

a great deal about this impossible problem that humane justice requires we attempt to solve.

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### References

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PSYCHIATRY AND LAW. By Ralph Slovenko, LL.B., Ph.D. Boston: Little, Brown and Co. Pp. 686. 1973. Price \$28.50.

It is most difficult to review a book with which one has little or no quarrel. Too often, I think, reviewers, in order to demonstrate their competence, seek to demonstrate the incompetence or failures or inaccuracies or inadequacy of the author. *Psychiatry and Law* is an excellent, authoritative, comprehensive, readable and scholarly book. Its excellence was attested to by the American Psychiatric Association when it awarded its Guttmacher Award of 1973 for this work. The award is given annually for the best publication in the area of psychiatry and law.

The author brings unusual qualifications to the writing of this book. He is a lawyer and a Ph.D. psychologist, and while at Tulane he received full three-year training as a psychiatric resident. Currently he is Professor of Law and Psychiatry, Wayne State University School of Law.

His writing style is very agreeable, scholarly but not pedantic, lucid but not simplistic. All of the difficult and controversial issues in this growing and troubled field are confronted with balanced and thoughtful exposition. Doctor Slovenko has his opinions and he advances them, but he does not polemicize. The book is a *tour de force* in interdisciplinary communication. The lawyer who reads the book will achieve far greater insight into the values, the strengths and certainly the limitations of the psychiatric profession in the forensic area. The psychiatrist or the mental health professional, even if experienced in the field, will learn a great deal about the law, painlessly. The author manages to cut through the argot of the law and that of psychiatry with disarming ease and clarity.

The book offers broad scope but at the same time detailed exegesis. Covered are "psychiatric aspects of criminal responsibility, disposition of offenders, addiction to alcohol and drugs, commitment procedures and rights of the mentally ill, civil competency, personal injury evaluation, marriage and divorce, custody of children, abortion, malpractice litigation, regulation of psychiatric practice, psychiatric testimony in courts or before legislative bodies, and confidentiality of communications," with many subsidiary chapters on such topics as traumatic neurosis and sexual psychopathy statutes. In addition to these are a series of appendices devoted to psychiatric testimony, mostly

of poor professional quality, in a variety of forensic areas. The final appendix is the part of Judge Johnson's decision in *Wyatt v. Stickney* in which "Minimum Constitutional Standards for Adequate Treatment of the Mentally Ill" are set down. There are quite complete indexes of legal cases, authors and subject matter and an excellent list of selected readings related to each chapter, relevant for both lawyers and mental health professionals.

I recommend this book as a highly useful, up-to-date, authoritative text on the many interfaces between psychiatry and the law.

A. Louis McGarry, M.D.