

CLARENCE MORRIS

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One of the happiest recollections I have of the exciting four years I spent on the faculty of the University of Texas Law School, from 1936 to 1940, is my association with Clarence and Bill Morris. Apart from the fact that they quickly became the closest personal friends that Mrs. Schmidt and I had on the faculty, the contribution which Clarence Morris made to the University of Texas Law School during those years and after was one of singular import.

Texas had an outstanding law school in those days, as it has today. The student body was exceptional for a state university, the faculty as a whole was first rate and, in the case of certain members, outstanding, and standards were very high; but there was one major weakness. We were too inbred. This problem had been alleviated by the addition of such outstanding men as Bryant Smith, George Stumberg, and Fowler Harper, but it is my opinion that no one did as much to open up the Law School at the University of Texas as Clarence Morris. He was not a breath of fresh air—he was a gale. His thinking, his teaching, and his writing all had a uniquely exciting quality which superbly combined originality, realism, and irreverence.

One of my classes in contracts followed immediately one of Clarence's sections in torts and it was all I could do to get possession of the room. His desk at the end of the hour was invariably surrounded by a mob of students, all endeavoring to continue the discussions. I used to tell him that I wished he would make himself clearer during class so he would not have to use my time to straighten out the confusion. The fact is that I, like most of my colleagues, was properly envious of the excitement he invariably stimulated among the students.

I also shared in that excitement myself. Clarence's office was conveniently adjacent to mine, and I spent many hours with him discussing every variety of legal question. We talked legal philosophy, fundamental legal conceptions, torts, contracts, and all the other problems that bothered me as a young law teacher. I never left his office without new insights, new understanding, and new questions. Although I

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never had Clarence Morris in class I can say truthfully and with much pride that he was my teacher. We talked of many other things too, including how we could open up the University of Texas Law School more effectively to minority students. The most fateful of these conversations, from my personal standpoint, was one of the last. I had been offered the Thayer Teaching Fellowship at Harvard Law School and for some reason I was undecided about whether I should accept. I went in to see Clarence Morris and, instead of giving me his usual perceptive analysis and leaving me to ponder, he said: "Of course you are going." I went, and I have never doubted that my old friend was right.

With all he meant to the University of Texas and all he did for me as a colleague on the law faculty, my real feeling for Clarence Morris is on the personal level. He and Bill were truly friends. There are some people whom one admires and respects, others whom one likes, and a few whom one loves. In very rare cases one may combine all of those feelings. For me Clarence and Bill Morris are the epitome of that case.

My warm congratulations to you of the *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* who have seen fit to honor this great man whose kindness and brilliance have helped to light the torch for so many young men who had the good fortune to cross his path. I am proud and grateful to have been among them.