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Reverend Joseph J. Donovan, S. J. 1891-1977—In Memoriam

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*Frederick J. Lower, Jr.**

For over forty years Father Donovan was one of those of whom it may be said: "Everyone knew him." Linguistic purists and quibbling logicians may have a legitimate quarrel with that statement as being far too broad. I will let them attempt to disprove it, although I certainly would not wager on their success. If the statement is read as meaning "everyone at Loyola Law School knew him," surely reasonable minds cannot differ.

Yet, between the time Father left the Law School in the early 1970's and his death late last year about half of all our law alumni were graduated. To this rather sizeable group Father Donovan simply may be the priest whose portrait hangs at the entrance to the law library. They will experience him vicariously—through the evidence of his work which is before them as they look around the Law School, the faculty, the practicing bar and the judiciary.

But to those who knew him he is the man whose determination, resolve and purpose was a vital guiding force at the Law School as three generations of judges and lawyers achieved their professional goals. And each of us who knew him harbors our own special memories.

Who would dare begin to explain why particular traits or incidents are associated with a person in the minds of others? The memories are simply there. My own recollections include his habit of brushing a jawl with the back of his hand, head slightly bowed, as he peered out from beneath raised, bushy eyebrows. I also recall his passion for telling stories and then suddenly quizzing his listener, asking questions which did not seem to be related to the story. Although Father Donovan was not a lawyer, it was through this device, I am sure, that he sought to identify a legal mind. As I look back on those stories and questions I am persuaded that Father Donovan was testing others for what Thomas Reed Powell described when he wrote: "If you can think about a thing, inextricably attached to something else, without thinking of the thing it is attached to, then you have a legal mind."

As we hear and read the laudatory statements and personal reminiscences about this rare man we may discover within us a desire to use a phrase or thought which somehow might sum up Father Donovan for the

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benefit of all who knew him as well as for those who did not. For my part, I felt such a desire. The inscription on the tomb of Sir Christopher Wren, the renowned architect, came to mind: "If you would see his monument, look around." I also recalled the words of a forgotten author: "He warmed both hands before the fire of life." It is these two thoughts which I find descriptive of the man and of his life.