

ACADEMICIAN

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Sincerity of purpose, compassion and unyielding devotion to the cause of the underprivileged characterized James J. Graham's career as a lawyer and law professor. In a society plagued by intellectual fads and fashions, and in a profession whose ethics are often compromised by careerism, Jim's struggle for social justice was deep and genuine. His commitment to poverty law was the result of a pervasive ethical posture, and thus his everyday behavior belied the imputation often made to liberals—good to the world but cool to the problems of individuals. It may come as a surprise to those whom he so vehemently attacked in *Enemies of the Poor* that Jim was a man of gentle disposition not only toward his family and friends but also toward his students and clients.

As a labor union lawyer and poverty law activist, his style was characteristically polemical and committed, definitely at odds with what at first sight may appear as the attitude of academic detachment. A slight dose of honest introspection, however, would reveal the inevitability of an academician's commitment either to an unchanging or to a changing state of affairs, curricular or otherwise. In either case, what appears as the acceptable academic style may frequently be nothing more than a convenient garb or an agreed upon form of polite language with which to express our commitment. Clearly, the crucial question is not whether we, as academicians, ought to be committed, but to what and how. If the quest for knowledge is a paramount goal of the educational process, as it must be, Jim's work as a law professor clearly exemplified the legitimacy of his commitment to a better understanding of the evils that afflict our torn society and of the means to cope with them in a rational civilized fashion. The very fact that his unfinished work intended to explore the inequities of public employee strikes and of the excessive concentration of economic and political power in organized labor testifies to the seriousness and candor of his concern.

In lamenting Jim's death, we, as friends and academicians, must face the sad fact that a young man with a noble mission and with the intelligence to search for and articulate a legitimate view of social reform is no more. But those of us who were privileged to be his friends or his students had the rare opportunity of learning lessons of justice and decency from a teacher whose very life was an example of his teachings.

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