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A. J. Thomas, Jr. : Friend, Scholar, Teacher

CHARLES O. GALVIN*

I FIRST MET A. J. Thomas when I began teaching part time in the Evening Division of the Law School in 1950. A. J. had recently begun his full time teaching career, having completed his work towards the degree of Doctor of Science of Law from the University of Michigan.

When I began teaching full time for S.M.U. in the fall of 1952, A. J. and Ann welcomed us to the Law School family with their bounteous and gracious hospitality that continued with unflagging generosity throughout almost thirty years of association. On Thanksgiving day, 1982, A. J. and Ann invited the whole Galvin family — brother, sister, children, granddaughter, and in-laws — to their beautiful place on Lake Texoma for one of the famous gourmet feasts. Every detail had been carefully planned from Irish coffee before a welcome fire as we came in from the cold to the brandies following a sumptuous repast. It was the last time we were to be together, but how fitting that it should occur in that setting and under circumstances which reflected the boundless generosity of these two wonderful people.

The scholarly production of the Doctors and Professors Thomas has been described many times. The catalogue of their books, articles, monographs, speeches, and panel participations not only in the United States but throughout the world is compendious and bespeaks their constant dedication to the effort of pushing farther the frontiers of knowledge in

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their specialties of constitutional and international law.

They so complemented each other in thought, research, and expression that each final published work became a synthesis, an integrated whole, merging and blending perfectly the talents and competence of both authors. One looks for parallels and readily recalls the similar joint scholarship of Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck or Will and Ariel Durant.

At A. J.'s death their latest book on the war powers of the President had just been published, a work for which I was privileged to write a preface honoring them. The book explores the relationship of the President and the Congress in declaring war and in the prosecution of a war effort. There are murky, unresolved areas not clearly defined in the Constitution, in enabling statutes, or by tradition. In reading the manuscript I marvelled how it reflected that dogged, detailed research and analysis of which only the conscientious, thorough-going scholars are capable. This is the kind of scholarship which the academic community describes as theoretical rather than applied research but is of the highest importance because it lays the foundation for the solution of the tough and difficult problems when they arise.

It is with respect to teaching, however, that I must say a special word, because it was in this activity that as a fellow teacher and sometime dean, I could watch him in daily action. He taught principally in the areas of constitutional law, conflict of laws, admiralty, and sometimes international law; yet he was willing to pull the oar wherever it was needed for the benefit of the students and the Law School. Even in an unfamiliar course, he gave it always his best, and the students loved him. Each semester the teaching evaluations came in praising him for his fine performance. What was his secret? Of course, he was always well prepared, but more than that, he maintained an unfailing good humor treating each student as a mature professional lady or gentleman and always available for inquiry, discussion, or review.

A. J. served the Law School and the University on many important committee assignments. For many years he chaired the Law School's Committee on Graduate Legal Studies. In

this role he personally counseled the candidates for the Master of Laws degree and the many students from abroad who were candidates for the Master of Comparative Law degree. He was more than academic counselor to students from abroad. He and Ann saw to it that they found suitable housing, that any special dietary needs were met, and that their comfort and security was assured in a new and strange land. Each year the Thomases prepared a newsletter which went out all over the world informing the foreign alumni of one another's activities and accomplishments. Everywhere we have traveled in the world and met students who were in the comparative law program their first inquiry was about the Thomases with the comment on how kind they had been to them. The Thomases have indeed been ambassadors of goodwill of incalculable value to our national interests abroad.

We at S.M.U. can take comfort and pride in the fact that A. J. will live on in the hearts and minds and the professional skills and talents of countless thousands of his former students.

