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TALBOT D'ALEMBERTE

CHESTERFIELD SMITH*

MY PROFESSIONAL and personal friend, Talbot "Sandy" D'Alemberte, Dean of the Florida State University College of Law for almost five years, is endowed with a rare combination of intellect, charm, curiosity, ability, personality, integrity, and academic courage. With all of his achievements as law dean, practicing trial lawyer, state legislator, and organized bar leader, he remains a compassionate and lovable human being. Indeed, above all, he is a good person and a superior citizen.

Sandy D'Alemberte is a Floridian. He truly loves this state, and to me he embodies the best of it. Born in Tallahassee in 1933, he was raised in Chattahoochee, a small town in the Florida Panhandle. He was graduated from the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, and later he attended the London School of Economics and Political Science. Sandy D'Alemberte received his Juris Doctor degree with honors from the University of Florida College of Law, having been active there with the law review, the appellate moot court team, and the student bar association. Upon admission to the Florida Bar in 1961, he joined the Miami law firm of Steel Hector & Davis, where he was a litigator and advocate until becoming law dean in 1984.

During his more than twenty years as a trial lawyer, Sandy D'Alemberte truly was, and still is, a renaissance man having myriad and diverse interests. A consummate advocate, a mellow, wise man, a concerned humanitarian, an effective writer and a forceful orator, he was recognized long ago by his professional peers as a principled and able trial lawyer. Throughout his professional career, he has combined and balanced a full trial calendar with his reformer's zeal to improve the working of government and the justice system. If it ever is proper for one person to be so singled out, in my opinion, he is the individual most responsible for the constitutional structuring of Florida's court system as it exists today.

As an advocate, Sandy D'Alemberte has extensively engaged in both trial and appellate practice. He has frequently represented the Legislature before the Florida Supreme Court; he furthermore has handled a variety of public law cases for major news media. He spear-

* President, 1973-1974, American Bar Association; President, 1964-1965, the Florida Bar.

headed the legal campaign that resulted in Florida's landmark cameras in the courtroom rule.

I personally know that the trial bar considers Sandy D'Alemberte most unusual as an adversary—friendly, courteous, always optimistic about a just result, trusting in the inherent good of all persons, including his opponents. He has a love for the common man, a feeling that equality is the abiding principle that a trial lawyer must always promote. He is an effective participant in the representation of those lodged in the state prisons under sentence of death. He, unlike many other friends, is not locked to any single idea—reason always prevails. In the face of tremendous demands on his personal time, he renders routinely far-reaching service of state and national impact to the legal profession.

Sandy D'Alemberte's organized bar activities are already formidable and are destined to become even more so. He has served hard and well the Florida Bar, the American Judicature Society, and the American Bar Association. As state delegate, he has for the past nine years chaired the Florida delegation to the House of Delegates of the American Bar Association.

In his career as an academic, Sandy D'Alemberte clearly is, and has been, a leading participant in the academic explorer category. He is not, and never has been, merely a legal archaeologist. He has approached each assigned task with an unparalleled zeal and a continuous enthusiasm for excellence. As a legal educator, Sandy D'Alemberte set often impossible standards for himself. He himself worked hard—and reputedly was sometimes hard to work for or with—and with his talented colleagues at the Florida State University, achieved a national reputation for its College of Law.

As dean of a state-supported law school, he has exhibited a thoroughgoing political pragmatism designed to achieve for his school the financial support essential to academic excellence. At the same time, he has provided to the law students a sincere appreciation for the law and for professional legal skills—and he has inculcated in them the belief that a real lawyer must be an admixture of specialized knowledge with a desire to serve others and the public well. He has displayed in a most singular way both imagination and perseverance. The nonpareil Village Green is only one of the many tangible monuments at Florida State which has resulted from his political acumen—and from his energy and organizational ability.

Dean Talbot "Sandy" D'Alemberte has had an illustrious tenure at Florida State University College of Law. He obviously continues to cherish all of its people. This demanding leader by solid achievement has established himself with faculty and students as a man of un-

bounded energy, keen insight, high legal scholarship, and warm friendship. He quite obviously has believed that a person who does his best always can enlist the support of others and succeed, regardless of roadblocks or hardships along the way. Truly, his accolades and honors as a law school dean defy specific enumeration. Suffice it to say, Sandy D'Alemberte is widely recognized as one of the great law school deans of America today.

It is a singular honor for me to participate in honoring this good man who has performed professionally in such an exemplary way. Verily, he is a noble son of the law.

