

LAUDATIO: PROF. İL HAN ÖZAY

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Dear honorable Professors, distinguished colleagues and dear participants,

I HAVE BEEN on this platform several times for various meetings and conferences, which has always been a great honor. For that reason first of all I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Flogaitis who trusted me regardless of my age and inexperience as he gave the chance to me to be a part of this distinguished community.

Today, the reason I am here to speak before this honorable audience is to express my respect to a great professor, a great mentor, a real master, an exquisite personality, and above all an academic father to me.

Prof. Özay was born in 1940, and after his primary and secondary education he started his studies at the Liceo Italiano di Istanbul and graduated with great honors from the science section. He was granted a scholarship of the Italian President for university education, he studied law at La Sapienza and obtained his Ph.D. degrees at the same Institution under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Antonio Lefebvre d'Ovidio de Clunières and Prof. Dr. Giuseppe Vedovato. He holds a double PhD, one on international maritime and space law and the other on the Constitutional Developments in Turkey. He was honored by "CIVIS" gold medal for his excellency and received his prize from the Italian President. After having obtained his PhD degrees, he had the honor to work as a research assistant of Prof. Dr. Massimo Severo Giannini at the University of Rome. Af-

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terwards he went back to Turkey and started to work as a research assistant at the University of Istanbul Faculty of Law at the Chair of honorable Prof. Siddik Sami Onar in which he would serve as a professor for years and later on be the chair till he retired. After becoming an associate professor, he had been invited as a Fullbright scholar to teach at the Harvard Law School as a visiting professor. While teaching at the University of Istanbul Faculty of Law, he was appointed to several high official positions such as a High Counselor at the Ministry of Justice. He was the one with his colleagues at the Chair of Prof. Siddik Sami Onar that built a bridge between academy and the courts.

What I have mentioned till now is what is known officially about him. However, to me he is an extraordinary teacher, a wise professor and as I mentioned a while ago an academic father.

Let me start with my first expression of his in my mind that goes back way before, the times when I was a second-year law student. At those times he was a great story-teller to us in class by which he provoked our thoughts and pulled us in administrative law. Such style was and still is inherent in his writings, which I realized when I started my academic career as his assistant. Imagine, who could mention penguins and seals in his article dealing with tender law; or mentioning monkeys while explaining the concept of "status" in defining public personnel. It all sounds unusual but his style of explaining concepts and institutions was and still is very much attractive for a student and an assistant.

And on the day I became Prof. Özay's assistant at the University of Istanbul Faculty of Law, it was a great honor for me to engage such a position, yet then my honor has been grown apace. As, starting from the very first day, he treated me as his colleague not as a newbie. In the academic meetings of the Department of Administrative Law he used to ask for our thoughts and ideas and let us vote for decisions of the Chair. Wherever he was invited, he would want us to accompany him, though not mentioning why, and he always thought of introducing us to the academic community. That is how I found myself, correcting: how we as young scholars found ourselves, in this room. Many travellings done and many memories treasured together as how he called us: as a family!

A family having its roots in the establishment of Turkish Administrative Law by the godfather of Turkish Administrative Law, the distinguished Professor Siddık Sami Onar. His heritage is still a living treasure through the efforts of his filiation Prof. Özay, I mean filiation by heart. This filiated son not only follows Prof Onar's academic steps but also equips new academic generation with his broad vision and ideas. And also this loyal filiated son Prof. Özay gathers his family (which is us) every year on the anniversary of death of his academic father Prof. Onar and shows his fidelity.

Besides all this academic and serious side, he has a naïve and childish personality as well, which you have to come closer to see, and a very high sense of humor. He always liked celebrations on an occasion, yet if there is none he would create a reason. He is very much fond of pasta and wine nights in which we could gather as a whole family, sometimes having academic talks but mostly singing songs. He would often take us to cultural events, concerts, theaters, and many more. This was an issue with assistants of other Departments as they mostly had distant relations with their professors. We, as assistants of Prof. Özay, are the lucky ones. Once, I would never forget, he was invited by the Italian Consulate to Cecilia Bartoli concert at the amazing Hagia Iren having protocol seats. Oh, unforgettable! We had the opportunity to be there. And on another occasion, on a snowy day in Istanbul, where hundreds of car accidents occurred and a snow storm was announced by administration, yet we had tickets for a concert at the opera house to which we, one way or the other, went as the only audience. Just the orchestra and we were at the opera house. We may have been the only ones outside their houses and enjoyed the snow together, playing snowball. Imagine, I was a first-year assistant and playing snowball with the guru of Turkish Administrative Law, Prof. Özay.

I could speak about Prof. Özay forever, my gratitude would never be expressed enough in words; they would never be complete and never be enough comparing to what I have experienced with him as his assistant. Yet, with a simple word, I would just say how lucky I am to be his last assistant. He has been shining in my life since my law school years and is still my sunshine as how he named his book.

Thank you very much, my dear honorable Professor, Prof. Özay.