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Introduction of Thomas Buergenthal Address - Introduction.

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ADDRESSES

**INTRODUCTION OF THOMAS BUERGENTHAL
(PRIOR TO HIS ADDRESS CLOSING A
HUMAN-RIGHTS SYMPOSIUM SPONSORED BY
ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW
ON FEBRUARY 14-15, 1991)**

BARBARA BADER ALDAVE*

This evening I have the privilege of introducing one of the world's most distinguished human-rights scholars and most remarkable men. My major difficulty in introducing him is deciding how to refer to him. Among other possibilities, I might appropriately call him "Professor," or "Judge," or "President." For Thomas Buergenthal currently is the Lobingier Professor of Comparative and International Law, as well as the Director of the International Legal Studies Program, at George Washington University. Previously, he has taught at the law schools of the University of Pennsylvania, the State University of New York, the University of Texas, and Emory University; and for several years he was both Dean and Professor at The American University's Washington College of Law. In addition, Thomas

* Dean and Professor, St. Mary's University School of Law, B.S., Stanford University; J.D., University of California, Berkeley.

Buergenthal currently is a judge, serving on both the Inter-American Court of Human Rights of the Organization of American States, and the Administrative Tribunal of the Inter-American Development Bank. Then, too, Thomas Buergenthal is the incumbent President of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights in San Jose, Costa Rica.

Perhaps I should resolve my uncertainty by continuing to refer to our distinguished guest as I always have referred to him in the past — that is, with all due respect, as “Tom.”

Tom was born in 1934. While still a child, he spent years in the Nazi concentration camps at Auschwitz and Sachsenhausen. Almost incredibly, especially in light of his youth at the time of his incarceration, he survived. He came to the United States, graduated from Bethany College and New York University School of Law, and earned the degrees of Master of Laws and Doctor of Juridical Science at Harvard Law School. He has written more than a hundred books, articles, and reviews; served on dozens of boards and commissions of organizations devoted to the protection of human rights; and won numerous prizes and awards and honorary degrees.

Five or six years ago, when Dean Buergenthal resigned from his position at Washington College of Law, the *Law Review* there published a number of tributes to him. I found particularly moving, and I echo, the sentiments expressed by Herman Schwartz, one of Tom's former colleagues:

To the world, Thomas Buergenthal is known as one of our most distinguished human rights scholars and practitioners, a pioneer in the effort to bring the arbitrary cruelties of dictators and tyrannical governments under some kind of control. To me, Tom is an old friend who has lived one of the most inspiring life stories that I know. . . . All of us who live long enough experience both the bitter and the sweet. Few of us, though, experience such enormous swings as Tom Buergenthal has. . . . Tom has become a great scholar, a superb teacher, a creative judge, and a first-rate dean. He has combined great analytic power and rigorous method with a shrewd judgment of people and situations. He is a living defeat of the Final Solution.¹

It is with great pride that I present to you the *Honorable* Thomas Buergenthal.

1. Schwartz, *Dedication: Dean Thomas Buergenthal*, 34 AM. U.L. REV. xvii (1985).