

Arthur Leolin Price CBE QC**(1924 – 2013)**

Arthur Leolin Price, or “Leo” as he was invariably known, was for many years a very well-known figure in Lincoln’s Inn and beyond. After serving during the latter part of World War II in the Indian Army (where he acquired a working knowledge of Urdu), he went up to Keble College, Oxford, where he read Jurisprudence and enjoyed an active political life becoming Librarian of the Oxford Union.

Leo was called to the Bar by the Middle Temple in 1949 and took silk in 1968. He had a long legal career, remaining in practice until very near the end of his life. Only one of the colleagues he leaves behind in Chambers had been called to the Bar by 1968 when Leo took silk and most of them had not even been born by then.

Leo’s career at the Bar was not only very long but also very distinguished. Throughout the 60s right up until the early 90s he was one of the giants of the Chancery Bar. He had a practice of enormous and truly international range stretching across the entire common law world. He appeared in numerous offshore common law jurisdictions and was in fact appointed QC in New South Wales and the Bahamas. In 1990 he was elected Treasurer of the Middle Temple.

Leo’s florid (one might almost say orotund) style of advocacy was unique, a throw-back to a bygone age when counsel addressed the court without hesitation in complete, mellifluous sentences. But if his delivery was, to the modern ear, unusually elaborate, it was beautifully constructed and would lead to the inevitable killer blow at the end.

To his colleagues it often seemed that every solicitor in the land was anxious for his advice. Many junior practices flourished as a result of the crumbs that fell from his table. But despite his eminence he was an approachable and affable man and would chat with passing clerks, ushers, judges, barristers and Law Lords or with anyone else if he got the chance. He was universally accepted by clerks as a “clerk’s man”. Many senior clerks in Lincoln’s Inn had at some point served as junior clerks in his Chambers at 10 Old Square. Clerks whom he knew, no matter what their status, would be often kept away from their duties by his enquiries and discussions as he walked to or from Middle Temple at lunchtime. (The writer is reliably informed that clerks in every Inn would have readily sold their grandmothers to have him in their Chambers!)

Leo had a wicked sense of humour. For many years he regularly made the principal speech of welcome to judges newly appointed to the Chancery bench. These were very well attended events at which Leo would not spare the blushes of the new judge. Indeed it was a test of the mettle of the new judge that he was prepared to invite Leo to perform this duty. (Not all of them were!) But his mischievous sense of humour was not confined to welcoming speeches. On one famous occasion he opened an appeal to the House of Lords by explaining to their Lordships that “this case is about the basics of contract – offer, acceptance and consideration”, an opening which prompted the following exchange:

Lord Widgery: “Mr Price, I think you can take it that we understand the basics.”

Leo: “My Lord, that was the mistake I made in the court below.”

Although Leo was totally dedicated to the practice of law, he was yet able to find the time to champion non-legal causes, in particular those associated with child health. For many years he was a governor of the Great Ormond Street Hospital (and was influential in procuring a

legislative provision giving the Hospital the rights in the UK to Peter Pan in perpetuity). He was also a governor and latterly chairman of the Institute of Child Health. (His CBE was in fact awarded for his services to child health, not the law.)

Leo's other abiding interest was politics. He was a prolific writer of letters to *The Times* and *The Telegraph* (not all of them published!). He was continually scathing of meddlesome bureaucrats interfering with the administration of the law and latterly of the unfairness of the European Arrest Warrant. But his particular ire was from the outset directed at the erosion of this country's sovereignty by successive EU treaties. In the earlier years such views were anathema to the political establishment and were generally dismissed as at best eccentric; it took some courage to express them. How times have changed. It must have been some consolation to Leo in his declining years that there has been such a sea change in attitudes.

Since Leo's death tributes have poured into his Chambers from around the globe via email and Facebook, not that he was especially familiar with either medium. (To be fair he did possess an iPad, though his colleagues wondered what use he made of it!) Leo's charm and charisma, his kind nature and accessibility touched many people. He will be greatly missed by all those who consulted him over the years. He will also be missed by all his colleagues and clerks at Ten Old Square, the set formed out of the merger in 1996 of the former sets at 8 Stone Buildings and 10 Old Square, over which he presided with distinction until ill-health forced him to retire last year.

Leo Price died on 24th March 2013 at the age of 88. His wife Lindy, who had herself been appointed CBE for her services to prison reform and public health, died in 1999. Leo is

survived by their four children, one of whom is a barrister and a member of his old chambers.