

Editorial: Herbert E. Thomas, MD, Editor, 1969-80

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One of the greatest privileges available to us as humans is to conceive an idea, nurture it and then observe its growth into maturity. I don't feel sad in writing this Editorial because it is about a person who has had the singular privilege to see his efforts bear plentiful fruit. Herbert E. Thomas has given birth to, fed, encouraged, slaved over and developed this **Bulletin**. It bears the hallmark of Herb Thomas: The influence of his genetic endowment, his British/Canadian heritage, his admiration of Sir William Osler, his psychoanalytic training and his love of mankind. All of psychiatry and the law owes a debt to him.

In May, 1969, when the founders of AAPL met in Miami at the annual APA meeting, Herb volunteered to be Editor of a newsletter and to have the first edition available at the first meeting of AAPL in Baltimore, in November, 1969. This first newsletter, typewritten, photo-offset and hand-stapled by Herb, represented the genesis of the **Bulletin**.

In 1971, Herb suggested we advance to a printed and bound journal of academic quality. The **Bulletin** was born. To those of us who have never attempted to undertake such a monumental task, the effort did not appear too difficult; however, to those of us who have observed the **Bulletin's** growth, the effort required became obvious.

Herb did not do it alone. As a competent Editor, he acquired an Editorial Board, Editorial Assistants, Research Editors and a Managing Editor. He saw that a cover was designed, printers contracted and paper selected, etc. As the **Bulletin** developed, he supervised arrangements for alterations in the type used, the subscription system and a myriad of details too numerous to mention. However time-consuming these details were, they alone did not make the **Bulletin** what it is: a journal of such quality as to be accepted, within only a few years, by the **Index Medicus** and the **Index of Legal Periodicals**, a journal subscribed to by the libraries of almost every law school in North America, as well as numerous appeals courts and most medical schools. Such an accomplishment requires Herculean efforts and quality leadership.

How does a person achieve such a monumental goal in such a brief period of time? He establishes high standards and never strays. Quality and compassion became his guidelines. The **Bulletin** would never knowingly print a paper previously published. All papers submitted had to be reviewed by at least two, usually three, reviewers. All authors would remain anonymous to the reviewer, regardless of the author's fame. New authors would be encouraged to submit articles and would be rendered every

possible consideration. New ideas—whether or not they were part of Herb's beliefs—would be rendered equal consideration. Colleagues would be added to the list of reviewers as they indicated interest. No paper would be published without being reviewed by a Research Editor and none published without the authors' personal approval of the galley proofs. Every issue would further undergo two more proof readings, page proofs and a final "blue-line" proof. This represented the highest level of editorship available, similar to the high standards of law reviews. Because of this, the quality of the **Bulletin** is the envy of many editors.

As if all of this was not enough of a burden for one person, there was yet another unfortunate aspect of his job, that of rejecting articles. To know Herb Thomas is to know that he is a sensitive, compassionate human being. These qualities he brought to his rejection slips. He attempted to convey to those whose papers he could not publish his heart-felt recognition of the tremendous effort required to write and the pain of rejection.

How was all of this accomplished by a busy psychotherapist and teacher with offices in Pittsburgh and New York? By devotion and unstinting personal sacrifice. He met with his staff at least two hours a week, almost every week of the year. He reviewed every paper before assigning it to reviewers. He personally watched over every aspect of the **Bulletin's** production. Herb devoted at least four hours a week to the **Bulletin**, well over \$100,000 worth of time in 11 years. To his wife, Barbara, and to his children, Joanne, Heather, Ruth and Herb Jr., we owe thanks for their willing sacrifice and encouragement.

In Herb Thomas, as the first Editor of the **Bulletin**, we have had the privilege of the leadership of a devoted, responsible, sensitive and concerned Editor. We hope that he is pleased with his efforts. We are not only pleased, we are satisfied, gratified and eternally grateful. We wish him as much success in his future endeavors. □