

IN MEMORIAM

COVEY OLIVER—by Lawrence Hargrove*

Covey T. Oliver, who died at ninety-three last month at his home on Maryland's Eastern Shore, was certainly an international lawyer's international lawyer. His teaching of international law—at Berkeley, Pennsylvania, Rice, and elsewhere—spanned close to half a century. He co-authored the initial draft of the first *Restatement of Foreign Relations Law of the United States*. He wrote in the field prodigiously, never shied from—indeed relished—academic debate on issues both monumental and minute, and was a vigorous participant in research activities undertaken by the Society. From the time he was drafted onto the Executive Council as a young turk in 1953, he served the Society in many capacities, including a long tenure as an editor of the *American Journal of International Law*, and acquitted himself with distinction as the Society's 30th president from 1982 to 1984.

But Covey was emphatically more than all of this. He was, I think, constitutionally incapable of being seduced by the smug self-satisfactions that can spring from an insider's competence in the esoteric. His life in the law was comfortably subsumed by his life in general, rather than the unfortunate reverse. He was a person of broad interests and experience: he was variously a diplomat and later U.S. ambassador to Colombia, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter American Affairs, and U.S. head of the Alliance for Progress in the Kennedy-Johnson years—in all of which his fluency in Spanish and Portuguese stood him in good stead.

He had grown up in Laredo and first taught at the University of Texas; as a native Texan myself, I recognized the somewhat courtly graces he retained from that upbringing in the early decades of the last century. To Covey my wife was invariably "Miss Ann," and he was an inveterate and charming raconteur. But he carried no trace of the regional parochialism that perhaps one or two Texans renowned in national public life have been said to exhibit.

And Covey was unabashed about taking a stand on principle: on national matters, such as the U.S. government's partial rescission of acceptance of ICJ compulsory jurisdiction in the face of the impending filing of the *Nicaragua* case, or more local ones, such as the antediluvian policies of the Cosmos Club that barred women from entering through the front door (not to mention from membership). For the latter stand, Covey was physically well-equipped, by what some will remember as a certain imposing rotundity, to serve on one occasion as point man on a flying wedge that crashed the Club's front door, future ASIL president Alona Evans and other Society stalwarts in tow.

To whatever Covey Oliver undertook he applied the full force of his character and formidable intellect, and he did so unpretentiously with zest, elan, and humor. He is sorely missed.

* Member of the Washington, DC, bar; former ASIL Executive Director; Director of Studies of the Society.