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FOREWORD

Symeon C. Symeonides: A Tribute

*Arthur T. von Mehren**

This issue of the *Louisiana Law Review* honors Symeon C. Symeonides. Born in April 1949 in Cyprus, he received an LL.B. in Private Law in 1972 and an LL.B. in Public Law and Political Science in 1973, both *summa cum laude*, from the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki Law School (Greece).

I first met Symeon in 1973 at Harvard University Law School from which he was to receive an LL.M. in 1974 and a S.J.D. in 1980 and supervised his theses for both degrees. His S.J.D. thesis—*An Outsider's View of the American Approach to Choice of Law: Comparative Observations on Current American and Continental Conflicts Doctrine*—is an outstanding work that demonstrated a remarkable grasp of the subject and perceptive use of the comparative method.

In 1976, after three years at Harvard, Symeonides returned to Thessaloniki as Assistant Professor of Law. In 1978 he was called to Louisiana State University; there he remained until July 1999 when he was named Dean and Professor of Law at Willamette University College of Law.

In the quarter century since his student days ended, Symeonides has had a remarkably varied and productive career. By nature, he is above all a teacher and a scholar. But he is also a gifted administrator and an imaginative and skilled law giver. Louisiana State University will remember him not only for his superb courses and writings dealing with such diverse subjects as Conflict of Laws, Comparative Law, International Litigation, Civil Law Property, and Introduction to Civil Law, but also for his administrative skill and devotion as Vice Chancellor (Administration, 1991, Administration and Academic Affairs, 1991-1994, and Academic Affairs, 1994-1997). He discharged his heavy administrative responsibilities with skill, objectivity, good judgment, and dispatch while continuing to attend to his duties as full-time teacher and writer.

Despite his myriad and demanding academic and administrative responsibilities, he has been active in law reform and a prolific writer. As Rapporteur and Chairman for the Louisiana State Law Institute's Codification of Louisiana Conflicts Law, he displayed not only great scholarly and technical ability but also the political skills required to carry an ambitious and difficult task to a successful conclusion. I had the privilege of working with Symeonides from 1987 to 1991 as co-rapporteur on a *Projet* for the Codification of Puerto Rican Private International Law. Our work drew heavily and with great profit on the Louisiana codification. We took into account—and sought to harmonize—civil law and common law practice and theory. Puerto Rico's ambivalent feelings towards the

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United States have so far made it impossible for our draft to obtain the political support needed for enactment.

Others have sought counsel from the principal draftsman of the Louisiana codification: Estonia on the articles on property (1992) and on private international law (1994) of the Draft Estonia Civil Code as well as on its General Part (1994); the Russian Federation on the articles on prescription, agency, persons, and things (1993) and on the General Part (1995) of the Federation's Draft Civil Code. In 1998, Symeonides and I collaborated on an article-by-article commentary on a *Projet de Loi de Droit International Privé* drafted by the Tunisian Ministry of Justice.

The activities chronicled above have not stayed Symeonides's pen nor immobilized his mouse; as the twentieth century ends, his list of publications includes some sixty-five titles mostly in English, but also in Greek, German, French, and Italian on subjects as diverse as comparative law, private international law, property, family law, and maritime law. The list will surely continue to lengthen at a steady pace in the twenty-first century; Dean and Professor Symeonides is, above all, a scholar with an inquiring, searching intellect, tremendous energy, and an abiding commitment to the life of the mind.

One of the great privileges and satisfactions that teachers have is to see their students distinguish themselves in their chosen fields. I am very proud of Symeon's accomplishments, those achieved and those yet to come. The privilege of working closely with him has, moreover, been mine on a number of occasions. During my tenure as President of the American Society of Comparative Law (1994-1998), Symeon served as the Society's Secretary. He was, as in everything he does, superb. His paper work prepared the Society's meetings admirably; his minutes were meticulous. No society could be better served by its secretary.

As already remarked, Symeon and I collaborated from 1987 to 1991 on the preparation of a *Projet* for the Codification of Puerto Rican Private International Law. This work took us on a number of occasions to San Juan. There we went sight-seeing together, took evening walks on the beach, and had long talks.

More recently, Symeon insisted that I should join him and Wendy Collins Perdue in the preparation of a conflicts casebook: *Conflict of Laws: American, Comparative, International* (1998). As it turned out, my contribution to the work had to be far less than we had hoped. As usual, Symeon did a superb job in conceiving the project and bringing it to a successful conclusion.

Symeonides has accomplished so much already that one might think he was nearing the end of his career; in fact he stands only at its midpoint. I am immensely proud of, and pleased by, what my student, colleague, and dear friend has already achieved. But the best is, I am sure, still to come. His students, colleagues, and friends cherish him, admire him for what he has—and will—accomplish, and wish him well in the new tasks that he has undertaken as the twenty-first century begins.