

James C.N. Paul: In MEMORIAM



James C.N Paul: A Man with Transcending Impact on Ethiopian Legal Education

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James Paul's contributions to Ethiopian higher education, legal education, legal profession, legal system and legal practice are extensive, deep and enduring. As a founder of the law school of the then Haile Sellassie I University (HSIU), he forged strong bonds with Yale Law School. For instance, a number of the early graduates and, later, faculty members went to Yale for graduate education. The original Ethiopian law curriculum, texts and commentaries were either authored by James Paul or under his direction and support. A pioneer of Ethiopian education, it is fair to say that James Paul shaped the institution, its faculty, library and program of study in the formative years.

By Serving as academic vice president of HSIU, James Paul's formative influence extended to the university as a whole at the crossroads from University College of Addis Ababa to Haile Sellassie University. James Paul deserves credit for the establishment of the chief faculties, foundational university legislation and institutional arrangements. He was also mentor to the first Ethiopian senior officers of HSIU, thereby advancing the university's driving mission of Ethiopianization.

James Paul continued to support the Law School and the University after his return to the United States. To cite only the most recent of his many contributions: He extended a generous donation, which became the core of a fund to support the law school library and the library at the Kifle Wodajo Center for Human Rights, Peace and Democracy at Addis Ababa University (AAU).

Beyond the education of the first generation of trained lawyers, James Paul labored to make sure that the Ethiopian legal profession lived up to the highest standards of law and morality. In this connection, it is noteworthy that he made frequent visits to Ethiopia during the Transitional Government to assist his friend, Kifle Wodajo, Chair of the Commission to Draft the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

Among his many valuable constitutional ideas, perhaps most notable were his seminal views on a constitutional order, the rule of law, and the independence of the judiciary.

Just before his sadly failing health James Paul served as Ethiopia's advocate in

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the compensation dispute with Eritrea, a dispute occasioned by the Ethio-Eritrean war. James Paul's able advocacy resulted in a triumphant decision in favor of Ethiopia. James Paul's lawyerly virtues to one side, this international case demonstrated outstanding traits of his personal character. First, his loyalty and devotion to Ethiopia, Second, at the time, AAU had put forward an offer to confer an honorary degree in recognition of his academic services. James Paul declined the honor on grounds that it may appear as a conflict of interest with his duty as Ethiopia's legal representative. Third, he donated his legal fees as a gift to AAU's libraries, once again showing that James Paul was always prepared to serve Ethiopia and her people far beyond the call of any legal or ethical duty.

I am certain that Ethiopia's citizens and her government will always cherish the memory of James Paul, one to whom we all owe a deep debt of gratitude that unhappily we cannot discharge.

James C.N. Paul: Personal Reminiscences

Fasil Nahom*

Prof. Jim Paul was a passionate teacher. Law particularly constitutional law, was his first love. As a student, I remember sitting in his classes mesmerized, when he would expound, Socratic style, profound principles and rhetorically ask, 'Who speaks for the law? Who speaks for justice?'

It was one day in early July 1963 that by chance I happened to meet Jim Paul at the entrance of the Law School at Sidest Kilo Campus of the then H.S.I. University. It was on the stairs of the Law School that I had my first encounter with Prof. Paul. He invited me to his office and there initiated me into law studies. His sincere concern for solving fundamental problems of society convinced me to study law.

In 1968 Prof. Paul had gone from being Dean of the Law School to become Academic Vice President of the University. As administrative duties of a fledgling university weighed heavily upon him he had to curtail his beloved teaching. I was asked to take over his classes and I still remember the dread of stepping into the shoes of such a great teacher. Thirty years later, when I had the opportunity to write a book on the new Ethiopian Constitution, it was a pleasure to pay back in a very little way by acknowledging his tremendous contribution.

As he fashioned the Law School together with a crack team of young professionals, so he put his stamp on the then only university in Ethiopia. He was keen to see the University become not only a transmitter of knowledge but also a center of relevant research and creativity.

His love for Ethiopia was a life-long affair and showed itself in action again and again. When the 1995 Constitution was on the drafting board, his public lectures under the auspices of the Constitutional Commission on Human Rights, the Independence of the Judiciary and many other weighty matters were profound and practical. His encounter with the Premier, I remember, correctly assessed Ethiopia's embarking on a new dawn. In his later years, his advocacy for just compensation pursuant to International Humanitarian Law, as he served on the Ethio-Eritrean Compensation Commission following the war, reflected another landmark.

Jim Paul's abiding philosophy that societies are best served when they observe the rule of law is a beacon for all of us to follow.

*Special Advisor to the Prime Minister

James C.N. Paul: In Memoriam

Selamu Bekele*

I am honored to be asked by the Addis Ababa University Law School to remember Dean Paul (as we used to call him, that is, except Ababeya, who used to address him as Jim). I remember quite a lot about Dean James C.N. Paul. I was there from the start. I write about few of them here and now.

In the summer vacation of 1963 I was working in the accounting office of the then newly founded Haile Selassie I University (Addis Ababa University now). Packages of books started to arrive addressed to a non-existing law faculty in the then HSIU. I was ordered to look after them. Some time in August, a slim bespectacled and a disheveled middle-aged man appeared in our office. He very humbly and with a very low and slow voice asked for the packages of books sent to the Faculty of Law. I showed him. Our boss came and told two of us to show the gentleman what was then used to be called the Duke House. He asked for the key and was told that it will be searched and delivered. Any way, we went and showed him the Duke House. He looked around. Then he broke the back door of the building and managed to enter and open the door. The House was in great mess and dirty. Next day, some keys were found and given him.

That is how James C.N Paul founded the Faculty of Law. Soon enough, applications for entrance were invited. The rooms were cleaned and room 27 was arranged with desks. His office and other rooms for the rest of faculty and supporting staff were prepared. The Law Library was fitted with shelves and books. Those of us whose applications were accepted started class in Room 27.

He taught us Constitutional Law. I can now say Dean Paul established the Faculty of Law A.A.U. single handed. Certainly, he had competent and devoted assistance from his teaching faculty and administrative staff. He went to extra lengths to create amity and collegiality between the faculty and us students. He often invited us to his house for big parties. He also tried very hard to build the standard of the Faculty to that of the best Faculties of Law of USA, Canada and Europe. In short, the history of the Faculty of Law is one chapter in the history of James C.N. Paul. In the end, I can vouch that he was a gentle, humble and good human being. Let God bless and protect the family he left behind. Let his soul RIP. Condolences to his family.

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*Ever since, the building has remained the law school building