

GARY VAUSE: A GREAT LEADER

Hon. Thomas E. Stringer, Sr.*

I really did not get to know Dean W. Gary Vause very well until, as a member of the dean search committee, I had the opportunity to participate in an in-depth evaluation of his qualifications for the vacant deanship. Like the other members of the committee, I was quite impressed and realized early on that he was the person to lead Stetson University College of Law into the twenty-first century. This initial impression matured into reality over the following four years during his service as Dean.

I subsequently became chair of the Board of Overseers and had the opportunity to work closely with Gary on several issues. I was most impressed by his level of commitment to Stetson and its mission of producing some of the finest legal minds in this country. One of the main functions of the Board of Overseers is to serve as an advisory body to the Dean. Gary understood this, and without fail, he consulted the Board and sought its advice on every important decision affecting the school.

In the last year and a half of his tenure as Dean, the dream of a few became the reality of many as we began constructing the new Tampa Law Center and Campus. It would not have been possible without Gary's vision, leadership, and perseverance. This Center will forever stand as a monument to his love for and commitment to Stetson, and his legacy will live on in each of the students who graduate and go on to epitomize the qualities of professional excellence for which Gary stood.

* © 2003, The Honorable Thomas E. Stringer, Sr. All rights reserved. Judge, Second District Court of Appeal. B.A., New York University, 1967; J.D., Stetson University College of Law, 1971.

Following college and before attending law school, Judge Stringer joined the United States Air Force where he attained the rank of Captain. After graduation from Stetson, he served as an Assistant State Attorney from October 1974 to November 1976. He was in private practice until his appointment to the Hillsborough County Court by Governor Bob Graham in April 1984.

In December 1987, he was appointed to the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit Court by Governor Bob Martinez where he served as the Administrative Judge for the Family Law Division until January 1994. Judge Stringer has served as a member of the Implementation Committee for the Florida Supreme Court Gender Bias Commission and was appointed by the Supreme Court to the Florida Commission for Responsible Fatherhood and to the Florida Family Court Steering Committee.

Dean W. Gary Vause and Celia Vause