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MEMORIAL DEDICATION

THE ROLE OF A LAWYER: A TRIBUTE TO JUSTICE WILLIAM J. BRENNAN, JR.

*Ellen P. Aprill**

William J. Brennan, Jr., served as an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court from October 1956 until his retirement in July 1990. He died on July 24, 1997. During his nearly thirty-five years on the Court, Justice Brennan exercised a profound influence on American jurisprudence by championing the rights of individuals.

As the tributes that follow make clear, his life exemplified the principles about which he wrote. He respected the uniqueness of each individual in both theory and practice. His warmth and concern touched the lives of everyone with whom he came into contact, whether the contact came through his legal opinions or in person. Affability, kindness, and generosity radiated from his chambers. When I clerked for Justice White in 1981-82, I did not have the privilege of coming to know Justice Brennan personally, but I nonetheless benefited from the close relationship that he had with his own clerks and with the other Justices. His presence made the Supreme Court a better place to work and the United States a better place to live.

Concern for others came without effort for Justice Brennan; for him it was a joy, not an obligation. He understood, however, that ensuring respect for individual rights throughout the nation requires vigilance and care. He assigned the duty of such care to lawyers. As Justice Brennan explained so eloquently in the address that he delivered at Loyola Law School's 1986 Commencement Ceremonies and which is reprinted on the following pages, he viewed lawyers as "uniquely situated to play a creative role in American social progress." In the symposium held at Loyola Law School on Friday, December 5, 1997, and in the tributes from fellow judges and former

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clerks printed in this volume of the *Loyola of Los Angeles Law Review*, we honor his inspiration and dedicate ourselves anew to his vision of America.