

1989

Tribute to C. Stuart Brown

Margaret Elaine Black

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarship.law.uwyo.edu/land_water

Recommended Citation

Black, Margaret Elaine (1989) "Tribute to C. Stuart Brown," *Land & Water Law Review*. Vol. 24 : Iss. 2 , pp. 303 - 304.

Available at: https://scholarship.law.uwyo.edu/land_water/vol24/iss2/3

This Special Section is brought to you for free and open access by Law Archive of Wyoming Scholarship. It has been accepted for inclusion in Land & Water Law Review by an authorized editor of Law Archive of Wyoming Scholarship.

Tribute

Margaret Elaine Black

Chief Justice C. Stuart Brown, retired, does not like to be addressed as "Justice," nor does he like to wear a robe. He says that neither the title nor the robe do anything to enhance his job performance. He does not care much for pomp and circumstance and prefers to avoid situations that require a lot of formality. This is not a formal writing because I know he would not like that.

Judge Brown is an excellent teacher, and he is my good friend. He has many students and friends, not all of whom are in the legal profession. I can tell you these things because he selected me to be his judicial assistant shortly after Governor Ed Herschler appointed him to the Wyoming Supreme Court. I have worked at the court for twelve years and have made some other observations.

Wyoming citizens make justifiably tough demands of their judiciary. People at all levels of society are demanding that the courts define more closely such areas as constitutional rights, due process, civil liberties, and criminal punishments. Citizens want to know whether a judge is fair and impartial; whether he is a scholar of the law; whether he is hard working; in short, whether he has a "judicial temperament." Clearly, when we are talking about one C. Stuart Brown the answers to such questions are in the affirmative.

There were few big headlines about Judge Brown when he was district judge or justice and chief justice of the Wyoming Supreme Court. He did not hold press conferences nor intentionally make the five o'clock news. A modest man, Judge Brown was interested only in an honest day's work, keeping his caseload current in all the judicial offices he held. He has not changed; he still works hard, and he still strives for a quality product.

Judge Brown says that he did not always possess writing abilities, but that one of his high school teachers instilled in him the confidence that he would one day write well. Whatever the case, he became an excellent writer and continues to enjoy writing both for the court and for himself. This talent served him well as a member of the supreme court. His opinions are easy to follow because his writing style is uncomplicated, clear, concise, and readable. It is his "countryside" sense of humor, however, that grabs the attention of the legal profession as well as his simplicity in setting out the law. Perhaps much of this humor can be traced to his eye for seeing the obvious and for recognizing the contradictions of life and people in general. He is expert at observing the "human condition."

Stuart Brown is popular with younger people, particularly lawyers and students of the law, perhaps because of his unfailing belief and confidence in the abilities of the younger generation. Because he believes in

them as individuals, they believe in themselves. I know that he cultivates young people for his own sake, too; it enables him to keep up with the times and the ideas of today. He does not feel that his friends of more mature years can do that for him as well. He makes time, however, for all of his friends and family; he writes to them and remembers things important to them.

Of all of his accomplishments Judge Brown prides himself most as a husband and family man. He is very proud of his family, and they remain close, although not geographically so.

Judge Brown has told me that he likes people to “roast” him a little, and that he enjoys a dig now and then. He said: “I don’t mind if those faults surface; I have so few, you know.” That gives me leave to relate one of my favorite stories.

Brown is a generous man, almost to a flaw. He is generous with his time, ideas, and even money. He is generous to everyone but himself; because of this he is no slave to fashion. Fortunately, he has “concerned” friends who come to the rescue when this defect gets out of hand. A few years ago Judge Brown was attending a judicial conference in a city out of state. It became apparent to a couple of these friends that some of his attire was less than attractive at the scene of a judicial meeting. The friends’ observation this time focused on Judge Brown’s shoes and watch. They decided to help him avoid embarrassing them by persuading him to buy a new pair of shoes and a new watch. This effort was nothing short of physical coercion. He could never figure out his friends’ concern; the shoes fit, and the watch still worked. Upon his return from the meeting, however, he was wearing a big grin; he could not wait for his new purchases to be noticed. This is how he occasionally shows up with a new hat, new coat or suit. Do not be misled. These friendly acts of roasting are reflective of the care and respect his friends have for him.

Stuart Brown is far from retired. He still sits on supreme court cases when current members must be recused, and is sought after to sit on the bench for district court judges throughout the state. His style on and off the bench is to reduce a matter to its simplest state; it almost always results in the most logical solution. I think he is appreciated most by his contemporaries for his judicial temperament, as well as his “practical man, common sense” approach. Stuart Brown is a good judge and a good man.