

**National Academy of Arbitrators**  
**HISTORY COMMITTEE INTERVIEW**

**Leo C. Brown, S.J.**

**NAA President, 1960**

**Memorial Remarks by**

**Gladys W. Gruenberg and John E. Dunsford**

**April 23, 1981**

## Father Brown Memorial Dedication

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Remarks of Gladys W. Gruenberg

Friends of Father Brown:

It's hard on an occasion such as this to strike the proper balance between joy and solemnity, but knowing Father Brown as we did, I'm sure he wouldn't want us to be too serious about his memory. When Dean Hasl asked me to act as a kind of mistress of ceremonies for this occasion, he really wanted me to keep the program as short as possible so that we could get to the main business of inspecting the Father Brown Memorial Room. But, as I'm sure will be the case with the other participants in the program, I can't resist giving you a brief history of how all this came to be and mentioning some of the people who made it possible.

Of course, you realize that this is by coincidence or design the week before Father Brown's birthday. On April 28 he would have celebrated his 81st birthday. I always knew when his birthday was due because my son Danny's was the day before and Clo Gassner's (his secretary during most of the 50s and 60s) was the day after. You will also recall that Father Brown died on May 3, 1978. About a month later, Father Paul C. Reinert, University Chancellor, Father Edward Drummond, President and Father Robert Doyle of the Provincial's Office of the Society of Jesus, in consultation with Dean Wagner of the School of Business and Administration and Dean Murray, former Dean of the Law School, decided that Father Brown's legacy to labor-management relations should be preserved in the Law School Library. After consulting with Eileen Searls, Chief Librarian of the Omer Poos Law Library, they agreed to move Father Brown's arbitration files to the Law School for safekeeping. The files had already been carefully indexed and stored in neat brown folders by Mike Steele, the nephew of another of Father Brown's secretaries, Jean Ambrow. As you can see, somehow whole families became involved with Father Brown. In fact, today we have in attendance children and grandchildren who knew Father Brown as a friend of the family and continued to invite him to family gatherings long after their fathers and grandfathers had passed away. This is, of course, also true of his own natural family consisting of his many nieces and nephews, children of his brothers who are also with us today.

About that same time contributions began arriving for a Father Brown Memorial, and it was decided that a conference room in the Law School Library would be a fitting memorial. Unions and companies made substantial contributions the same as they had done in the past to keep Father Brown car-borne. The final commission was to have a biography written. I am happy to report that all these missions have been accomplished, owing in large measure to Dean Hasl, Father Barry McGannon, Vice President of Development, and Father George Ganss, Director of the Institute of Jesuit Sources.

The persons who have gathered here today to honor Father Brown have been touched by him in a way they will always remember. To most of us on the podium he was a friend and mentor. He was a force for good in the labor-management community as well as an example of genuine devotion to the Jesuit social apostolate. His colleagues in the Society of Jesus and in the arbitration profession, many of whom are also here today, agree that he remained true to his priestly vocation while endeavoring to bring some order to the workaday world.

We are here merely to represent all of you, to voice your devotion and friendship for a truly dedicated human being. It is my pleasant task to introduce the speakers, which I will do briefly and then let them tell you what Leo Brown meant to them. Since they are also good friends, I'm sure that they won't mind my informality.

First we have Ken Moffett, who is now Acting Director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service in Washington, D.C. His first association with Father Brown was as the Executive Secretary of the Atomic Energy Labor-Management Panel, which Father Brown chaired after 1968. Next to him is Bob Vining, management consultant and attorney, who first met Father Brown as Assistant Dean of the Saint Louis University School of Law when Father Brown was Acting Regent immediately following World War II. He too was led into labor relations as a result of Father Brown's suggestion that management needed expert counsel in handling arbitration cases. And finally there is Jack Dunsford, Professor of Law at Saint Louis University, who literally began his arbitration career as Father Brown's intern shortly after Jack became a member of the Law School faculty, back in the 50s, just about the same time that I was Father Brown's graduate assistant. We both enjoyed team-teaching arbitration courses with him because he found such pleasure in meeting with students, whether as undergraduates, law students or practitioners continuing their education at the feet of the master.

So without further ado, I turn the platform over to Ken Moffett and ask that the others follow in order without further introduction. Thanks.

#### Remarks of John E. Dunsford

The first time I sat in as an observer on an arbitration hearing with Father Leo Brown, I was surprised how easy it looked to be an arbitrator. I could hardly wait to get a case of my own. Yet in the period between that first observation and the point when I began serving as an arbitrator myself, things seemed to change radically. I found to my surprise it was a lot harder than it looked, at least if you wanted to do it the way Brown did. The sensation was much the same as trying to hit a baseball after watching Stan Musial at bat, or singing in the shower once you have heard Luciano Pavarotti.

In point of plain fact, Father Brown was a marvel as a hearing officer. He broke me into this profession as I accompanied him from one hearing to another for over a year, serving as a kind of law clerk. Indeed, to this day he is the only other arbitrator I have ever seen in action. But, as you can imagine, he was enough. His style at the hearing was the distilled essence of his personality. We all know that styles will vary, and there is no prescribed manner for a successful arbitrator to hear a case. Brown was the quiet and passive type, in the sense that he sat there composed and still, letting the parties unfold their case in their own way, interposing gently a question here, a question there, damping down passions with a soft word, absorbing constantly what was said and--often more important--what was not said.

A break would come in the hearing. "What do you think of the Company attorney?" Brown would ask me. "That business representative does a good job, doesn't he?" Father Brown admired competence, he savored the skill and effort and desire of an accomplished advocate, he gloried in watching human beings perform up to their full capacities. The hearing resumed and cross-examination of a vital witness had run its course. The parties were ready to excuse the witness. Did the arbitrator have any questions? Father Brown looks up quizzically and slowly begins to ask a few more questions, one building on another, each cutting removing a tumor; there is a clean precision to the work.

He never went too far. He always stopped before the blood came. When he finished, there was a sense that everything that was necessary had been done, but no one quite knew how it had been accomplished or exactly when the sunlight broke through.

The extraordinary qualities of Father Brown as priest, arbitrator, economist, and human being are well known to this group. I am not going to repeat the list of his personal accomplishments on which his reputation so solidly rests. My theme is one of a few reminiscences, a brief reflection of what it was like to know him. For there is a strong curiosity to wonder what makes a man so superior to the run of the mill, as Father Brown surely was. It is rare in human relationships to brush against greatness, and perhaps even rarer to be able accurately to measure it. But what is most surprising, I think, is suddenly to grasp that greatness in a human being is not a separate order of creation but rather only a concentration and surpassing enrichment of talents and virtues that we all possess to some frustratingly meager degree.

I remember once watching a television talk show in which a moderator interviewed a group of millionaires to find out just what gave them the capability of being able to earn such vast amounts of money. And the message that each of these five millionaires conveyed was the same one, though in slightly different words: all you need do to become a millionaire--you can write this down if you want to--is to learn how to manufacture a product or perform a service which will sell for a greater amount than it costs, and you do this over and over again until you've made a million dollars. The unique-

ness of Father Brown is brought to mind by that program, for in a way his greatness was like that artless formula of the millionaires. He was just like anyone else that you knew, except at nearly every point he was astonishingly better. What made him special is that he was made up of the same good qualities that potentially are present in each of us, but in him they were realized to a depth which went far beyond the range of either the experienced or the expected.

Father Brown was a simple man. He dressed simply, of course, because he was a priest. But in remembering him it is a point to note that since he was a priest he always dressed for public as one, with the notable exceptions, of course, of those occasions when he was beating the wheel, the dice, or the cards at the Las Vegas tables. Which is not to say that he did not have that residual trace of boyish vanity that confirms each of us in our humanity. I remember once being startled to have him stand before me, taking a tug at his hat, dressed for the street, black from head to toe except for the rim of white in the clerical collar, and asking in all seriousness: "What do you think of my new raincoat?"

The simplicity of Brown derived from the profoundly clear view he had of the human condition, of its predicament and its possibilities. What enabled him to achieve this insight I will leave for the philosopher and theologian. What I do know is that he was a magnificent listener. His greatest flattery, I think was the sober intensity with which he listened to what you had to say, no matter who you were. When he listened, miracle of miracles, he heard. When he heard, he understood. What Father Brown wrote on the occasion of the death of his friend Cyrus Ching, quoting Scriptures, is also applicable to him: "Wisdom is the important thing; therefore get wisdom; but with all thy getting, get understanding." Father Brown had understanding. And in some mysterious way, despite the gravel voice and the unassuming manner, people intuitively sensed that here was a man of more than ordinary dimensions, one who would accept you for what you are and for what you could become.

Paradoxical as it may sound, considering the fact that he was both an exemplary spiritual leader and a renowned private judge, Father Brown was not a judgmental person. He observed; he pondered; he weighed; he deliberated; and to the extent he was asked he gave the answer of a wise man. But before he would ever offer an answer, he had to be asked. I think it was his way of being sure that people would listen.

Despite his grand eminence and his towering stature, he was a man you could cherish as a human being. We spent one night in Indianapolis looking for a restaurant that would serve a peanut butter sandwich; whenever he checked in a hotel, he would immediately go into the corridor outside his room to locate the fire exit, a habit which has caught on with a lot of people lately; sitting in an airplane at 25,000 feet Father Brown asked me to guess what blood lines were revealed in the face of a strikingly pretty stewardess and he talked to her later to confirm she was Eurasian; commenting on the trend toward immodesty in women's dress, he gave it as his solemn opinion

that the bare-breasted dancing on the Las Vegas stage was done with a lot of grace and class; at 5:30 a.m., we penetrated the mist of morning in a small Illinois shoe town to find an altar where he could celebrate Holy Mass before the hearing began. Oh yes, there were a rash of stories about his driving, which is probably why some people called him Barney Oldfield.

The dedication of this room to him would have given him genuine pleasure. He loved lawyers. I have never known a man who more revered the profession of law, and the men and women who were part of it. The affection grew, I suppose, because lawyers do what Father Brown did superbly well. They solve problems, or they try to. And as you have heard, Father Brown himself would have become a lawyer--except that he found something that for him was a little bit better. Though he travelled all his life and was hardly ever at home for long, he thought of his earthly family as the Jesuit Order in which he took his solemn vows. I saw him last on Easter Sunday in 1978 shortly before he died, in St. John's Mercy Hospital, and he said of his absence from the Jesuit Community at St. Louis University. "You know, Jack I miss those guys. I really love those guys."

In those last months Father Brown manifested a side of his character which was always implicit, his soaring courage. After learning that he had cancer of the liver and the bones, he wrote to a number of his friends:

At this stage when I look back on a full life I am grateful to Almighty God for the care he has taken of me. Also for the opportunities he has given me to serve other people. I have unbounded confidence in Him. I think I have had some usefulness and for that I am grateful to God. You know you have my friendship and there is little more to be said.