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Samuel Enoch Stumpf: A Man of Many Dimensions

In seventeenth century England, poet-philosopher John Milton penned a small, influential pamphlet, *Areopagitica*, which struck to the heart of the principles of freedom of thought and expression of ideas. "And though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field Let her and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse, in free and open encounter?" Sam Stumpf has been shepherd to such winds of doctrine and currents of ideas. During some thirty-six years in higher education, he has encouraged very many different voices in free and open encounter. A part of Sam Stumpf's special genius is that he understands that the free and open encounter of Truth and Falsehood is not constrained by monolithic disciplines or precise branches of science.

Some three centuries after Milton's *Areopagitica*, we require more than ever that idea be set against idea, and that fact be set against fact; we demand more often than ever that points of view be judged against other points of view, and that truth, in all of its manifestations and with all its uncertainty, be open to every scrutiny. In our own life and times, few attributes are as valuable to educated citizens as the ability to synthesize vast amounts of new information from a variety of sources and disciplines and then to evaluate and apply that information to new worlds of knowledge and experience. For more than a generation, Professor Stumpf's students and colleagues have enjoyed the luxury of learning from a man whose own interests and expertise cross traditional lines in academic disciplines and whose analysis of problems, issues, and ideas arches high above the traveled paths of those disciplines.

Sam Stumpf's own formal education took him to the Univer-

sity of California, Los Angeles, where he received his B.S. degree in 1940, to Andover Newton Theological School for his B.D. degree in 1943, and, finally, to the University of Chicago for his Ph.D. degree in 1948. He came to Vanderbilt in 1948 holding appointments as Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Assistant Professor of Historical Theology. The next year he added an appointment as Associate Professor of Ethics; in 1950 he added Lecturer in Jurisprudence to his faculty repertoire; and in 1952 he achieved the position of full professor and chairman of the Vanderbilt Department of Philosophy. Throughout his career at Vanderbilt, Sam Stumpf has held faculty positions in the College of Arts and Science, the School of Law, the School of Medicine, and the Divinity School. He interrupted his career at Vanderbilt only once, from 1967 to 1974, when he held the presidency at Cornell College.

Truly a multidimensional scholar, the title of his most recent book *Law, Morals and Medicine*¹ aptly describes the territory that his insightful mind and incisive analysis can cover. In the early 1950s he was writing about "The Moral Element in U.S. Supreme Court Decisions,"² and now, three decades later, he is still writing about the legal, moral, and ethical dimensions of our cultural, social, medical, and political decisions. Sam Stumpf is a good voice for us, and it is exceedingly good that his voice has been heard most consistently, most often, and with most resonance here on the campus of Vanderbilt University. His influence gave Vanderbilt the opportunity to be a better university, and his teaching gave students the opportunity to be better individuals.

For one well versed in philosophy, in theology, in law, in ethics, in moral philosophy, in medical philosophy, quoting from Aristotle should have a familiar ring for Sam Stumpf. "Dignity does not consist in possessing honours, but in deserving them." And Samuel Enoch Stumpf deserves mightily to possess this honor of professor emeritus from his colleagues.

Congratulations.

Joe B. Wyatt

Chancellor

1. To be published by McGraw-Hill.

2. Stumpf, *The Moral Element in Supreme Court Decisions*, 6 VAND. L. REV. 41 (1952).