

Quintin Johnstone

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Quintin Johnstone's role at Yale Law School has been substantial and somewhat paradoxical. There is no doubt that he has left his mark upon generations of students who, themselves, will attest that they learned not only substantive law under his tutelage, but also something of the discipline necessary for true scholarship. At the same time, Quintin has steadfastly maintained his own approach to law teaching along with his own unspoiled personality. That personality, he is the first to admit, has not always been attuned to the harmonics associated generally with membership on the Yale Law School faculty.

His colleagues and other scholars will speak of his impressive scholarly achievements. I will only say that I have been amazed by the consistency of reports from alumni who praise the effectiveness of his teaching. Many give him predominate credit for the early development of their practitioner's skills. It is Quintin Johnstone the man, rather than Professor Johnstone the scholar, of whom I wish to speak.

Although he delights in his reputation for being a demanding teacher and tough grader, Quintin has been, in fact, a caring and sensitive individual. On a number of occasions when serious problems arose concerning the adequacy of academic performances by students, it was he who found a way to permit the students to prove themselves. Often the solutions required considerable extra work on his part. But then, he has never been one to complain about extra work. Quintin Johnstone is the only law professor I have known whom one might consistently expect to find in his office at 7:00 a.m. or earlier.

Often Quintin Johnstone used his direct manner in a fashion that would mask his considerable sense of humor. He could be so forthright that a student dealing with him would become convinced that he was a tyrant or a curmudgeon or both. After several follow-up contacts, however, the student would begin to realize that Quintin cared deeply about excellence and that his straightforward approach reflected genuine concern for the student's education. The student would sometimes also be surprised to get a glimpse of a wit that secretly dwelled within this all-too-serious person.

In fact, in his last years of teaching, Quintin Johnstone was beginning

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to be found out. He began to be discovered as the soft and caring human being that he really is. Do not mistake what I say as suggesting that he ever tolerated less than competent performance. His high standards for academic performance were, to my knowledge, never compromised. But I say, with some personal delight for having been associated with him, that underneath a crusty, serpentine exterior there lies a warm and sensitive individual. Quintin Johnstone the man has been supportive and dependable to me in my counseling of students in need. I thank him for it.

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