FOREWORD

From Barry A. Crouch, I learned that persons could be paid for something they would do for free. Crouch taught at Angelo State University during the last years of the 1960s, when I was attending there as an undergraduate. He prized teaching, whether at Angelo State or the several other universities where he worked. Equally dear to him were research and writing. After his classroom duties ended, he would spend hours working on his dissertation or preparing articles for publication. His passion infected me, and over the years I've come to marvel that the academy pays me as a professor for working at something I would do for sheer personal and intellectual gratification.

Mr. Crouch was no older than twenty-eight in 1969, when I enrolled in his class titled The Era of the Civil War and Reconstruction. I was twenty-four, just two years out of the military, and pursuing, at most, a BA in history so I could have a life better than the one I had left behind as the son of South Texas farm laborers. The quality of instruction at small colleges, I have found over the years, matches that at any name university, and that judgment certainly applied to Crouch's abilities. To me, at least, he was a captivating lecturer (I am told he was equally stimulating when signing at Gallaudet College (now Gallaudet University), where he spent the greater portion of his career) who did more than narrate the historical events that led to the Civil War and laid the groundwork for Reconstruction. He vigorously denounced the tradition, originating in the works of William Archibald Dunning, that depicted white southerners as helpless victims of Radical Republicans and made villains of the freedmen, scalawags, and carpetbaggers. More exciting to me were his digressions into the field of research, about which he spoke with equal zeal. The way he told it, historians had a duty and responsibility not only to teach, but also to dedicate themselves to research. The title of "scholar" was not to be used

generically just because a person held a PhD, he commented. Scholars were those who searched for historical truths in archival documents and whose work we read in the classroom. A PhD was the license to write and to legitimately claim the title of "historian." As an example of a historian's tome, he would hold up a book titled *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550–1812,* written by Winthrop D. Jordan, a brilliant historian of that period.

In keeping with his views on scholarship, Crouch required an extensive research assignment in that class I took under him in 1969. He wanted it to be fifty pages, I seem to recall, and to be based on primary documents. It was a formidable undertaking for anyone, but Crouch had an uncanny ability to detect seriousness of purpose in his students, and he took time to mentor me on the secrets of the craft. By the time I finished the course, he had "discovered" me, identifying me as one with high prospects for a career in the history profession. I do not think I disappointed him, for he remarked many years later that he had "discovered" others, but that none could match my scholarly record.

In 1970 both Crouch and I left Angelo State. He finished his dissertation that year and accepted a postdoctoral fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities to study at Howard University in Washington, D.C. I had received a fellowship to attend Texas Christian University (TCU) at the same time, and enrolled in TCU's PhD program, majoring in Latin American history (though my field of specialty was, and has been, Chicano history). Our parting in 1970 did not signal an end to our friendship; for the next thirty years we remained fast friends. In fact, Barry (it took me awhile to move away from addressing him as "Mr. Crouch") continued to monitor my progress in graduate school, writing to me at least once a month (and at times more frequently), encouraging me to stay on track and assuring me that I had chosen a noble profession. He insisted that I call him collect should I run into problems, and I believe I must have taken him up on his offer once or twice during those down days that pervade graduate-school life. He visited us in Fort Worth when research brought him to Texas, and he would take us out to dinner, a special treat for a family on a graduate student's austere budget. As I approached the dissertation-writing stage, I sought his counsel on doing something along the lines of Winthrop Jordan's work on African Americans, and he encouraged me to proceed as intended. The result was my dissertation, "White Racial Attitudes toward Mexicans in Texas, 1821–1900" (TCU, 1974), which the University of Texas Press published in 1983 under the

title *They Called Them Greasers: Anglo Attitudes toward Mexicans in Texas, 1821–1900*.

After finishing at TCU, I returned to Angelo State. Common interests kept us corresponding and visiting. We would exchange copies of our publications (his on slavery in general, but on Texas Reconstruction in particular), and we would mail each other manuscripts for input and editing. Annually we would get together at the Texas State Historical Association (TSHA) conference, if not at some other historical meeting, and make a point of having lengthy discussions over breakfast or dinner. He never failed to express pride in my accomplishments, and I never stopped feeling that if it had not been for Barry, I would probably have gone through life as an unfulfilled public-school teacher.

The name of Barry A. Crouch and the topic of Reconstruction Texas became almost synonymous for thirty years after he arrived in the East; his only competitors were people like Carl Moneyhon, James Smallwood, and Randolph B. Campbell. His reputation rested on his use of the National Archives (where he was in "researcher's heaven," he would say) as his main source, his masterful command of the secondary literature, and a narrative style of writing that offered proof of interpretation instead of a reliance on theory. His works provoked discussion and debate in journal articles, and his writings constituted the center of any Reconstruction debate. He was ever ready to give a helping hand with a manuscript, and his critique of the Reconstruction chapter in *The History of Texas* (which I wrote with Robert A. Calvert) proved valuable. In all three editions of the book, we thank him for his assistance.

By the mid-1980s, and certainly by the 1990s, he was considered a "senior statesman" of Texas history. At the annual conferences of the TSHA, both young scholars and old hands would want to visit with the master. The scene around him at times resembled a class of eager students wanting to hear more from their favorite professor. After the day ended, the gatherings retreated to the cocktail lounge at the hotel, where the shoptalk continued. Upon my recommendation, the TSHA in 1995 inducted Crouch as a fellow of the association in recognition of his immense contributions to Texas historical studies.

Like other of his Texas friends, I saw Barry Crouch just a few days before he passed away in March 2002. He had made the long flight from Washington, D.C., to Corpus Christi, Texas, to participate in the yearly TSHA conference and to get together with his Texas colleagues. I published another of my books in the fall of that year and dedicated it to his

memory. It was not the only book I so dedicated. My very first one, *The Tejano Community, 1836–1900,* had acknowledged the deep debt I owed him. How small these tributes seem for a person who led me into a career that richly compensates me for doing something I do not regard as work at all.

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