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## Dedication to Bret Leslie Lansdale

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## Dedication to Bret Leslie Lansdale

It is not often that the subject of a law journal article kills the author.

This issue of the *Hastings Constitutional Law Quarterly* is dedicated in memory of Bret Leslie Lansdale who died from AIDS on October 21, 1990. He was twenty-eight years old.

Born July 5, 1962, Bret grew up in Killeen, Texas. At Killeen High, he won several awards for his scholastic abilities and was class valedictorian. Outside of school, he also was active in many organizations, including the Masons.

In 1980, Bret was admitted to Yale University, Jonathan Edwards College. At Yale, he majored in English and directed the internationally-known Whiffenpoof Chorus. Following his graduation in 1984, Bret returned to central Texas, where he was administrative director of Waterloo Counseling Center, a center for gay men and lesbians.

In May of 1987, he became a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. Later that summer Bret moved to San Francisco to enter Hastings College of the Law, class of 1990.

In sobriety Bret thrived; in San Francisco he blossomed. His enthusiasm and accomplishments in law school were applauded by all who knew him. His growth during that time was beautiful to see. The law offered Bret an arena in which he could express himself fully. In the summer of 1988, Bret clerked for a local law firm. There he began to really grow intellectually and emotionally. He came to achieve a wonderful sense of self-confidence and independence; he was truly happy—maybe for the first time in his life—as he came to realize his dreams and ambitions. This growth was abruptly arrested in the fall of 1988 by AIDS.

The essay published in this volume of *CLQ* is a testimony to Bret's remarkable courage. While working on this publication, he maintained his excellent grades and taught Civil Procedure discussion groups. He was a member of the *CLQ* staff. At the same time, Bret had to endure the total loss of vision in one eye. He constantly worried that he might lose sight in his other eye. He was required to infuse drugs in a catheter that was surgically implanted in his chest. He was in constant pain. Opportunistic infections scarred his skin; the virus took his strength. During this period, he was also forced to battle hospitals, his doctors, Social Security, Medi-Cal, and, of course, the insurance companies.

Money was a constant worry for Bret. The few drugs that are available to treat HIV and the attendant infections are acutely expensive.

Bret was taking many drugs to treat his disease—all experimental and all very expensive. He spent more than \$25,000 on medications alone in the year before he was able to obtain Medi-Cal. It cost him \$100 a day just to slow the loss of his eyesight.

Rather than be beaten down, Bret became more active. He joined local AIDS activist groups to fight for the rights of persons with AIDS. He fought for a fair medical delivery system that would not abandon someone who is ill.

Bret was always concerned about others. He was able to assist others in the acceptance of their disease, while he himself had to come to terms with the loss of his health, looks, energy, and eventually his life. He endured these losses and did so with his rapier wit, charm, and unbelievable bravery.

Throughout his life Bret worked to accomplish many things—not for personal gain, but to help others. He often said his life would be cut short before he could contribute as much as he wanted to. He wanted to give to the world and he felt AIDS would keep him from doing so. This essay shows he has indeed contributed to the world, but only if people read and understand.

It is difficult to understand the loss we all suffer at Bret's death. Death is always sad, particularly when someone dies at a young age. But I think it the most cruel irony that a young person struggles to be happy all of his life and endures great pains in the hope of a better tomorrow, just to have that hope destroyed as it approaches fruition.

I grieve to know that this brilliant young man, shining with the promise of a lifetime ahead of him, will never write again, will never think again, and will never bring any more joy to others around him. The world is not as good a place as it was.

I will miss his friendship, and the world will miss so much more.

*Chris Moore*