

RISA GOLUBOFF: There's one last matter on the agenda before we adjourn. And it is a bittersweet duty for me. It is professor at George Yin's retirement. I am sad to see this friend, colleague, and tax law luminary-- I told you tax would come back. I'm sad not to see him as often in the future as I've seen him in the past. But I'm delighted to celebrate with him, a wonderful lifetime of achievement-- 25 years of which, we were lucky to have him to vote to UVA Law School.

Before receiving his JD with honors from George Washington University in 1977, George studied mathematics and economics at the University of Michigan. He taught in the Teacher Corps. He obtained a masters in early childhood education from the University of Florida. And he was a computer program in the Atlanta public school system.

Upon law school graduation, George clerked in the tax division of the Department of Justice and for the US Court of Claims Trial division. He then joined the firm Sutherland, Asbill, and Brennan as a tax associate, where he spent the next five years.

George's first foray into public service as a lawyer came in 1983, when he served as tax counsel to the US Senate Finance Committee. Leading a project to revise a portion of the Internal Revenue Code on corporate shareholder transactions, corporate acquisitions, and reorganizations. George said that the juxtaposition of practicing tax law in private practice and making tax policy as a public servant piqued his interest in academia. He saw the beauty and challenge of not only evaluating the law as it is. But in studying what it could be.

So following his time on Capitol Hill, George returned to the University of Florida. This time, as faculty at the Levin College of Law for eight years. During his time there, he served on the Board of Editors of the Florida Tax Review. And was a member of the board of advisors to NYU's IRS/CPE curriculum coordinated by its graduate tax program.

Now, you may not know this, but Florida, NYU, and UVA are the tax powerhouses of law schools. And George has made his mark on all three of them, helping to shape the three leading tax programs in the nation. And that is certainly what he did when he came to UVA. First as a visitor and then permanently joining the faculty in 1994, where he has served as the Edwin S. Cohen Distinguished Professor of Law and Taxation.

With his appointment, George became the first tenured Asian-American faculty member at the law school. And he has since learned, he is also the grand-nephew of UVAs first Chinese

graduate-- W.W. Yin-- who is now the namesake of one of the international residential college dorms.

Since joining our faculty, George's scholarship and mastery of tax law have made and continue to make him a highly sought after voice across the university and beyond. He is the co-author of two books, *Partnership Taxation*, and *Corporate Taxation*-- both with multiple additions. As well as scores of articles and Tax Notes, the NYU, Florida, and Georgetown law reviews, and tax journals.

His service and leadership includes serving as a consultant to the Department of Treasury, the National Commission on Restructuring, the Internal Revenue Service, and the US House Ways and Means select revenue measures subcommittee. As well as service with the American Law Institute Reporter on the federal tax project on income taxation of private business enterprises, the University of Virginia Tax Law Foundation board of trustees, the IRS advisory council, faculty advisor for the Virginia Tax Review. And he still finds time to serve on the Charlottesville Symphony Society Board of Directors.

Now I don't know about you, but there can't be that many more institutions on tax that exist that George has not served on. Most significantly, perhaps-- from 2003 to 2005, George served as chief of staff of the US Joint Committee on Taxation-- a position among the most influential on national tax policy.

It's very challenging to do well given all the varying interests surrounding it, and he was charged with convening a non-partisan body, getting nonpartisan support within a highly partisan environment. And what he said at the time was, "if you're doing your job right, nobody likes you." Sounds like being a dean, maybe-- I hope not.

Some of the signature bills of his time include the Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003, the Working Families Tax Relief Act of 2004, and the American Jobs Creation Act of 2005.

Overall, the committee expanded its ability to perform macro and economic analysis of tax legislation. And completed a major report setting forth options to improve tax compliance and reform tax expenditures.

In an interview shortly after leaving the post, George was clear that there were only a few things that could entice him to stay in Washington, rather than return to Charlottesville, UVA,

and the life of the tax mind. What would have kept him there? He said, "if the Nationals plan to stay in DC, and have any interest in hiring me, I certainly would give it serious consideration."

George has had a remarkable career in the private sector, the academy, and public service. Nurturing, and then drawing on a deep and broad wealth of experience, alongside a persistence and problem solving. And a deep sense of public and professional responsibility.

What is even more remarkable is that he has done it all with an integrity and humility deserving of emulation by all who know him. He is the boss who defends his employees against criticism. The colleague who is, quote, unfailingly approachable and supportive over the years. The teacher who rejected the paper chase model in favor of-- as he said-- "his nice guy self. And an ability to make-- in a student's words-- an otherwise daunting subject accessible.

Professor Jon Cannon put it this way-- "George combines a practical sense of what's important with a scholar's commitment to finding and saying the truth. He is unfailingly generous and kind. There could not have been a better model."

What a pleasure to sit with George and Mary the other night, a few weeks ago, as the university celebrated his retirement. There were others there, too, but really, it was for George. Hearing you talk about your excitement to continue to think about hard problems now that you will have more time and to be able to read more broadly, especially in history-- my own love. From our conversation, I gathered you'd already read quite widely in.

But I was touched George mentioned that he had hesitated to read broadly outside of the tax field. Because I was paying him to do tax. I don't think many of our faculty take that responsibility quite as seriously as George does. It makes a dean happy.

But really, it was so wonderful to hear that you were excited to continue to do what drew you to the academy in the first place. And to hear you and Mary talk about your plans for travel and with your grandchildren. And generally, enjoying life in the future. What a pleasure.

We will miss your everyday presence. But we hope that you will visit often. And we know that your innumerable contributions to the field and your binding friendships built here will always be happy reminders of our shared time together. We wish you the very best as you begin your next chapter as Professor Emeritus. And I offer you this bottle of champagne to drink at an appropriate time.

GEORGE YIN:

Thank you all so much. President Shannon, Dean Goluboff, distinguished alums, and other distinguished guests. It's been such a privilege for me to be a member of the faculty. And to be part of your law school all of this time. And I have so many, many people and things to thank. But I will just limit myself to thanking just one group-- which is all of you.

I probably will never fully appreciate the many ways in which you have helped and will continue to help the law school. But I want to share one way in which, perhaps, many of you don't even realize how you help the law school. But to explain this, I need the dean's indulgence to allow me to share a little bit of a faculty secret-- if you will.

Most of us in the faculty have little difficulty maintaining our excitement and interest in our scholarship and research. It's the life that we chose. And it's a great life. To be able to follow your interests and to be able to identify problems that intrigue you, and to take the time to work them out and figure them out. And then to try to write them up your findings, as well as you can. It's just a tremendous life that we have.

But when it comes to the other important aspect of our faculty responsibilities, which is teaching-- this story is a little bit different. So in our first year of teaching, most of us way over prepare for all of our classes. In part, this is because we are anticipating possible questions that students will have. But in large part, it's really to satisfy our own curiosities.

When do we get into a subject matter, we try to understand it as well as we can. We try to figure things out. We try to understand how level one of a particular topic leads to levels two and three and so forth.

After we'd been teaching for some number of years, when our minds are still, perhaps, struggling with how level six connects to level seven-- we go into our classrooms. And we discover that our students-- bright and as enthusiastic as they are-- do not yet understand level one. And try-- as we do-- during the semester, we discover that by the end of the semester, we can, at best, get to begin to discuss level three or a level four.

So the question is, how do we maintain our excitement and interest in teaching? And my answer-- at least, in part-- is to think about all of you. Now, obviously, your successes are affirmed to some extent-- the work that we try to do in the classroom.

But more important than that, I think about the loyalty and support that you continue to provide to the school year after year. And it highlights, for me, the importance of our classroom work.

And the reason is that I know that however successful we may be in our scholarly work, most of you only know us through our classroom work.

And so when I approach each new group of students, I think about you. And I think about how some predecessors of mine who were able to do a great job in the classroom, were able to produce such a great and loyal set of current alums. And I realize if I do my job right, I can help to contribute the next future generation of alums who will be as great and loyal as all of you.

So congratulations, to all of you on your great accomplishments. And thank you, especially, for all of the continued support and loyal help that you've been providing. It's helped to stimulate-- at least, me-- to do my very best in the classroom every year. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]