action. In his Center presentation, "*Fifteen and Counting: Vermont research 1974-1989*," he noted the lack of a good judicial history of Vermont. He subsequently wrote two: *Uncommon Law, Ancient Roads, and other Ruminations on*

Vermont Legal History (2013). Most recently *Law of the Hills: A Judicial History of Vermont* (2019).

I could consume the rest of our evening recounting all Paul's other research and writing from the Berlin town history to his essays on the Vermont character to his writings from the statehood bicentennial. But that would miss the point.

What makes Paul such a great choice for the lifetime achievement award is his engaged sense of wonder. By that I mean Paul's insatiable curiosity, matched with an unparalleled work ethic.

As a consequence Paul has informed a broad cross section of Vermont research for decades. We are all better for it. So, Paul, with this award, and from our hearts, we thank you.