

**MUSINGS ON GUY G. deFURIA delivered to Inn of Court May 7, 2003**  
**By Alexander A. DiSanti**

Guy deFuria so lived his life that he served as my singular professional role model. Born Gaetano deFuria to immigrant parents, Guy received a Phi Beta Kappa key with his diploma upon completion of his undergraduate studies at the University of Pennsylvania before he matriculated at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, where he served as Editor of the Law Review and graduated as a Fellow of the Order of the Coif.

Following the completion of his law studies and a period of notable service in the Delaware County District Attorney's Office, he entered private practice and quickly demonstrated his competence both as a trial attorney and legal advisor to the point where by the time I was admitted in 1960 he bestrode our local bar like the Colossus of Rhodes and indeed was recognized as the dean of the southeastern Pennsylvania bar, a man whose counsel was sought by government, major corporations and his colleagues.

But academic laurels and professional success were a very small measure of Guy deFuria's legacy. To borrow a somewhat hackneyed expression, he was a true Renaissance man, steeped in the arts, sciences, history, theology and philosophy. Thirst for knowledge resulted in his accumulation of a mammoth personal library of both ancient and current literature, much of which was donated by him to Swarthmore College and the University of Pennsylvania during his life.

He is one of only a handful of persons I have been privileged to know on whom the term "great" fit comfortably. Guy was both a great **man** and a great **lawyer**. Equally important, he was a true gentleman, carrying dignity, learning and character in a courtly

manner while personifying John Cardinal Newman's definition of a gentleman—someone who would not intentionally cause pain to another.

In Guy deFuria, every young lawyer in this county who saw fit to seek his counsel had a surrogate “father in law”, and he was always generous with his time and advice in assisting young lawyers with problems and in mentoring them through legal issues, qualities which make our local Inn of Court being his namesake most appropriate. Indeed, he possessed all of the qualities we admire in a lawyer-- a profound sense of the historical and philosophical foundations of our legal system, a keen ability to analyze legal principles and problems, integrity, dedication, perseverance, tolerance and patience.

One facet of Guy's professional life deserves special note, because it represents an aspect of his legal career for which American society **at large** is indebted to him. In 1954, he served for several months in Washington as assistant counsel to the United States Senate Select Committee established to investigate the activities of Senator Joseph McCarthy who, proving that hysteria unleashed knows no reason or boundaries, was himself responsible for the blackest hour of our democratic traditions during the post-World War II era. Opposed by the estimable Edward Bennett Williams, the quality of Guy's work contributed to the Senate's voting later that year to censure Senator McCarthy and formally lay to rest his political career and the havoc he wreaked upon our most basic notions of fairness and decency.

Another aspect of Guy's long and distinguished career is worthy of note, his role as an author and teacher. It is said that a teacher's lifetime is for eternity and that it can never be known how far his influence will extend. Guy's own sense of social, religious, legal and political philosophy is memorialized in a series of essays authored by him and

published under the title "Abecedarian Talks." No words written *of* him can convey Guy deFuria's level of scholarship and his philosophical underpinnings as eloquently as that series of essays written *by* him, and for anyone who has not taken the opportunity to become acquainted with them, a veritable mother lode of intellectual *stimuli* awaits perusal of them. My own copy, somewhat ragged from use when I'm in search of the historical genesis for some seminal idea, has served as a valued point of reference since Guy presented it to me some 40 years ago.

The Talmud teaches that "When a sage dies, all are his kin." Those of us assembled here tonight cannot help but feel kinship with Guy deFuria, whose legacy as a man and as a lawyer is that so many of us were fortunate to have had our lives touched and enriched by the force and vitality of his intellect, character and personality. While his corporeal shell may be gone, the inheritance he left us is for ever, because the indelible imprint he made upon those acquainted with him was fashioned by the force and power of his mind and spirit, and his ideals and standards are beyond temporal bounds. Conversely, this Inn of Court's bearing his name will serve as a constant reminder for years beyond his passing of Guy deFuria's many and varied contributions to the grand and noble profession we pursue.

My personal inability to summon the level of eloquence- and elegance- sufficient to describe the nobility of his *persona* has compelled me to borrow from the poet Edwin Markham to give adequate expression to my feelings about his life and his death:

He held his place,  
He held the long purpose like a growing tree,  
Held on through blame and faltered not at praise.  
And when he fell in whirlwind, he went down  
As when a lordly cedar, green with boughs,  
Goes down with a great shout upon the hills,  
And leaves a lonesome place against the sky.