

University of Chicago Law School

## Chicago Unbound

---

Journal Articles

Faculty Scholarship

---

1966

### Aaron Director: A Personal Appreciation

Bernard D. Meltzer

Follow this and additional works at: [https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/journal\\_articles](https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/journal_articles)



Part of the [Law Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Bernard D. Meltzer, "Aaron Director: A Personal Appreciation," 9 *Journal of Law and Economics* 5 (1966).

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Faculty Scholarship at Chicago Unbound. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal Articles by an authorized administrator of Chicago Unbound. For more information, please contact [unbound@law.uchicago.edu](mailto:unbound@law.uchicago.edu).

## AARON DIRECTOR: A PERSONAL APPRECIATION

BERNARD D. MELTZER  
*University of Chicago Law School*

In this issue of the *Journal* I find it "difficult to speak and impossible to be silent." It is always difficult to express in public admiration and affection for a friend, and especially so when the friend has extraordinary modesty as well as an ironic irreverence towards ceremonial occasions. But it was impossible for me to be silent when I was given an opportunity to join in a salute to Aaron Director—a salute that, as I have special reasons to know, is richly deserved, however lightly it may be shrugged off by its recipient.

Aaron Director's twenty years at the University of Chicago Law School have been especially fruitful. Working closely with many students and colleagues, he has forced them to rethink their own positions and to scrutinize the modish slogans of the day. He has enriched scholarship not only by his own contributions but also by serving as a catalyst and critic of important work by others. He has helped to bring a new vitality to legal education through the interweaving of economics, history, and law; and he has done so by grappling with concrete problems while meticulously avoiding any grand exhortations and inter-disciplinary work. He has been a superb teacher not only of students but also of their instructors, in part, because his example has moved others to deepen their analysis and to develop the ideas that he has so generously donated. Indeed, he has been conducting one of the most successful programs of adult education in the United States.

Like all demanding teachers, he has occasionally expressed dissatisfaction about the results of his efforts, at least in the case of one of his colleague-students. But whatever dissatisfaction he may have felt about his efforts has not been shared by his immediate colleagues or by the law school world. His work here and its radiation elsewhere have given a new breadth and bite to American legal education.

I do not pretend to be able to describe the qualities of mind and spirit that account for his achievement. There are, of course, his range, his depth, his tough-mindedness—all graced by deep learning, which he never confuses with wisdom and which he never uses to make a display rather than a point. There is also his capacity to acknowledge the limitations of his own knowledge and, if need be, to confess his own errors. But perhaps his outstanding quality is a fastidious and austere integrity that rejects catchwords, looseness, senti-

mentality, and intellectual or institutional trimming of any kind. He has given us all, students and colleagues alike, a challenging example of a powerful and well-furnished mind, with an undeviating commitment to the search for truth and a disciplined awareness of the difference between hope and reality.

Aaron Director has contributed much to the world of law and economics and the marriage between them. It is congenial to think that, as in all good marriages, both parties have received as well as given. In any case, his colleagues and his friends are delighted that his gifts, occasionally warmed by the rays of California sun, will continue to enrich the life of this law school as well as the larger community of law and scholarship.