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WALTER TRINKAUS—A TRIBUTE

*Quentin O. Ogren**

As much as any lawyer I have known, Walter Trinkaus was blessed with a temperament so cool that he could compete in the hottest of contests without losing poise, ever.

Long before *Roe v. Wade*, there were intense debates in California over proposals to legalize so-called therapeutic abortions. In Southern California the leading proponent was Assemblyman—now Congressman—Anthony Beilenson, and in a long string of confrontations, Walter Trinkaus opposed him. Seldom have I seen advocates more suited to their roles. Always mutually respectful, the two managed to shed light in reasoned dialogs which put to shame the noisy shouting matches we have become used to since the United States Supreme Court constitutionalized—and polarized—the abortion issue.

I envied Walter. Here, I thought, was a lawyer's lawyer, unflappable and tirelessly objective, never in the least overcome by anger. Had I tried to do what he did, I would have choked up, and instead of attending to my argument, listeners would have focused on my demeanor: "Why is Bud so angry?" In my entire career, though God knows I tried, I was never able to discipline myself to do what Walter seemed to do effortlessly.

Ronald Reagan as Governor signed therapeutic abortions into law in 1967. Good or bad, it was clearly an idea whose time had come. It is no reflection on Walter that he was unable to stem the tide. No one else was able to either.

One final note: It is commonplace that, while we boast that the law is a profession, countless lawyers treat it as merely a business. The hallmark of a profession, of course, is that its members serve the public's interest, if need be, at the expense of their own. That's what Walter Trinkaus did. He didn't just make a living in the law; he made a life.

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