
January 1999

Tribute to Hibernia Turbeville

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Recommended Citation

Ann Van Thomas, *Tribute to Hibernia Turbeville*, 52 SMU L. REV. 19 (1999)
<https://scholar.smu.edu/smulr/vol52/iss1/9>

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TRIBUTE TO HIBERNIA TURBEVILLE

*Ann Van Wynen Thomas**

HIBERNIA Turbeville—Dear friend, for fifty years we shared joys, laughter, and a few tears. I can still recall the day A.J. introduced me to you, and I said, “The only way I will ever remember your name is to think of ”Tess of the “D’Urbevilles’.”

“Great,” you replied, “call me Tess and that will be another added to my string of nicknames—Big, Bernie, Miss T, Tess.” So A.J. and I often called you Tess much to the confusion of your other friends.

When introduced to the original SMU Law Library, that tiny dark space, crammed in a small area of the basement of Dallas Hall, and surrounded—to protect the books from predatory hands—by of all things, chicken wire, I remarked on the smell—unlike any library smell in my recollection. “Ah,” you explained pointing to the small cubicles surrounding the library which served as offices for the law professors, “One of our professors is addicted to oranges. He keeps a crate of oranges in his office and eats at least a dozen a day, and this whole place smells rather fruity.” Many years later, after the library had moved to Storey Hall, you would come upon a book and call it to our attention: “Oranges!”

The move to Storey Hall demonstrated your super organizational abilities. On that great day, A.J. and I stood on the second floor balcony watching your transfer of books from the basement of Dallas Hall to the second and third floors of Storey Hall. You had hired a number of law students to do the heavy work, and they had packed and marked each box according to your directions, as well as marking each section of the new law library. Beginning at 6 a.m., a parade of box-carrying students, marching like so many ants, left Dallas Hall and placed the books on the correct shelves in Storey Hall. And at eventide the task was completed; every book was in its correct space. The library was ready for use. A few years later you had to repeat the process when the library, now greatly enlarged, moved to Underwood Law Library, and again, because you were so well organized, the transition was carried out with almost no disruption of library services.

And you had an uncanny ability to assess character very quickly. One morning, when the library was still in its infancy in Dallas Hall, you mentioned to me that the money from the coke machine did not tally with the number of cokes purchased. You marched up to one of the students and

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asked him if he could explain. He gave you a song and a dance, but after looking at your angry face, coughed up the missing money. "You know," you told him, "This could ruin your chances of ever becoming a lawyer." The student hung his head in shame. "I shall not report this, and you will probably become a famous Texas lawyer some day. But I want you to remember that there is a law librarian in your background who caught you with your fingers in the till. When you become a lawyer, I want you to deal honestly with all your contacts and clients." And he went forth and became famous and was always praised for his honesty and integrity.

And then there were the wonderful people you selected to work with you. The Cherokee Princess, whose domain was the receiving room and the card catalogue room in the basement of Storey Hall. She rode the slow elevator from the basement to the second floor catalogue area so often that we labeled it her pony, Old Paint. Cherokee Princess or not, she was a marvelous catalogist, often catching errors in the Library of Congress classifications. There was the refugee Yugoslav Baroness, whom you placed in charge of the international law library and who spoke six languages. What a delight she was to we poor illiterate professors who needed a foreign phrase translated or a foreign language paragraph explained. And I shall never forget the student assistant who worked for you a number of years who flatly declared that he would never marry a woman who could not make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. When you wryly suggested that maybe that function could be easily taught by him to one not so gifted, he explained, "It's the principle behind it, Miss T, if she can't make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, she is a woman who is not well brought up."

Hibernia, your marvelous forthrightness was something one can never forget. One day you were driving me down Hillcrest on some mission or other when a University Park policeman signaled for you to stop. "Little lady," he said, "I'll bet you can't guess why I pulled you over."

"Oh yes, I can guess," you retorted, "It was because you couldn't go fast enough to catch all the other cars that were passing me by." Red faced, he only gave you a warning not to speed on Hillcrest.

With a smile I recall when we took a Danubian River Cruise together, and the airline mis-directed your luggage to Austria instead of Turkey. The airline told you to go and purchase a new outfit until your luggage could catch up. So here we two gray headed women wandered around the lingerie shops in Istanbul, finding all you needed but a pair of panties. After six lingerie shops indicated they were not available, we returned to the hotel. You told the tour guide that an old friend used to sing the only line that he knew of a World War I song, but that you now could add a second line—"They don't wear pants in the southern part of France, AND ONLY A FOOL THINKS THEY DO IN ISTANBUL."

When last we met, dear friend, early last May, you came with Professor Joe Norton and Jean Jury to see me here at Spaniel Hall on the Shores of Lake Texoma. The lake sparkled like the champagne we sipped. April

rains had painted the low hills of this cross timber area with a palette of many greens. The trees were gently tossed by spring breezes, and the hillsides were covered with gailardia, Indian paint brushes and wine cups. A few fluffy white clouds danced across the blue, blue sky. "Living in the city," you exclaimed, "makes one forget how beautiful God made North Texas in the spring!" A perfect day, a perfect memory.

Green be the turf above thee,
Friend of my better days,
None knew thee but to love thee,
Nor named thee but to praise.

