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## DON SAÚL LITVINOFF (1925-2010)\*

Agustín Parise<sup>†</sup> & Julio Romañach Jr.<sup>‡</sup>

On January 5, 2010, in his adoptive city of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, the great Argentine jurist, Saúl Litvinoff, bid farewell to his family, students, and colleagues. Don Saúl was born in Buenos Aires on March 15, 1925. He graduated from the National High School of Buenos Aires (*Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires*) in 1944 and the law school of the University of Buenos Aires (*Facultad de Derecho de la Universidad de Buenos Aires*) in 1949. He received a doctorate from that same university in 1956, and obtained the degree of master of laws from Yale University, in the United States, in 1964. Since 2002, he had been a corresponding member of the National Academy of Law and Social Sciences of Buenos Aires (*Academia Nacional de Derecho y Ciencias Sociales de Buenos Aires*).

His vocation for teaching led Dr. Litvinoff to be a law professor in several universities, in the Americas as well as in Europe. However, his teaching activities took place primarily at Louisiana State University (LSU). He was a professor at that university from 1965 to 2009, in which year he was named professor emeritus. His most important contributions to the science of the law include the two volumes of his treatise on obligations<sup>1</sup> and his course books on sales<sup>2</sup> and obligations.<sup>3</sup>

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\* Originally published in Spanish in REVISTA JURÍDICA LA LEY (Febr. 2, 2010) (Arg.), at 1-2.

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1. SAÚL LITVINOFF, THE LAW OF OBLIGATIONS: OBLIGATIONS IN GENERAL, 5 LOUISIANA CIVIL LAW TREATISE (2nd ed. 2001); and SAÚL LITVINOFF, THE LAW OF OBLIGATIONS: PUTTING IN DEFAULT AND DAMAGES, 6 LOUISIANA CIVIL LAW TREATISE (1999).

2. SAÚL LITVINOFF, SALE AND LEASE IN THE LOUISIANA JURISPRUDENCE (1978) (followed by several editions, the last of which was published in 1997).

3. SAÚL LITVINOFF, THE LAW OF OBLIGATIONS IN LOUISIANA JURISPRUDENCE (1979) (followed by several editions, the last of which was published in 2008).

Dr. Litvinoff occupied a fundamental role in the development of the Louisiana Civil Code that is currently in force. Starting in 1969, he was appointed Reporter of the Louisiana State Law Institute,<sup>4</sup> and was in charge of the revision of the titles on the law of obligations of that civil code. Thereafter, also acting as Reporter, he was in charge of the revision projects of the contracts of sale, compromise, and exchange, among others. Dr. Litvinoff was the best ambassador that Argentine law could have had in the United States.

The impact of the work of Dr. Litvinoff was valued in Louisiana, not only by the local universities, but also by the state legislature and bar. It is noteworthy, for example that the LSU Law Center declared 2009-2010 to be the *Year of Litvinoff*. In addition, in 2008 and under the direction of Olivier Moréteau, the Center of Civil Law Studies at LSU, which Dr. Litvinoff directed between 1976 and 2005, published a *Liber Amicorum* in his honor.<sup>5</sup> The book includes works of lawyers and legal scholars from around the world who paid tribute to his life.

Don Saúl's teaching vocation was very strong, and it could only be matched by his vast knowledge. He could quote legislation on a particular subject area from, among others, Argentina, Brazil, Ethiopia, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Panama, and Spain, and at the same time remember the names and nicknames (designed by him) of all the students in his class. It is very rare to find professors of that caliber. Our notebooks would become full of notes, not only of legal matters, but also of how to conduct a law course, and more importantly, how to treat human beings. His students, who became brothers in spirit in his classes, were able to discover and appreciate the many levels of his knowledge and of his zeal for life. His sources were infinite in many aspects! Don Saúl's brilliant work performance enticed students and colleagues to join the ranks of his admirers and the many that were grateful to him.

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4. The Louisiana State Law Institute is an official law revision agency for the State of Louisiana. For more information on the Institute, *see*, William E. Crawford & Cordell H. Haymon, *Louisiana State Law Institute Recognizes 70-Year Milestone: Origin, History and Accomplishments*, 56 LOUISIANA BAR JOURNAL 85 (2008).

5. *ESSAYS IN HONOR OF SAÚL LITVINOFF* (Olivier Moréteau, Julio Romañach, jr., & Alberto Zuppi eds. 2008).

It is worth adding that Dr. Litvinoff was not only a renowned academician and codification expert, but he was also a legal consultant to many American and multinational companies and to innumerable law firms in the United States that frequently solicited his expert opinion on innumerable practical problems. Don Saúl prided himself on being a legal professional in the broad sense of the term.

What a privilege to have known that great Argentine jurist Don Saúl, who managed to make clear what was obscure and to render the difficult, simple—that one corresponding member of the National Academy of Law and Social Sciences who, *certainly* dedicated his life to the human aspect of the law!

The academic world and his students are grateful for his dedication, intelligence, and intellectual generosity.