

## PROFESSOR COVEY T. OLIVER

WALTER STERLING SURREY †

I welcome the privilege to write what has all the trappings of an obituary for a very active and alive human being, and a very dear friend.

Geographically, Professor Covey T. Oliver has covered the globe: Texas born; professional service in Washington, Spain, California, Pennsylvania, Colombia, Brazil; plus innumerable travels to all parts of the world.

Occupationally, he has held many diverse positions: law professor (the base from which he was constantly called to government service), economic-warfare specialist, foreign service officer, Assistant Secretary of State for the American Republics, Ambassador to Colombia, author, lecturer, and, not the least of all, genial host.

But it is Professor Oliver's continuing intellectual and pragmatic contributions to the field of international law, public and private, that have been all-encompassing. These contributions are reflected in his teachings, his published works, his significant role as co-author of the *Restatement (Second) of the Foreign Relations Law of the United States*, his contributions at meetings and symposia, his membership on the Board of Editors of the *American Journal of International Law*, and his activities in public office. His incisive mind has never been rudely displayed; even when most critical of a colleague's position, his exposition of contrary views are graciously offered in keeping with his Texas heritage. His legal pronouncements, while never dogmatic, are forcefully expounded; his writings are incisive because, as with his oral statements in whatever forum, he says something only because he has something to say. Fortunately for all of us, Professor Oliver generally has something to say. As the development of public and particularly private international law accelerates in a world where each of us is touched by events wherever they occur, his contributions will continue to grow, and, as in the past, have a significant impact on the development of law in his principal field of specialty.

When one searches for the keys to his abilities, many are obvious—a native intellect (for which full credit is given his parents), a self-imposed intellectual discipline, clarity of expression, an unbounded interest in every phase of law and related disciplines—all the qualities that generally account for unique success among the

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† Partner, Surrey, Karasik & Morse, Washington, D.C. B.S. 1936, University of Virginia; LL.B. 1939, Yale University.

few who achieve it. But there is one aspect to Professor Oliver's makeup that is unfortunately not present in most—his openness to new ideas regardless of the source. This is best reflected by the experiences of those who have served with and under him—even way under him—during his periods of government service. He listened to everyone, whether a third secretary in an embassy, or a third assistant to a State Department country desk officer—there are no lower—or a low-titled foreign official, or just a plain human being. Professor Oliver has the interest and perspicacity to listen to the concept and judge it on its validity and not on the rank or importance of the source. This quality may well account more than anything else for his ability to relate to the student and to make the good student feel an equal.

Above all, however, what endears and captures all of us who come in contact with Professor Oliver is his ever-present thoughtfulness, his graciousness, and his good humor, whether acting under stress or relaxing during an evening of far-ranging talk.

Although Professor Oliver's retirement from teaching is a loss to the future law school student, it will inevitably provide a gain to the legal profession. Now he can devote all his time to writing and speaking for an unlimited audience. His recent period of service as Acting Dean gives full credibility to the obvious expectation that retirement is just another milestone in a long journey that has many miles to go. As is inevitable for a man of talents and for all seasons, it is now from retirement as a Professor and Acting Dean that he will be sought out for both government and institutional activity.