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FRANK R. STRONG AND THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL OF LAW

DICKSON PHILLIPS†

In 1964 Frank Strong, then Dean of the College of Law of the Ohio State University, penned in this journal a personal tribute to the memory of Maurice T. Van Hecke, former dean of this school, who had died in late 1963 while still active on the faculty of which he was unquestionably the most esteemed member. Significantly, Frank was chosen by the editors of that day as the most appropriate of a host of Van's friends outside this faculty to join Henry Brandis and Fred McCall, cherished friends and colleagues within it, in the moving testimonials that resulted. Providentially for all of us here, Frank came the very next year to join the faculty now bereft of the wisdom and devotion of his old friend. For the ensuing twelve years, Frank has given to this law school the full measure of his own wisdom, devotion and talent, and the constantly growing prestige of his good name. As his tenure here now regrettably moves toward its compelled end, the opportunity has been given me to express in these pages the gratitude of the institution for his service to it and of his colleagues for his presence among us during these good years spent together.

Rather than chronicling specific aspects and incidents of his incredibly productive tenure here, it is my purpose to celebrate what seem to me the dominant themes of his institutional life among us. I chose to commence this piece devoted to Frank with a reference to another person. If this seems odd to some, I think it will not to Frank. He will understand. It suits my sense of the right ongoing of this place to see Frank's tenure here as a special means by which a set of personal and professional values uniquely shared by these two good men has been happily continued here. They provide in Frank's institutional life among us the themes that I propose to touch upon. While they could be limned in various ways, they come down finally and simply to loyalty, constancy and civility.

First, of loyalty. It is frequently said in academia these days—maybe it has always been said—that the loyalty of faculty members now

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runs only to their disciplines, no longer to their institutions. Whether this is true as a generality I do not know. I do know that Frank's loyalty has run here instinctively and in full measure to all the elements of the domain in which he works—to his discipline, to his school, to the university of which the school is a part, to his dean, to his colleagues, to his students, to his professional association, to the legal profession. There is with him no careful calculation or allocation of these loyalties. The unmistakable impression is to the contrary, that the loyalties simply inhere in his nature without conscious thought, that indeed they order him rather than he them. This blessed quality also insures another that rates high in the scale of collegial virtues: the refusal to make nice calculations of prudence about the degree of commitment appropriate to one assigned task against any other. With Frank, any job given to be done—whether high or low by the world's standards—is to be done to the utmost of his ability.

Next, of constancy. I have never known this virtue better exemplified in an individual life than in Frank's. His service on this faculty has simply been the continuation, without abatement of zeal or commitment, of a distinguished professional career stretching now over forty years. By the time he came here he had already achieved distinction as President of the Association of American Law Schools, as dean for twelve years of another law school, and as constitutional scholar of the first order. He continued to grow as scholar, as innovator, as administrator in his new home in Chapel Hill. Such constancy is marvelous under any circumstances. It is even more remarkable when it is maintained over such a period without any apparent need for frequent external reassurances and rewards, and without any of the inner compulsions of egomania, self-aggrandizement or related unlovely psychic drives. Frank's constancy seems instead to be fuelled simply by a sense of duty owed, of obligation laid on by life, and accepted because it is there.

Finally, of civility. On this let me speak very carefully, lest I make larger claims than Frank himself would find comfortable. This is a quality most intensely personal and less likely in common reckoning to have relevance to institutional life than do the others here developed. Nevertheless, it seems to me there is a very great connection and that it would be impossible fairly to assess Frank's contribution without touching upon it. It happened that his tenure here has extended through the troubled years of campus unrest starting in the late 1960's. Here, as on other campuses, the personal qualities of civility and gentil-

ity and the capacity for rational discourse were sometimes shunted aside in the swirl of emotion. More seriously, they came under direct challenge as qualities any longer worthy of emulation to the extent they might inhibit passionate commitments and action. What the lasting effects of this may be on the social order, time alone will tell. It is clear to me that, in the short run at least, the daily examples provided by Frank Strong and those like him—that civility can co-exist with conviction and gentility with passionate commitments to humane ideals—contributed powerfully to the survival of the more beleaguered campuses and of these qualities within them. There is no way, of course, to measure Frank's particular contribution here. I simply testify to its existence and to my gratitude that it was at work with that of others on this campus, at this school, at that time.

These virtues of Frank's—loyalty, constancy, civility—have been described at large. They have borne their fruit not only as exemplars of conduct for those of us appreciative of and dependent upon good models, but in countless specific manifestations large and small. In sum, they have enriched this law school beyond measure. As Frank's dean for ten of his years here, and as his colleague and increasingly devoted friend for all of them, it gives me real joy to record on these pages my gratitude for his contribution.

