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"Doctor"

Leroy Thomas

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A tribute to a distinguished Western Oklahoma journalist and former SOSM Public Relations director; written for Mr. Walter Crouch's memorial service held at 2:00 p.m. on August 15, 1985, in the United Methodist Church of Weatherford.

“DOCTOR”

By Leroy Thomas

My association with Mr. Crouch spanned a bit over three decades. We were first merely acquaintances, then student and teacher, afterwards friends and colleagues, and later neighbors for a time.

Up to this past Monday night when I was told that he had died, I had realized many things that he wasn't; now I know some additional things that he was. That statement will hopefully become clearer as this tribute develops.

From the first, I knew that he wasn't slipshod in anything he did. He was a meticulous writer, a faultless grammarian, and an inspired, inspiring teacher. In the classroom, he used a technique of quiet, relaxed intimidation which always created amazing results. He wasn't one of the best; he was THE BEST.

I soon learned that he wasn't a Walter Crouch hornblower. There were many things that he could have touted because his accomplishments were diverse; however, anyone who brought those accomplishments to his attention was sure to get reciprocal comments. It wasn't the man's nature to accept compliments without returning them.

He also wasn't a fair-weather friend. He always looked for the best in others — especially those who had few redeeming points in their favor. Even during his last years, while obviously weak and ill, he was willing to help a friend during the lift-off stages of a writing project.

*And he wasn't easily impressed. I always called him “Doctor” because that was the first name I ever heard him called - the name my boss, Ivan Cates, called him. Mr. Crouch seemed to delight in that bit of presumtuousness on my part (after all, I wasn't a member of the Cates-Crouch “fraternal order”), but I would never have called him **Walter**, as I won't now. For me to do so would be like calling my own parents by their first names.*

The last time I saw Mr. Crouch, I went to his house to deliver some complimentary copies of an issue of WESTVIEW in which one of his articles appeared. He insisted that he should be paying me for the honor of being published in SOSU's journal. I insisted that I should start paying him for the thirty plus years he had given me. He insisted that I was already trained when I was dropped on his academic doorstep and therefore owed him nothing. I insisted that I was just a farm kid in need of help at the time. He insisted. . . I insisted. . .



Mr. Walter Crouch

And then last Monday night I found out that he had requested that at this service I read Saint Francis of Assisi's “Prayer for Peace” and make other appropriate comments. The prayer tells us much about the man Walter Crouch:

**Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.
Where hate rules, let me bring love.
Where malice, forgiveness.
Where injury, pardon,
Where doubt, faith.
Where disputes, reconciliation.
Where error, truth.
Where despair, hope.
Where sadness, joy.
Where darkness, THY LIGHT.**

So now we know many more of the things “Doctor” was.