

THE CAMBRIDGE LAW JOURNAL

VOLUME 33, PART 2

NOVEMBER 1974

PROFESSOR S. A. DE SMITH

STANLEY DE SMITH has left a legacy of outstanding scholarship. He reshaped administrative law as an academic subject in this country; and his wide-ranging contributions to the literature of public law were consistently incisive and constructive. His style was both elegant and distinctive: like Blackstone—as Jeremy Bentham put it—he spoke the language of the scholar and the gentleman.

Professor de Smith began and ended his university career at Cambridge. He graduated from St. Catharine's College in 1942. After distinguished war service—during which he was mentioned in despatches and awarded the Order of Leopold II and the Croix de Guerre (1940) with palms—he taught for nearly a quarter of a century at the University of London, successively as Lecturer, Reader and (from 1959) as Professor of Public Law. The emphasis in his research and writing was towards two particular areas. The first of these was that of the constitutional problems of developing countries: his advice in this area was frequently sought by the United Kingdom and other governments, and his work led to the publication of *The New Commonwealth and its Constitutions* in 1964, and, after a stay as visiting fellow at the Center for International Studies and as visiting professor at the Law School of New York University, of *Microstates and Micronesia* in 1970. The second area was administrative law. From the publication in 1959 of the first edition of *Judicial Review of Administrative Action* his reputation rapidly became established; and his concise and shrewd analysis of so many problems in administrative law achieved growing recognition in the courts of common law jurisdictions throughout the world. To the end of his career he continued active as a consultant upon the constitutional problems of emergent states and nations. In 1970 he returned to Cambridge as Downing Professor and as a Fellow of Fitzwilliam College. In 1971 he was elected to a Fellowship of the British Academy. His academic stature was already assured; but

even in the few years that were left he maintained and enhanced his reputation with the publication of two editions of *Constitutional and Administrative Law*, of a third edition of *Judicial Review of Administrative Action* in 1973, and of the new section on Administrative Law—for which he was the principal joint editor—in the fourth edition of Halsbury's *Laws of England*. At the same time he was keenly interested in teaching and research in the university. He was at his happiest in postgraduate teaching and the supervision of research students, but he cared deeply about all aspects of teaching and Tripos reform. In 1973 appointment as editor of the *Cambridge Law Journal* brought him great pleasure, and there is no doubt that over the years he would have applied exacting standards and exemplary direction to the task of editing.

In this country and especially at London and Cambridge, in Mauritius, where he served for many years as Constitutional Commissioner, in Australia, where he was a Visiting Fellow at the Australian National University in 1962, in the United States, and in many other parts of the world, news of Stanley de Smith's death at the age of 51 was received with a profound sense of loss. Those who knew him will remember him as a somewhat reserved person with a quiet sense of humour (though they will not have known that the appearance of reserve was the result of deafness caused by his artillery service in the war); he was invariably encouraging to his students and younger colleagues and he was generous in his assessments of others. We offer our deepest sympathy to his widow and family.