

IN MEMORIAM

CHRIS MERILLAT—by Elizabeth Andersen*

I am standing in this evening for Professor Richard Edwards of the University of Toledo Law School. He was planning to be here tonight to remember his time at Tillar House under the leadership of then-Executive Director Chris Merillat, but he took a fall the other day, and although not seriously injured was unable to travel. He sends his regrets and his greetings to many friends and colleagues here.

Rich served on the Tillar House staff when Chris Merillat took the reins as the Society's first Executive Director. Talking to Rich the other night about his memories of Chris made me think with some trepidation about the Tillar House staff here tonight and what tales they are going to tell of me fifty years from now.

Herbert Christian Lang Merillat, or "Chris" as his friends called him, was born on May 7, 1915, in Winfield, Iowa, and grew up in Monmouth, Iowa. He did his undergraduate studies at the University of Arizona, was a Rhodes Scholar, and returned as a post-graduate law student at Yale in the late 1930s, where he was a student of Myres McDougal, who, Rich said later, described Chris as an extraordinarily brilliant person. During World War II, Chris was the official historian of the First Marine Division and wrote two books on the Guadalcanal campaign. After World War II, he served in U.S. foreign aid agencies and as a writer for *Time* magazine.

From 1955 to 1961, Chris worked as a program officer for the Ford Foundation in New York and in India. Vikram Raghavan told me tonight that Chris wrote a seminal work on the Indian constitution that is still cited today. Chris came to the Society from the Ford Foundation in 1961, as the Society's first Executive Director. He brought enviable ties to the Ford Foundation, and large grants for research and conferences soon followed. I have enjoyed digging through the files and reading about his tenure at Tillar House, and finding that some of our current initiatives, some of our "great innovations," are in fact fifty years old.

Chris was much ahead of his time. Rich suspects that his experience in World War II made him skeptical of substantive rules of public international law. I suspect the Yale Law School. Whatever it was, he was intent on broadening the Society, bringing to our collective conversation new voices from other disciplines, from the developing world, and from practice. I am hesitant to tell you about another innovation (particularly in an audience with so many legal advisers present, lest I raise expectations), but Chris spearheaded Society conferences of legal advisers. Long before it was fashionable to talk about transnational judicial dialogue and networks, Chris was fostering them.

Rich describes Chris as someone who got things done. He describes a vivid memory of Chris's frustration after a meeting of the committee charged with designing a new reporting service. (I do not understand why: I have never been frustrated after a meeting of the Society . . .) The committee could not agree on the format or coverage of the proposed publication, and Chris turned to Rich and said, "Let's just get out an experimental issue." And thus ILM was born.

Rich remembers Chris as a wonderful mentor and the finest teacher he ever had. The Society was certainly enriched by his visionary leadership, and his legacy enriches us today. So please join me in raising your glass to his memory, and to realizing his vision of an inclusive and global society, actively engaged in addressing and solving the international legal problems of our day.

* Executive Director, American Society of International Law.