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WINGO DEDICATION

*Ann Thomas**

IT seems like it happened only yesterday, so swiftly fly the years! I remember well my husband, A.J. Thomas, Jr.'s enthusiasm after he had interviewed a new candidate for a faculty position in the Southern Methodist University School of Law. "I have just spoken to a wonderful young man by the name of Harvey Wingo. Not only is he extremely literate and intelligent, but he is also interested in non 'bread-and-butter' courses like Constitutional Law and Constitutional Criminal Rights. He is the first we have talked to in a long time that didn't care about teaching Taxation, Securities Regulations or Property Rights!"

And thus it came about that Harvey Wingo and his very attractive, witty young wife, Carolyn became part of the SMU Law School Family. Harvey quickly found favor in the eyes of the students who saw in him a teacher that had something more to impart than the pure expertise in his subjects. He had an unmistakable touch of love and pride beyond mere skill in his teaching. Learning is a profoundly human end in itself, and Harvey brought to his students the knowledge that law is made up of words which are mysterious, ambiguous, ambivalent and strange phenomena. They can cast rays of light or lead one into further obscurity. He instilled into those who took his courses the realization that a mind trained to inquire freely is a mind free to make informed choices about work, life, leadership and a deepening sense of responsibility to each other.

Harvey was ever the industrious worker, yet he always recognized that life had to be balanced—that his growing family also needed his guiding hand and that he owed the duty of sharing the burdens and joys of raising his three children with his wife and loving companion. Carolyn was an irrepressible spirit, a comforting presence and a strong, compassionate and cheerful helpmate.

In turn, once the children had become independent, Harvey was most supportive of Carolyn's desire to try her wings as a fledgling entrepreneur. Seeing that many women of her age were exceedingly creative but with no place to show the products of the creativity, Carolyn organized a small and quickly successful business to sell these handcrafted items. But alas, one day a federal inspector came to her and warned her that what she was doing was viewed by the federal government as engaging "sweat shop labor." So after long discussions of the pros and cons with Harvey,

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she decided that she could not fight the strange labor laws that seemed to govern her enterprise. And so amidst the wails of her suppliers and satisfied customers, she shut down her venture.

When the Wingo's only daughter decided she wished to attend SMU Law School, Harvey was a bit dubious. Like most corporate enterprises, the Law School Faculty was made-up of diverse factions, and there was always an undercurrent of professional rivalry. Although Harvey thought she might be happier elsewhere, she persisted and proved to be right as she graduated at the top of her law school class. His second child, a son, also desired to enter the legal profession but wisely decided that he did not want to be compared with his sister, so he chose to go elsewhere. And when it came to the third child, Carolyn pointed out that he was creatively different and not the least bit interested in the study of law, so he embarked on a diversified career as a song writer, script writer and director of independent movies which are now being widely acclaimed.

SMU Law School like most other corporate organizations was not immune from organizational sins. At times certain professors were either ignored or treated unjustly. One could blame these aberrations on personality conflicts, professional or personal jealousy, envy or a myriad of other reasons. A victim could seek revenge, rail, move on, or keep head up high and continue to give his daily tasks all of his knowledge and devotion. Harvey never spoke of what others would have perceived as being ill treated, and so A.J., probably Harvey's best friend on the faculty, was unaware of what had taken place. When A.J. became Dean Ad Interim, he did his best to rectify past injuries. Speaking to Harvey about it, Harvey told him that it was more important to him to be honest in his labors, to be kind, to preserve, and to continue to make his students wise and his family happy. So he never became embittered. Harvey knew that he had a number of good friends amongst the members of the faculty and university administration and that some day justice would prevail.

Not only did justice prevail, but as time passed emergencies arose and the Law School faculty and the University Administration turned to the one and only person whom all could trust to take over the helm of the Law School. And whenever called to do so, Harvey responded to the call with firmness, vigor and honor.

A few years ago, Harvey called me to tell me that he had again been called upon to take over the interim deanship of the Law School. He informed me that if he did so, when his term ended he would request that he be given "an honorable discharge"—that is, early retirement. "But, Ann, what is retirement like—do you ever get bored?" "Harvey," I replied, "The world doesn't stop because you retire, and life is too short to ever think of boredom. As long as one enjoys good health, retirement opens whole new doors of opportunity. It gives one the chance to engage in new enterprises, even new careers, volunteerism, and being able to do things one could only previously dream of."

“Sounds excellent to me,” Harvey replied, and so far Harvey and Carolyn are thoroughly enjoying the retirement phase of their lives—traveling, writing a biography of Carolyn’s mother, grandparenting, and volunteering to mention but a few of the many enterprises that keep the two of them if not young, at least young at heart. May they have many more wonderful years to enjoy.

“When the black lettered list to the gods was presents,
(The list of what Fate for each moral intends,)
At the long string of ills a kind of goddess relents,
And slipped in three blessings—wife, children and friends.”

Articles

