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## A Tribute to J. Timothy Philipps

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Later, during my stint as Dean of the law school, I discovered that Tim's prowess in the classroom could create a bit of a headache for the Dean. So many students wanted to take his section of the basic tax course that we simply could not accommodate them all. I would receive petitions or visits from groups of disappointed students who had been put on the waiting list for Tim's section. They knew perfectly well that nobody who had gotten into the section would drop it, so to be on the waiting list was to be told that you could only hope for better luck next year (if, of course, you were a second-year student, so there would be a next year). Sometimes, without letting the fire marshal in on it, we fudged a bit on the capacity of our 75-seat classrooms to accommodate a few extra students from the waiting list.

Tim never disappoints his audiences. He knows tax law, and he knows how to convey it to students with plenty of verve and humor. He loves to teach, and it shows.

Tim has another attribute known to practically all of us at Washington and Lee. For him, this is the consummate law school. He believes with all his heart in the values this school has traditionally held dear: honor and the dedication to honesty that comes with it; openness in relations with people within and outside the law school; and a dedication on the part of the faculty to teaching and to the best interests of students. If these things make Washington and Lee a special place, as I believe they do, they also make Tim Philipps a special person.

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Andrew W McThema, Jr.\*

For as by a man came death, by a man has  
come also the resurrection of the dead.

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall  
all be made alive.

— I Corinthians 15:21-22

Tim my colleague, friend, and teacher is sick and may be dying.

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I need to acknowledge in some way what his life means to me. But even more important I need to say something so as not to surrender to the chaos of death. Somehow I know we cannot be silent. Finally we must mock the chaos.

Of all the worldly powers, death is the most obvious, but it is not the last word. The last word is not death, nor life after death; the last word is the same as the first. And that word is Jesus Christ. He has, holds, and exercises power even over death in this world. And His promise is that a person may be set free from bondage to death in this life here and now.

And Tim has claimed that promise. He is free of the bondage of death. His life is a song which mocks the chaos.

We have been together in this place since 1980. I thought initially that I would attempt to pull up some thoughts of our life together in the law school over that time. While there are many memories to treasure, and I do treasure them; colleague and friendship stories give way to the overwhelming reality of Tim as teacher. Not as a teacher of law students about the Byzantine nature of the Internal Revenue Code. But as my teacher.

He is teaching me so much about living and dying.

Recently there was a most wonderful gathering of family, friends, former students, and colleagues all of whom came together to express their love for Tim. In reality many of us had an additional reason for coming. We were searching for a teacher to help us come to grips with the power of death. We were searching for understanding. We were near despair; many of us asking WHY questions.

And Tim did what all great teachers do. He turned the questions around. Instead of worrying about death, he celebrated life. Rather than surrender to darkness, he laughed and brought light to the world. A friend and former student who was in near despair asked me somewhat bitterly: "How can you believe in the resurrection when someone so beautiful and vital as Tim is stricken?"

But finally to be present in that place, to see Tim wearing a funny hat made of balloons, talking about country music, and stretching the truth about his basketball exploits is the ultimate proof of the resurrection.

I want to close this meditation with an offering from the *Book of Common Prayer*

This is another day, O Lord. I know not what it will bring forth, but make me ready, Lord, for whatever it may be. If I am to stand up, help me to stand bravely. If I am to sit still, help me to sit quietly. If I am to lie low, help me to do it patiently. And if I am to do nothing, let me

do it gallantly Make these words more than words, and give me the Spirit of Jesus. Amen.

Thank you Tim for living so gallantly Thank you for making these words more than words. You make them flesh. Thank you for being a witness to the resurrection. And thank you for being my teacher.

Peace

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Brian C. Murchison\*

When I arrived at Washington and Lee in the summer of 1982, I had little awareness of what it meant to be a law professor and still less about what it meant to be a teacher at this law school. All I knew was that, for better or worse, I had left a good job at a law firm in Washington, D C., and had brought my wife and two-year-old son to a small Shenandoah Valley town for a different sort of life. We were expecting our second child. It was a liberating time for us, but also one fraught with doubts. Had we taken the right turn?

When I met Tim Philipps, he supplied calm encouragement and honest friendship—the right things at the right time for an uncertain newcomer. He and Sandy opened their home and hearts to us. We would talk about what happens when you leave a metropolis to raise a family in a smaller, more humane, but sometimes less private, environment. I could see how important family was to them and how much they valued the quality of life that was possible in Lexington. In the often-frenzied moments of those first few years, Sandy in particular would remind me humorously that I was here now, not in Washington! And Tim would always talk about teaching, the dynamic of the classroom, the essence of the good teacher, the need to communicate with students honestly, and this school's special focus on fostering relationships of trust between teacher and student. He knew that the spirit that pervades this school was rare in the world of legal education and that it required attention and nurturing. For him, the "open door

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