

IN MEMORIAM

J. CHRYS DOUGHERTY—by Susan Karamanian*

Chrys Dougherty of Austin, Texas was one of the most distinguished lawyers in Texas and one of the longest-living members of the American Society of International Law. He died on February 20th of this year at the age of 98. He had been a Society member for 67 years.

When you think of Texas, international law may not come to mind. But Chrys's knowledge and understanding of international law, and his ability to embrace it, profoundly changed the state.

Before explaining how this happened, let me share some words about Chrys Dougherty. He was born Robert Henderson Dougherty on May 3, 1915, in Beeville, a small town in south Texas. When his father died 16 years later, Chrys assumed his father's name, J. Chrys Dougherty. Chrys studied on his own by reading the Harvard Classics. His uncle supported him to attend the University of Texas and Harvard Law School. During World War II, Chrys served in the Counter-Intelligence Corps, and in France as an attorney in the Judge Advocate General Corps. He learned French and had mastered Spanish as a child in south Texas. He would later become the honorary French Consul of Texas. His love of languages stayed with him well into his 90s; it was reported to me yesterday that when he was 92 he was taking Japanese lessons as his grandson was living in Japan.

After the war, he returned to Harvard for a year to study international law and then returned to Texas to co-found in 1946 the Austin law firm of Graves Dougherty Hearon & Moody, one of the state's most prestigious firms. Chrys was President of the State Bar of Texas from 1979–1980, and his presidency was defined by his commitment to expanding legal services to the poor through pro bono services. The highest award given to a lawyer in Texas for pro bono service is the State of Texas Bar Association's J. Chrys Dougherty Legal Services Award. Even after retiring from practice in 1995, Chrys was active in service. I had the pleasure of serving with him on the board of Texas Appleseed, which he helped found and which is devoted to recruiting lawyers on a volunteer basis to promote justice.

Chrys was state president of the United World Federalists in the late 1940s. In the early 1960s, he was a member of this Society's Executive Council. Yet it was in his work on the *Tidelands* case that his expertise in international law had a substantial and lasting effect. In the case, Chrys was an assistant attorney general for the State of Texas. The United States had sued Texas to establish federal title to submerged land in the Gulf of Mexico between low tide and the state's Gulfward boundary three leagues (10.35 miles) from shore. At stake was oil under the state leases, which meant money, yet also there was a strong concern about federal interference. The litigation went on for 20 years. Chrys's masterful documentation of the many treaties at issue, including some in French and Spanish, and his understanding of Spanish law, are generally recognized as forming the basis for a victory for the state. The state leases from the oil have reportedly generated billions of dollars for public education in Texas.

When I attended my first Society Annual Meeting in the late 1980s I looked up and saw the name tag, J. Chrys Dougherty. Mind you, I had never met Mr. Dougherty before, but he loomed large in Texas. I knew at that moment that I was in the right place, that I had come all the way from Dallas to Washington to be in the same room with this Texas legend.

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In his obituary it was noted that Chrys frequently quoted the Bible verse: “From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required.” Chrys Dougherty’s life of service—one committed to improving mankind and to the respect for and care of others—is one we recognize and honor today, and it is one that we should all strive to emulate.