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## Walter Trinkaus

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## WALTER TRINKAUS

*Harry N. Zavos\**

During Walter's retirement years, when I was driving on Figueroa Street, I would occasionally see him walking between his apartment on Bunker Hill and the Law School—impeccably dressed, shoulders back, chest out, ramrod erect with a sprightly gait. For some reason, the phrase used by Roosevelt to nominate Al Smith would come to mind—"The Happy Warrior," and mentally I would immediately add "The Gentleman Lawyer." Those phrases seem to fit Walter Trinkaus.

While a student at Loyola, I knew him as Professor Trinkaus; later I knew him as a fellow faculty member. But I got to know him best during those retirement years. During those years, he remained active in part-time practice and would frequently be at the Law School doing research. I would see him in the faculty library or the faculty lounge. He was always free to talk. When I had time—and even on occasions when I did not—I would be delighted to find him there and to engage him in long conversations. I was not alone in this. He was as sprightly and vital in his intellect and spirit as he was in his gait.

He was a man of conviction who did not shrink from his beliefs. His thoughtful and articulate defense of those convictions never reflected a sour view of those who did not agree with him; his approach was always optimistic and positive and recognized the dignity of the individual. I always found his views and ideas peppered with fresh perspective. He had both an analytic and inventive turn of mind. To watch it in action was both instructive and a pleasure. His knowledge of the law was encyclopedic. His keen interest and curiosity in the world, in people, in events, and ideas seemed inexhaustible. Mark Robinson, in his eulogy at the funeral service, mentioned that toward the end of his life when it was clear that the end was near, Walter wanted to tackle Einstein's Theory of Relativity. Advanced in years, facing terminal cancer, there was no self-pity, no withdrawal, no defeat—there was the challenge of mastering Einstein's theory of relativity. I said to myself, "That's Walter Trinkaus, alright."

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Those who knew him could not do so without, early on, learning that he was a man of faith who gave of his time and energy to his church and to helping others. He exemplified those characteristics to which his Savior, Jesus Christ, called His disciples—charity, faith, hope, devotion to God, and valuing and helping fellow human beings.

For me, what remains are those conversations in the faculty library and lounge where I got glimpses of those characteristics as well as glimpses of a life full of accomplishment—the topic of other tributes. What I saw was a life affirming that which is admirable in human beings. I am reminded of the Paul Scofield version of *A Man For All Seasons*. It exemplified to me those qualities of what it means to be a lawyer in the best sense of that word, what it means to be a compassionate man of integrity involved with his fellows, what it means to be a man of faith. I do not for a moment intend to imply that Walter was a saint in that he was Sir Thomas More. But he was the happy warrior, the gentleman lawyer, a man for all seasons. We are impoverished by his passing, but enriched by the recurring memory of who he was.



