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## RICHARD RANK 1914-1973

*by Lloyd Tevis\**

For ten years Richard Rank was the Law Librarian at Loyola Law School. He was my good friend and colleague. When such a friend dies, it is natural to reflect upon those things about him that made him your friend, to remember shared experiences, and to realize anew that a friend lost can never be replaced. These are a few of my remembrances of Richard Rank which I hope will say something about his character and personality.

In 1962 we were looking for a new Librarian at the Law School. Dean Dibble solicited suggestions from a number of knowledgeable people. Our interest was aroused by the frequency with which the name, Richard Rank, was mentioned and the praise that accompanied its mention. He was, at the time, Law Librarian at the University of Toronto, but was interested in coming to Loyola. In due course he joined us at the old Grand Avenue Law School building. It must have been a disheartening experience to take command of a mediocre library of 38,000 volumes (one-half of which were in storage), in a building that contained none of the facilities necessary to run a proper library, and in which the library staff consisted of one person: Richard Rank. But he knew that our new building was soon to be constructed so that he could plan for the library he dreamed of for the Law School. Then came the blow. He found that it was already planned and that these plans did not meet with his approval at all!

### NOT TERRIBLY AMUSING

Over the years since then, Rex Dibble, Richard, and I have laughed about what followed, but it wasn't terribly amusing then. Richard simply bowed his neck and refused his approval. There were many meetings, many discussions, many arguments. At last the plans were substantially changed. It was typical of him that he knew what was needed and refused to say that something was "all right" when he was convinced that it was "all wrong." As it turned out Richard was right, and yet when Rex Dibble later told Richard that Richard was right,

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Richard did not act like a victor. Instead he promptly began talking about the need for two more members for the library staff.

This was an early indication that Richard meant to transform our library. As time passed it was clear that no obstacle could deflect him from this course for long. At faculty meetings he would good-naturedly take our ribbing as he weighed every question as to its possible effect on the library. In the preparation of library budgets he would persuasively resist every suggested cut. As time went on he built an excellent professional staff literally from the ground up. Yet in spite of this dedication he was no fanatic. He would listen to suggestions; accept disappointments when he could see that it was in the interest of the institution as a whole; and in all ways he was agreeable to work with. In our frequent discussions I soon found that it was as easy to like him for his personal traits as to admire him for his professional competence.

Richard was an Estonian by birth. It was his misfortune to be subjected, along with his fellow countrymen, to successive occupations of his homeland by the Russians, the Germans, and again by the Russians. These events apparently entailed some considerable personal danger for him, but he was always reluctant to discuss them. These experiences, however, had a profound effect on him. It was apparent that he understood better than most of us the priceless privilege of freedom. Often he expressed to me his concern over what he considered to be our nation's misplaced trust in the Soviet Union and its allies. Although he never said so to me, I suspect that his first-hand experience with international lawlessness is what prompted his great interest in International Law.

Richard Rank was robust in appearance and in fact. He had a handshake like a vise, but would always smile in the friendliest way while unknowingly crushing my hand. He was physically strong, and I have seen him lift weights which would stagger most of us. Thus it was that he could never really adjust to the necessity of keeping quiet and inactive after suffering a heart attack in 1967. It was incredible that he was lying in a hospital in Colorado Springs and daily attempting to run the Law Library by telephone.

#### A SPECIAL PLACE

Librarians always appear to appreciate those who make use of the library, and Richard was no exception. He had a special place in his heart for those colleagues and students who made extensive use of the library facilities and services. But over and above this pleasure,

he had a keen interest in developing and supporting scholarly activities. Appreciation of scholarship came naturally to him, for he himself was a scholar. His scholarly habits affected all that he did. I never encountered superficiality in him.

People who are scholars, or who are efficient, or who are dedicated are often difficult to take. Not so with Richard Rank. Above all else, he was a friendly man. When we would meet in the library or hallway, or at faculty meetings, there was always that warm smile, hearty handshake, and friendly conversation. There comes to mind an occasion when he and I spent a few days together at the beach. I recall a relaxed and amiable man walking along with me, collecting beach pebbles as we went along the edge of the surf. It was a pleasure to be with him, and it is the loss of this pleasure that is the greatest loss.