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# Tribute to Dean Soia Mentschikoff

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## Tribute to Dean Soia Mentschikoff

In a society such as ours, law schools and universities enjoy a special prominence, for lawyers are charged with being the healers of conflicts within our society. The leadership of a law school is thus a high trust and, as with every fiduciary institution, it must be treated as a stewardship for which there is accountability. That accountability is to the public served by lawyers, to the concept of the rule of law, and to the highest principles of justice responsive to the enduring ideals and values of Western civilization.

More than ever before, the stewardship of legal education carries unique challenges and responsibilities. The challenge is to preserve the essential elements of traditional legal education while providing training that is responsive to the needs of the people. The responsibilities of that role require men and women who possess a combination of practical experience in the arts of healing and resolving conflicts, as well as skills of advocacy with awareness of the limits on advocacy.

It is particularly appropriate that this *Law Review* pay tribute to Dean Soia Mentschikoff, and I am pleased to participate in this tribute to a dedicated, exemplary steward of legal education.

Columbia Law School prepared her for the practice of law, which occupied her for more than a decade. During those years she also served as Associate Reporter for the revised Uniform Sales Act and as Associate Chief Reporter for the Uniform Commercial Code. Her experience and interest in commercial law and arbitration led to a career as a scholar and teacher of those subjects, along with international law and transactions. At Harvard Law School, then at the University of Chicago School of Law, and later in several visiting professorships, she left her imprint on many who are now leaders of the Bar. Then she came to the University of Miami School of Law.

Dean Mentschikoff, a legal educator for more than thirty-five years, was the President of the Association of American Law Schools and Secretary of the American Bar Association Section on Legal Education. She contributed to the American Law Institute, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Council of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and numerous other organizations. Her teaching, scholarship, and other professional contributions earned her the respect of generations of students and of the legal profession. Far ahead of most of her contemporaries for more than three decades, she pressed the importance of arbitration, mediation, and negotiation as alternatives to litigation. The legal profession and business community have begun, but must

continue to explore the opportunities for expanding the use of arbitration and negotiation.

She has been an articulate leader in reminding us that legal education requires ever greater community of activity among law schools, practitioners, and judges. That cooperation, as Dean Mentschikoff pointed out not long ago, is necessary to the competent "teaching of the skills involved in at least the five major crafts of law: (1) appellate argument; (2) trial advocacy; (3) counseling; (4) negotiation; and (5) drafting."<sup>1</sup>

This recognition of Dean Mentschikoff's exemplary stewardship should serve as an inspiration, and a reminder, of the challenges and responsibilities of law schools and the legal profession.

HONORABLE WARREN E. BURGER  
CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE UNITED STATES

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1. Mentschikoff, *Legal Education—University of Miami Law School*, 54 FLA. B.J. 19, 19-20 (1980).