John Morris Clark, 1944-1979

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The Editors of the Minnesota Law Review wish to dedicate this issue to the memory of Professor John Morris Clark of the University of Minnesota Law School. Professor Clark died on January 20, 1979, at the age of thirty-four. A warm and gentle man of brilliant academic achievement and promise, Professor Clark was a special friend of all law students and especially those of us on the Review. No problem of ours ever seemed too insignificant for him; he gave generously of his time, listening patiently and advising us in his quietly constructive and insightful manner. Always concerned with encouraging and motivating students, Professor Clark truly enjoyed teaching the law and had a remarkable ability to chart logically consistent paths through its most confusing areas. Having been members of what we at the time did not realize would be his last complete Constitutional Law class, we fondly recall his encouraging manner as he attempted to find some bit of relevancy in even the most tortured of our answers. As a trusting and concerned personal friend, “Mo” Clark was simply unsurpassed.

In this memorial issue of the Minnesota Law Review, we have decided to include a speech that Professor Clark gave three years ago at a meeting of the Center for Law and Religious Freedom, an organization in which he was an active member. Undoubtedly, had he known the speech would be published, he would have prepared it in the thorough and detailed style that characterized his writings. Nevertheless, although we have added a few footnotes, we have chosen to publish the speech as Professor Clark delivered it, in the direct, conversational style we remember so well. The speech, which concerns religious freedom, reveals Professor Clark at his thoughtful best, attempting to interrelate his strong personal religious beliefs and his professional dedication to understanding the Constitution. In addition to the speech, we have chosen articles for this issue that reflect a few of his many areas of interest. Professor John Morris Clark was a very special person. We miss him and hope that this issue of the Minnesota Law Review will provide an appropriate memorial to his many talents.