In Memoriam: Charles A. Reynard

Wex S. Malone
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On the second of February of this year the Law School and the University community were stunned by the tragic news of the sudden death of Charles A. Reynard, Professor of Law at Louisiana State University. This issue of the Louisiana Law Review is dedicated to his memory with reverence.

Charles Reynard was a child of Louisiana only by adoption. He was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on December 14, 1913. Both his collegiate degrees were from Ohio State University. The Bachelor of Science was conferred in 1937 and two years later he received the Bachelor of Laws. His scholastic attainments in law school resulted in his election to the Order of the Coif. Immediately upon graduation he became associated with the legal division of the United States Department of Labor and he served as Regional Counsel in Cleveland until 1946. Charles Reynard’s first teaching experience was at the University of Utah, where he taught for two years. When he came to Louisiana in 1948 he had already established his family, which included his wife, the former Marian Carmony of Columbus, Ohio, and two daughters, Marjorie and Barbara. His son, Kenneth, who arrived two years later, is the only Louisiana-born member of the family group. One of the most heartwarming aspects of Professor Reynard’s career was the vigor and enthusiasm with which he and his family undertook to accommodate themselves to their new southern environment and to win the devotion and admiration of the many people in this Louisiana community who came to know them. Their success was outstanding.

Charles Reynard’s own modesty of spirit would discountenance any lavish description of his career and attainments. But the bare facts here speak with an eloquence of their own. A list of his accomplishments affords striking evidence of a rarely well-balanced professional and civic life. His talents and energy were given unstintingly to the service of his university, his community, his adopted state, and to the world of learning within the compass of his chosen field of public law.

Charles Reynard’s writings in Constitutional Law and Labor Law betray a keen and discerning mind. His perspective was
always sound and practical, but he tolerated no dallying with the high principles of human liberty and decency to which his spirit was profoundly dedicated. He wrote with the kindly humor and quiet persuasiveness that characterized him in everyday life. These talents quickly brought him into understanding contact with a wide and appreciative audience. His numerous monographs have appeared in law journals abroad as well as in this country, for the scope of his intellectual curiosity was not confined to any single nation or legal system. In recognition of his capacity to come to grips with social and labor problems on the broadest possible scene he was designated last year as one of six Americans invited to participate in the Second International Congress for Social Law held in conjunction with the Brussels World Exhibition. The paper he prepared for this occasion has been widely distributed and appears in this issue of the REVIEW.

Perhaps Charles Reynard’s best known contributions to legal literature were made in connection with a novel cooperative project designed to make available for law school use materials on Labor Law reflecting the composite judgment and selective choice of a large segment of teachers of this subject throughout the nation. In this movement, endowed by the Carnegie Foundation, Professor Reynard was active from the very beginning. One volume already released was under his immediate editorship. Recently he was designated as chairman of this group for the entire venture. Tragically, it was immediately after his return to Baton Rouge from one of the first editorial meetings over which he presided that he was fatally stricken.

Professor Reynard’s academic contributions on the local and regional scene have been no less distinguished than in the nation at large. Many are the Louisiana attorneys and the representatives of both management and labor who recall his active leadership and participation in numerous conferences and institutes on problems of taxation and labor. At personal sacrifice and with only nominal remuneration he has lectured at night or has stalked the entire southwest region in his effort to bring about a better understanding of the complex and ever-changing fields to which he was devoted. Hundreds of graduates of this law school will testify that as a teacher he was unsurpassed. He possessed the grasp and understanding of the thoroughly mature scholar. His manner in the classroom was gentle and considerate and he avoided direct contradiction whenever possible. Instead,
through kindly but pointed inquiry, he generally induced the
student to become his own critic.

Perhaps we who happily claim intimacy with Charles Rey-
nard will have our warmest satisfaction in recalling the give and
take of friendly argument with him. The subjects of dispute
ranged far and wide, from the trivia of yesterday's problem in
the classroom to some ponderous matter of world importance. It
was here that his sharp intellect, his sentiency, his quiet humor
and kindly manner and his unwillingness to seize upon an unfair
opportunity showed up to best advantage among those who com-
muned with him in love and understanding. Again, the friendly
hand extended with selfless sacrifice to those who were in agony
and could not help themselves will perhaps remain forever ob-
scured by anonymity, but it will never be forgotten.

Many in Louisiana will remember best Reynard the good
neighbor or the stalwart unflinching citizen. Twice he served
with the Louisiana Legislative Council and again on the Louisi-
aña Commission on Alcoholism. His point of deepest penetration
into state affairs came when, in response to persistent urging, he
assumed the role of Executive Counsel to the Governor during
the 1956 legislative session. Here again he proved himself a
capable administrator adept in the strategies of practical poli-
tics. His friends know well the physical and emotional strain
that this responsibility involved for him during that long sum-
mer. But he returned to the cloisters of academe with an under-
standing of public problems possessed by few law teachers, and
this he put into constant use.

The qualities described heretofore — the wide practical
knowledge, the scholarly learning, the sound judgment, the sense
of fair play — all served as admirable equipment for the role of
industrial arbitrator in which Charles Reynard served for sev-
eral years prior to his death. On frequent occasions employers
and union leaders alike in a broad range of industries in the
southwest region called upon him to umpire their disputes. It is
a solid tribute to his capacity that he was very frequently re-
engaged by the same management or union against whose con-
tentions he had previously ruled. Recognition of his fair consid-
eration of their claims outweighed their previous disappoint-
ment in the outcome. Appreciation of Professor Reynard's suc-
cess and standing in this area of activity resulted in his election
in 1957 to the National Academy of Arbitrators, a highly selec-
tive confederation of those who enjoy the highest esteem in arbitration circles.

Charlie, for he was always so known to those who loved him, had a rare capacity to kindle the warmest affection in friends, colleagues, and students, even as he inspired their profound respect and admiration. His was a keenly incisive mind, a quiet, generous, and companionable nature, a deep feeling of compassion for all the lowly creatures of this earth, and a highly exalted Christian spirit. The example of his magnificent life is preserved forever in our memory. The void that he has left in our hearts can never be filled.

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