JOSEPH RICHARD JULIN, 1926-1993*

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It has been some forty-four years since I first became acquainted with Dick Julin. Although in the years that followed Dick acquired greater knowledge and maturity and professional craftsmanship, he revealed as a first-year law student at Northwestern University the same essential traits of mind, character, and temperament that distinguished him in his later years. He possessed, then as later, an acute and skeptical intelligence. He exuded optimism and vitality. He was possessed of good humor, a quick wit, and a sturdy appreciation of what was right and sensible.

Dick was a fine student, of course, and won an array of academic honors. There was another quite different way in which he made a powerful impact on his alma mater. This was in the wooing of Dorothy, then secretary to the law school dean. Everyone knows that deans' secretaries are more important than deans, and the courtship of Dorothy was accordingly monitored very closely by all persons connected with the institution. It is said of an earlier property scholar, later to become a nineteenth-century judge, that he took with him on his honeymoon a copy of Fearne's treatise on Contingent Remainders so that his studies might not be unduly interrupted by the distracting early days of marriage. I doubt that Dick emulated his distinguished predecessor in this respect, but I confess I have not checked the point with Dorothy.

A life as full of incident and achievement as Dick's defies brief summation, and I shall review only a few of the facets that seem best to reveal the man. After graduation from law school, Dick spent several years in successful law practice in Chicago before determining to make a career of law teaching. He joined the faculty of the University of Michigan Law School in 1959, where I followed several years later. Two years after assuming the duties of dean in Ann Arbor, I was required to fill the position of associate dean. There was never doubt about whom I wished to have in that office, and accordingly prepared in my mind an elaborate argument designed to persuade Dick to accept the assignment. As it turned out, I was never given the opportunity to make my eloquent plea, for Dick accepted as soon as he learned my purpose. There began at this point one of the most interesting and satisfying relations of my life.

Dick's attributes and mine were in many respects very different. Fortunately, however, they were complementary; and through a division of labor we accomplished much that I surely could not have achieved with-

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* Editor's Note: This is the transcript of an address, given by Professor Francis A. Allen, at a memorial service for Dean Joseph R. Julin, held in Gainesville, Florida, on August 7, 1993.
out him. The time was that of the Vietnam conflict, very possibly the most stressful era for university administrators in this century. In those difficult years I do not recall ever directing Dick to do anything. He knew what needed doing and had often done the necessary thing before I was even aware of the necessity. Campus administrators in the sixties spent innumerable hours negotiating with activist students. Dick proved to be a superlative negotiator, the best I have ever seen. His success was not founded on the principle of agreement at any price, a posture taken by a good many college administrators in those days. On the contrary he took hard and controversial positions when he believed them called for. He possessed an instinctive sense of the situation and a remarkable ingenuity in devising solutions. He relied on no ruses or covert tactics. His method was one of complete candor and openness that often proved distracting to students who came to the bargaining table unprepared for such honesty. They sometimes left feeling that Dick's candor and openness somehow violated the rules of the game. Later in Gainesville, Dick made use of his exceptional negotiating skills in the interests of the University of Florida and the College of Law. I am told that his techniques of openness and candor proved as disturbing to some University officials as they had to the activist students in Ann Arbor.

As dean of the College of Law, Dick became a national figure in legal education. He added significantly to the material resources of the school and the law library. He devised innovative educational programs that flourish to this day. His strong appreciation of excellence resulted in appointments that enhanced the quality of the faculty and the intellectual commitments of the school. That he was regarded as perhaps the most successful dean of an American law school in his time by observers throughout the country cannot be doubted. One manifestation of this assessment was his election as president of the Association of American Law Schools in 1984.

Following his retirement from the deanship Dick became a kind of elder statesman of legal education. In addition to the presidency of the law school association he had, before leaving the dean's office, served as Chairman of the American Bar Association's Section of Legal Education. For many years he contributed his talents to the National Conference of Bar Examiners and to a host of committees and commissions concerned with problems of law training and law practice. He was active in the movement for continuing legal education, and in his earlier years brilliantly hosted a television series dealing with issues of law and the administration of justice that won the American Bar Association's Silver Gavel Award. Just three years ago he published with co-authors, including Scott Van Alstyne, a widely noticed volume on the current state and deficiencies of American legal education.

Dick's mode of thought, his intellectual strategy, was a source of continuing interest to me. His tolerance and instinct for quality made it pos-
sible for him to value and defend intellectual enterprises quite different from his own. But in his own work Dick was never seduced by the lure of high theory. For him, thought was always a prelude to action or, better, thought for him was a form of action. His curiosity about how society functions never abated. Among the most pleasant of my recollections of Dick are those of sitting across the coffee table from him in his living room discussing the handling of some current problem of public or university policy. He loved to consider the options available to those facing the problem and the ways in which the difficulties involved might most effectively be resolved. Dick’s proposed solutions were always interesting and often extraordinarily creative. At the conclusion of such evenings, which usually included a retelling of old war stories deriving from our earlier partnership, he would invariably say: “We could do it better.” I was always dubious about my inclusion in the proposition, but at least never doubted that, indeed, Dick could have done it better.

Extreme pragmatism, like Dick’s, sometimes leads to narrowness of view and amorality. It produced no such effects on Dick, and this for several reasons. Despite the strength of his own intellectual tendencies, he never lost his basic respect and tolerance for competing modes of thought or his ability to identify quality even if of a different sort from his own. And his life was supported by a bedrock of ethical values that shaped both the ends and means for which he strived. A striking example of his skills and his values is provided by his work as Special Master to the United States District Court involving the constitutional litigation concerning health services being supplied inmates in Florida’s correctional institutions, a task that he brought to an end in the last year of his life. Throughout that tortuous eight-year assignment Dick revealed remarkable courage, unflagging persistence, and creativity. The final consummation represents a brilliant achievement of social engineering. The problems of correctional care are placed back in the hands of the State of Florida where they belong, but an agency is created to monitor the performance of the state; if, as in the past, state officials fail to reach the levels of basic decency, they may be held accountable in the state courts or ultimately, if need be, in the federal courts on review.

No human personality, especially one as varied and complex as Dick Julin’s, can be captured in a pattern of words. Dick conveyed a warmth and incandescence felt by all who knew him. But he was not always or simply a blithe spirit. Dick, like all of us, on occasion, must have suffered dark nights of the spirit. He was, at base, a private man, one who needed to preserve a space of his own. Those who came to know him well discovered this, and if wise respected it. Despite my long and close association with him I was wholly unaware of his serious physical affliction that persisted for twenty years and was to prove fatal. It was typical of Dick that he would not consent that his friends and associates be burdened by this knowledge.
There is always a sense of unreality that accompanies the sudden passing of one like Dick. It is a fact not easily absorbed; time is required for its accommodation. But if he was to be stricken, was it not better that it should occur as it did, freeing him and his family from the agonies of a slow and painful decline? When the famous English historian of the last century, J.R. Green, was afflicted by a fatal disease, he is reported to have said: “Do you know what they will say of me? ‘He died learning.’” Dick Julin died learning, loving, functioning, and achieving. I believe he would have preferred it this way.

For those who knew and loved him our consolation resides in the knowledge that his compassion and the warmth and the light he radiated are still reflected in the lives of his family that he cherished, in his friends, students and colleagues, and in the achievements that survive his departure.