

REMARKS OF THE CHAIRMAN AT RETIREMENT DINNER FOR  
DONALD J. STOCKING

One of the peculiarities I have developed as I gain more experience – my euphemism for “growing older” – is a greater interest in history generally and particularly in the history of institutions with which I am involved. Naturally, since my return to the Commission I have become more exposed to the “folklore” that flows up and down the corridors and, sometimes, outside our doors.

One thing that I have learned from greater experience – and I do mean “experience” now – is that while learning can be accomplished by referring to pieces of paper or reels of computer tape, or scanning cathode ray tubes, true wisdom cannot. That can come only from talking with people and, especially, people who themselves have been exposed to experience radically different from your own.

As you are all aware, this year is the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Commission’s founding. During that extremely active period of the New Deal, an enormous amount of knowledge and wisdom was built up concerning our responsibilities. Unfortunately as each year passes, there are fewer and fewer people available to us who can pass it on.

One such now will, I regret to say, be Don Stocking. Now, I don’t mean to imply that, through Don’s retirement, we are losing someone who, in Dean Acheson’s phrase, was “present at the creation,” for that obviously isn’t the case. But not all wisdom concerning the Commission’s activities emanates from Washington – despite what we may tell you in any particular matter.

What I am trying to say in my clumsy way is that, when I was reviewing Don’s record of service with the Commission and outside of it, the thought occurred to me: My God, what a rich and satisfying life this man has lead and how much could he tell me, indeed all of us at the Commission, about what we really do!

Since some of you may not be intimately familiar with Don's career, I would like to review it here with you briefly. Don received his law degree in 1931 from the University of Montana and spent two years in general practice in Great Falls. He then served for four years, from 1934 until May 1938, as the Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Montana.

He has been with the Commission ever since, first as an Associate Attorney in our Seattle Regional Office, then as the Acting Regional Administrator in Denver and, since March 1962, the Regional Administrator.

But that's just the bare bones. During his many years with us, he received the SEC's Distinguished Service Award in 1967, was the SEC nominee for the national Civil Service League Career Service Award in 1962, and in what I suspect was of more tangible value to him, in 1957 received a Merit (cash) award. He also received Outstanding Performance Ratings in 1962 through 1968 and in 1970.

Don's obviously busy SEC career did not, however, mean neglect of his private life: he has seven children, including twin girls. It is probably not surprising, therefore, that he has been very active in community and civic affairs, particularly in connection with youth groups. Perhaps the high point of his private career was his three-year incumbency as President of the Seattle-King County Council of Camp Fire Girls. Apparently the women have fewer hang-ups on this sort of thing because the highest post he achieved on the male side was Neighborhood Commissioner of his parish's Boy Scout troop.

Don also brought his talents to bear in municipal government, having served for over twenty years as a member of the Municipal League of Seattle and King County, a non-profit and non-partisan organization working for better local government. During this time, he participated in the drafting of the present charter for the City of Seattle and in extensive research on local governmental problems which has resulted in many beneficial changes.

Upon this occasion, there is little I can add; Don's distinguished career speaks for itself. The most that I can do, on behalf of the Commission, is say "Thank you."