

I wrote my senior paper for Charles Black on the Torrey Canyon oil spill and water pollution regulations in the United States and elsewhere. I suppose I imagined that I might become either an admiralty or an environmental lawyer.

As things turned out, I did quite a lot of environmental work at my law firm after I arrived, probably because I had just finished deeply researching that broad subject area and was the one most familiar with the nuances. It did not take me long to realize, however, that being an environmental lawyer at a large firm meant that I would represent polluters.

I felt more comfortable on the other side of the table and ended up being deeply involved in environmental work at the statewide and, more diligently, at the local level. I was the vice chairman and chairman of the land acquisitions committee for 10 years of the Connecticut Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, chairman of the 4,500-acre McLean Game Refuge in Simsbury and Granby, a founding member in 1972 of the Granby Land Trust and an active participant and occasional president of that later organization ever since. I helped write the Connecticut inland wetlands regulations, co-authored a study on Connecticut land use law for the United States Senate, served on the Granby Planning and Zoning Commission for 36 years, was a probate judge for four years and, by appointment by Connecticut's chief justice, served as a probate magistrate with statewide jurisdiction for a couple of years.

I found my work in the probate area to be deeply satisfying, because I could help people through the most personally wrenching crises in their lives. I was not the passive umpire calling balls and strikes. Instead, I could be an active participant as the parties in contested cases worked through their disagreements and, when it seemed appropriate to do so, I could offer solutions they might not of thought about. I tried not to be intrusive, but to be viewed as being impartial, willing to listen and helpful. I hope others saw me that way, but one never knows. I also had served for three years on the board of selectmen, so, when you add it all up, I had an elected office in Granby for 43 years and an appointed one for two more.

I've been an active participant in the work of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council. It did not take me long to understand that, if I am to contribute anything to society, I can be most effective working at the local level, which I've done in a lot of other ways, as well. My other passion has been historic preservation, and I have served on the boards of the Connecticut Historical Society and Historic Deerfield. I also have written articles and lectured at various museums on American furniture, Russia leather and other topics. While I did create and lead a corporate trust practice area at the firm which became nationally prominent, my greatest pleasures have come from my community activities.

*- Recycled from Put's Summer 2020 Class Notes*