



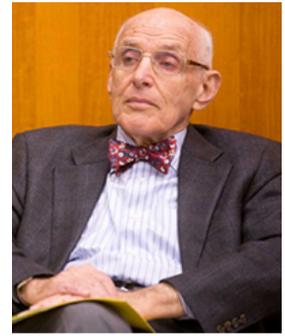
Under the watchful eye...



Bertha Mather McPherson upbraids Professor Joseph Lawrence Sax

Professor Joseph Lawrence Sax (1936-2014) widely known as the “father of environmental law” was author of the first environmental law based on the public trust doctrine.

However, on one occasion, his writings fell afoul of Stephen Mather’s daughter, Bertha Mather McPherson.



Bertha Mather McPherson did far more than simply save and assemble materials related to her father. She was an ardent champion of his reputation and challenger to any misrepresentation of his character or actions. Case in point, from recently discovered letters in the attic...

In the June 1982 issue of *Natural History Magazine*, Professor Sax penned “Free Enterprise in the Woods.” In the article he wrote, “...the worst that can be said of Mather was that he occasionally let his conception of interior elegance run rampant. At the Great Northern’s ...hotel in Glacier National Park...guests arrived in rickshaws and entered then a Chinese pagoda decorated with imitation cherry blossoms. In the dining rooms...guests chose between Swiss-costumed or geisha waitresses and ate to the sound of tom-toms beaten by Blackfoot Indians...”

That September Bertha wrote to Sax, “...This report is so entirely out of character to what I know to be my father’s principles and taste that I wrote to Horace Albright to ask if he had any recollection of such practices...”

Bertha then includes Albright’s response: “...the paragraph you marked has no truth in it. If what the author says ever happened, it was before 1915. STM and I were in Glacier Park that season and every season afterwards for years, and there was never any such foolishness.”

Sax immediately replied, “...I am a great admirer of your father’s achievements...and if I have erred in my article, I will certainly send an erratum to the magazine...” He adds, “...the source of my statement is a book entitled *In Search of the Golden West: The Tourist in Western America*...the passage only speaks of a few years after 1905...”

Bertha replies, “I am very appreciative of your prompt reply...and your willingness to send an erratum to the *Natural History Magazine*...I feel the activities described...in your article occurred before 1915 and therefore before my father had anything to do with the National Parks...”

Score one for Bertha!