SHALE D. STILLER

In late 1963, the Maryland Law Review published a lengthy book review of a biography of Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes. Shale D. Stiller was the author of the book review. The last paragraph of Shale's review quoted this passage from a lecture Holmes had delivered to Harvard undergraduates in 1886:

"The law is the calling of thinkers. But to those who believe with me that the least godlike of man's activities is the large survey of causes . . . , I say - and I say no longer with any doubt - that a man may live greatly in the law as well as elsewhere; that there as well as elsewhere his thought may find its unity in an infinite perspective; that there as well as elsewhere he may wreak himself upon life, may drink the bitter cup of heroism, may wear his heart out after the unattainable."

Shale has often quoted those lines when he speaks to lawyers and others. In many ways, those lines epitomize Shale's entire career. In Holmes's words, he has "wreaked himself . . . out after the unattainable."

Let us begin with Shale's career as a lawyer. He is a partner in the international law firm, DLA Piper LLP. He has actively engaged in the private practice of law for over 60 years. He never sought public office; indeed, he generally attempted to avoid the limelight, preferring simply to help his enormous group of clients - both individuals and corporations - navigate the terrifying shoals of complex legal rules.

But in addition to serving his clients, he has energetically endeavored to improve the law in many ways.

A. He has been an Adjunct Professor at the University of Maryland for 58 consecutive years, a longevity record at the Law School. He hopes to continue teaching for many more years. He has taught Commercial Law, Constitutional Law, Federal Jurisdiction, Federal Estate and Gift
Taxation, and the Law of Non-Profit Organizations - a wide ranging portfolio for anyone. When asked to identify which of the courses he has enjoyed more than any other, he instantly replies: "Federal Jurisdiction." When asked to explain that choice, his response: "It is the most complicated of all the courses in law school, and it is also one of the most important; it deals with the very structure of our great country, the meaning of federalism, and the nuances of that very concept."

B. Shale has tried many of the great cases in Maryland - the seminal School Finance case, where after a four month trial ending with appeals to the Court of Appeals, he was completely successful; the scores of cases arising out of the Old Court Savings and Loan scandal, where he had been appointed by Governor Hughes to represent the State in recovering hundreds of millions of dollars for the depositors and the State; and suits he won against the Islamic Republic of Iran in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia on behalf of American citizens whose family members in the United States Armed Forces were murdered by Hezbollah, an agent of Iran. Shale has argued many cases in both appellate courts in Maryland; his last seven were in 2017-2020, and he won them all.

C. His efforts to improve the law have been legion. He and the late Roger D. Redden, one of his dearest friends, were the leaders of the famous Henderson Commission, appointed by Governor Tawes in 1966 to examine all the statutes of Maryland relating to the estates of decedents, minors, and disabled persons. The Commission issued its report in 1968. Roger and Shale testified on behalf of the report on many occasions before the General Assembly of Maryland. The legislation recommended by the Commission was unanimously passed and enacted in 1969. Roger and Shale described the legislation in their classic 1969 law review article frequently cited by Maryland appellate courts: "It may not be hyperbolic to refer to these . . . measures . . . as the most significant statutory reform of private law to have been originated in Maryland in this century." The
purpose of the law was to simplify the administration of estates, to reduce the expenses administration, to clarify the law, and to eliminate those parts of the law which were archaic and no longer useful.

The completion of the task of modernizing the law of estate was only the beginning of Shale's task of wreaking himself out after the unattainable. The Stiller-Redden article called for the creation of new commission to rewrite the ENTIRE code of statutes in Maryland.

"The major significance of Chapters 3 and 4 of the Laws of 1969 is not the overdue substantive revisions of the Maryland laws relating to the estates of decedents, minor, and incompetents. Rather, it is the apparent recognition by the General Assembly that the entire Maryland Code needs a complete reorganization and recodification."

Some laughed; many scoffed at such a suggestion. But it was time to cleanse the Augean stables. Shortly thereafter, such a commission was appointed. Today, both lawyers and laymen can revel in the fact that the old black-covered volumes of the Maryland Code - horribly disorganized, terribly archaic in many instances, and often unintelligible - have been totally superseded. For the first 20 years of the new commission's work, Shale was a major participant and draftsman; indeed, he was the principal draftsman of the volumes in the new Code dealing with Courts and Judicial Proceedings, Real Property, Estates and Trusts, and Tax-General.

Shale's passion to improve the law was also manifested in many other ways. In 1970, he was elected to membership in the American Law Institute, a group whose primary responsibility is to prepare "Restatements of the Law." Its members are judges, professors, and leading lawyers. The Restatements are prime source material for researchers and for the courts. Shale has been very active at the American Law Institute, having served on the consultative bodies in at least seven substantive areas - Suretyship, Trusts, Property, The Law Governing Lawyers, Servitudes, Wills and Other Donative Transfers, and the Law of Non-Profit Organizations.
Shale has also written books and many articles. He has spoken at scores of continuing legal education meetings. His written subjects have included three BNA Tax Management portfolios (dealing with life insurance and tax credits), the law of fixtures, accounts receivable and inventory financing, estate planning, and two 400-page books of forms for Maryland lawyers who deal with the Uniform Commercial Code.

D. Shale Stiller is the only Maryland lawyer ever elected to be a Fellow of both The American College of Tax Counsel and the American College of Estate and Trust Counsel. Just a few years ago, he was named by Town and Country magazine as one of the best 100 estate planning lawyers in the country. He was the only Maryland lawyer on that list.

Those who know Shale Stiller will attest to the fact that he is single-minded in his devotion to his clients and to improvements in the law, but he also has been endlessly active in community affairs.

A. Education - In addition to his 58-year span of teaching at the University of Maryland Law School, he has been a member of the Board of Trustees of the Johns Hopkins University for 37 years, where he has served as the Chairman of the Advisory Board of the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, Chairman of the University Library Council, Chairman of the Board of the Peabody Institute, and chairman of important committees. He also has been a close personal advisor to the last five presidents of the University.

For several years, he was Chairman of the Yale Law School Association of Maryland, and he reminds his partners that ever since U.S. News and World Report began ranking law schools, Yale has always been #1.
For the last 13 years, he has been a Trustee of the Bar-Ilan University in Israel. He served as Chairman of the University of Baltimore Law School Advisory Committee for several years and was a member of the University of Maryland Law School Board of Visitors for three years.

For over 15 years, Shale was a member of the Board of Trustees of The Park School of Baltimore, holding every office, including serving as President for three years. (His own precollege education was entirely in the public schools of Baltimore, culminating in his being graduated from Baltimore City College at the age of 15).

B. Charitable Foundations - Shale has served on the boards of directors of eight charitable foundations in Baltimore, at least four of which are among the 10 largest in the area. He has been the President of three of those foundations - The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation (5 years), The Charles Crane Family Foundation (23 years) and The Leonard and Helen Stulman Foundation (21 years), and the Vice-President of another, The Haran Dahan Foundation.

C. Medical Institutions - For 27 years, Shale has served as a trustee of Johns Hopkins Medicine, the entity which directs the operations of The Johns Hopkins Hospital, the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, and several community hospitals. For 9 of those years, he was the Vice-Chairman of the Board of Trustees. He was the Chairman of the Compensation Committee for 19 years. He is understandably proud of his association with Johns Hopkins Hospital, which he constantly reminds everyone has been ranked by U.S. News and World Report to be one of the three best hospitals in the United States for 30 years.

D. Jewish Organizations - Shale served as National Vice-President of the American Jewish Committee for 16 years, and as a member of its National Executive Council and its
National Board of Governors for many years. About 50 years ago, he was Chairman of the Baltimore Chapter of the American Jewish Committee.

He was a director of the Associated Jewish Charities of Baltimore for several years (in addition to serving as its general counsel for over 30 years). He served as President of the Jewish Family and Children's Service in Baltimore from 1972-1974, as a Trustee of the Baltimore Hebrew University from 1992-1996, and as a director of the Baltimore Jewish Council for 7 years, during which he was the Vice-Chairman for 4 years.

Some individuals are elected to boards of directors for the "honor." Shale does not fall into that group. When he accepts the position of a board member, he rolls up his sleeves and goes to work. He is also a disbeliever in the notion that "to get along, go along." He has never been hesitant to challenge sacred cows, and in most instances, he has persuaded his colleagues on charitable boards that substantial improvements can be made in their administration.

E. Miscellaneous awards – In 2016, The Johns Hopkins University granted to Shale it highest honor, a Doctorate of Humane letters. He is a member of the Order of the Coif. In 2011, the Maryland Legal Aid Bureau recognized Shale as a Champion of Human Rights and Justice; the American Inns of Court, at a ceremony at the Supreme Court of the United State presided over by Justice Sotomayor, granted its Professionalism Award to Shale; the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, presented to both Ellen and Shale its Award for Public Service; and the Baltimore Bar Association in a “first-ever” event, named Shale one of three attorneys designated as “legal legends.” In 1984, Baltimore Magazine and The Daily Record quoted Roger Redden as proclaiming Shale to be the “all around decathlon winner” among Baltimore’s Best Lawyers.
Shale is a consummate practical joker, as many of his friends will attest. He is a member of The Sanhedrin Gaming Society, a rowdy and hopelessly bawdy group of nine poker players who were with each other for over 40 years.

What else? Shale is devoted to his dear wife of 37 years, Judge Ellen M. Heller, their many sons, and their seven grandchildren. He and Ellen travel extensively throughout the world, having visited over 25 different countries, mainly for the purpose of providing aid to beleaguered Jewish individuals but also to visit the great art museums. He is a voracious devotee of the humanities. His chief hobbies are listening to classical music and attending the theatre and museums. In 1970, as a young attorney, he added to his regular 80-hour work week by pursuing and obtaining a Master of Liberal Arts (with honors) at Johns Hopkins University. His goal was to challenge his mind with non-legal interests. And so, he began reading Dante, Goethe, and Chinese history. He has been a season subscriber to the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra for over 60 years. He adores chamber music and challenges anyone to name a better chamber music series in the country than the Shriver Hall series at Johns Hopkins. Ellen and Shale have been season subscribers for 25 years to the great Shakespeare Theatre in Washington. They also attend the theatre in Baltimore and often travel to New York and London for the same purpose. Shale reads voluminously every day -- the New York Times, the Washington Post, and the Wall Street Journal are delivered to his home early every morning -- and he subscribes to a bevy of magazines (The New Yorker, the Economist, The New York Review of Books, The London Review of Books, The Jewish Review of Books, Foreign Affairs, The Atlantic, etc.). His favorite authors are Dante, John Keats, and Isaiah Berlin. Ellen's and Shale's home teems with books - thousands of them. When does he sleep? Don't ask, but if pressed, he will tell you that Ellen works harder than he does.