

Milton Prince Higgins was a good man, a man of action, a family man, a pillar of his church, who worked with might and main for his company and his community.

John Jeppson 2d

JOSEPH FRANKLIN DUSH

The small, rural town of Willard, Ohio, expressed its love for my book-collecting friend, Joe Dush, with the following newspaper headline: 'Willard Loses Patriarch.' Such sentiments would have made him blush, as he chose to stand outside the limelight. But his active civic life of more than half a century made such praise commonplace. His accomplishments for his city were many. He was one of the founding members of the Willard Industrial Development Committee, a long-time member of the Willard Library Board, the Willard Hospital Board, the Willard Historical Society, author of its town history, and designer of its centennial coins and the monument at the town's entrance. Indeed, his life was Willard's history, and Willard's was his.

Born in the smaller, rural town of St. Louisville (current population, 375), Licking County, Ohio, on the 28th day of 1915, his early years' activities suggest much of what was to follow. Before he left home to attend Ohio State University, he collected insect specimens and built model airplanes. During and after college, he added reading and book collecting to his growing list of hobbies, as well as visiting libraries and learning as much of the history of mankind as he had time. After college he attended and was graduated from the College of Law, Ohio State University, in 1939, and passed the bar the same year. The following three years, he practiced law as a young attorney in Newark, Ohio. By 1941 the war interrupted his private life as it would many others. Drafted in September, he was sent to Fort Francis E. Warren in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and then to Mather Field in Sacramento, where he was office manager of the legal affairs on the base.

The time he spent in military service in the American west had a lasting influence on him. When I first met him, he was preparing for one of his many trips to Ghost Ranch, New Mexico. He loved the outdoors, where he further nurtured his love of nature. The cabins with their lack of modern heating and indoor plumbing did not bother him, but invigorated him instead. During these visits to Ghost Ranch, he engaged in his favorite hobbies of writing poetry and sketching. These hobbies found personal expression in his custom-designed Christmas cards. These cards embodied much of the man and his being. For example, for Christmas 1996 the card contained on the outside a personal sketch of a stone spring house built about 1840 just north of Willard, where the spring water still flows, and is signed 'J.D.' Inside is a poem which read: 'A fresh spring / speaks well / of the earth. / It gives of itself / and says / to the grasses, the / weeds, the trees / the critters and us, / "Come. You can each / have a part of me." / It is Christmas / all year 'round.' Poetry provided him with another avenue to express his wonder at his environment, which he included as part of his religious beliefs. Poetry mirrored his lighter side, too. January last, he fell on the ice and spent three days in the hospital. He wrote me of the experience: 'There was an old lawyer named Joe / Who slipped on the ice and the snow / He fell on his arse / And he looked like a farce / But his humor has fled him, you know.'

He so loved to write. Besides his poetry, his largest work outside of his legal career was his *History of Willard, Ohio*, illustrated by him; published in Willard in 1974; and printed and bound by R. R. Donnelley and Sons Company, at the Lakeside Press. The R. R. Donnelley and Sons Company built a factory in Willard in large part because of Joe and the Industrial Development Committee, and he was their legal counsel for the Willard plant. And, as one might expect, he also collected the important Lakeside Press Series. He wrote a local history column in the community newspaper, where he honed his skills as a storyteller and authored a history of the First Presbyterian Church of Willard and *The*

Amish School Question, 1960. The Amish school question was the issue of the most important legal case that he argued before the State Supreme Court, the *State of Ohio vs Glick*. The Ohio legislature attempted to close the Amish schools by issuing an injunction. The Amish would not comply, and their chairman Henry Hershberger on Apple Creek contacted Joe about defending them. He accepted the challenge and stepped into the limelight again. The Ohio Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Amish, and Joe became a hero to them. The experience was 'a high point' in his life and another tale for the storyteller from Willard.

I met this gentle man in Akron in 1990 at the annual book fair sponsored by the Northern Ohio Bibliophilic Society. Bob Hayman, our long-time mutual friend, book dealer, and fellow American Antiquarian Society member from Carey, Ohio, introduced him to me. The conversation turned immediately to books, especially Ohio imprints before 1850, which is my 'gentle madness.' Joe extended an open invitation to visit, and the friendship and frequent visits followed shortly thereafter. His home was a library and a museum with Joe serving as both curator and guide. Antiques adorned the house from basement to attic. The rear entrance was a menagerie of early American antiques from saws to advertisements and stools to paintings. The master bedroom on the second floor had a full wall painting of a view of a canyon with sightseers. When a Western bank had discarded the painting for more modern ones, Joe had purchased it, brought it to Willard, and restored it. His bedroom also housed his famous William Henry Harrison Collection. It was the largest collection in private hands, with hundreds of artifacts from the elections of 1836 and 1840: ribbons, plates, log cabin song books, and pamphlets by and on Harrison.

The attic was filled with a myriad of handmade and purchased bookcases from floor to ceiling. Having survived a disastrous fire over fifteen years ago, here were complete collections of the Ohio county histories, the journals of the Ohio Senate and House of Representatives, law books published in Ohio and the Northwest

Territory, book-dealer catalogues from over forty years of collecting including Wessen's personally marked, office copies of the *Midland Notes* that he lent me, plus thousands of pamphlets on hundreds of topics, especially the American West, along with his Clarence Darrow Collection.

His den off the master bedroom contained his most valuable and most appreciated books. Here one found: *The Federalist*, a Benjamin Franklin-published volume of Pennsylvania laws, a first edition Ohio Gazetteer, a copy of the earliest Ohio militia laws, four or five 'saddlebook notebooks' used by lawyers, one of several every-man-his-own-lawyer books, Ohio justice and township officer guides, and on and on. The book of greatest importance and value was *Laws of the Territory of the United States North-West of the Ohio*, the so-called Maxwell Code, named after its publisher William Maxwell. The first book published in Ohio in 1796 combined two of his loves: law and the Northwest Territory. He bought the book from the dean of Ohio book dealers, Ernie Wessen, late of Mansfield, Ohio, and a former American Antiquarian Society member. Ernie placed his imprimatur on this copy as the 'best' that he had ever seen and he saw to it that it went to one of the greatest book collectors he knew, a small-town lawyer in the town of Willard, Ohio. On another occasion he gave him a folder containing ten copies of the *Constitution of the United Germans of Teutonia* (1826), there being only four other known copies at the time!

The death of Joe Dush on March 16, 1997, of a heart attack while visiting his daughter in Florida, was sudden and unexpected. The previous Thursday he had called to announce that after his return, we had an appointment to visit the law school library at his alma mater, Ohio State University, to get the 'cook's tour.' Planning future trips with him was always a rewarding experience in which the friends met and gained were, to him, most important of all. Although his membership in this Society had not yet reached its second anniversary, he was most proud of his election and became an immediate and active participant. He exhib-

ited his enthusiasm by driving to the spring meeting in Washington, D.C., in May of 1995 and later that fall by flying to Worcester to hear the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund Lecture given by David McCullough at the annual meeting. Because Harry S. Truman had given a pivotal speech in Willard, Ohio, at which Joe had been present, McCullough had contacted Joe about it and then acknowledged their conversation in the biography. Knowing that he would finally have a chance to meet McCullough, Joe brought his copy of *Truman* to Worcester to be autographed. We understand that McCullough was delighted to have the opportunity to meet the person who had told the story of Truman's visit to Willard so eloquently, and that he began the lecture by acknowledging Joe's presence in the audience filling the First Baptist Church. Joe was asked to stand and be recognized as one of the finest local historians and collectors McCullough had ever known. When Joe returned to Ohio, he gave the autographed book to his son, who had taken in Truman's Willard appearance from the perch on his father's shoulders.

Joe was preceded in death by his wife, Ruth, in 1993. From this and a previous marriage, he is survived by two daughters and a son, twelve grandchildren and nineteen great-grandchildren, a brother and two sisters. He shall be dearly missed by all. Happy Collecting, Joe!

Richard P. Morgan

LAWRENCE A. FLEISCHMAN

The death in January of Lawrence A. Fleischman at seventy-one left an enormous gap in the American art world. As a young man in his thirties, living in his native Detroit, Larry Fleischman formed an unequalled, prescient collection of American paintings that included some of the greatest American pictures, including Rembrandt Peale's *Rubens Peale with a Geranium*, Thomas Anshutz's

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