

Professor Gray Thoron

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PROFESSOR GRAY THORON

Bruno Colapietro†

As a freshman law student at the Cornell Law School in the fall of 1957, the first faculty person to address our assembled class was Dean Gray Thoron. The process of going from college senior to law school freshman was most humbling and a bit disconcerting. I came to Cornell with many stories of the horrors of law school (and Professor Kingsfield in “Paper Chase” had yet to be created!) and I had no little trepidation as we gathered to hear the Dean. I can still recall the sense of relief I had following his remarks. I heard not only the Dean of a prestigious law school, but also a warm human being who took much of the apprehension out of the initial days. (That is not to say that the rest of my law school days were apprehension-free—I am still trying to figure out *Hadley v. Baxendale*.)

During the next three years, professors such as Dean Thoron and Ernest Warren kept their doors open to all troubled souls and I know that many of us hold an incalculable debt of gratitude for their patience and understanding. The intellectual challenge of the law school was formidable, but my classmates and I truly appreciated the human approach of Gray Thoron and others. Even today, I hear from many Cornell Law students that Professor Thoron is an always available counselor.

That spirit of humanity has served me well, both in the practice of law and in my personal relationships. In 1970 when I became an adjunct instructor at the law school, I was fortunate again to come in contact with Professor Thoron. I was a frequent guest speaker in his classes and for the past twenty years I have observed first hand the admiration his students have both for him personally and for his course. The scope of his lectures touched dimensions not covered by other courses. Professor Thoron’s zeal and love for the profession has been a vital component in the Cornell law student’s education.

Professor Thoron inspired me as a student, as a lawyer and as a colleague. The Bible states, “And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” Dean Thoron’s contributions during his many years at

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Cornell are embodiment of these words. Cornell makes good lawyers. Gray Thoron has helped make Cornell lawyers good human beings.