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Glenn Feldman was one of the most complex men I have known, in many ways a study in contradictions. I suppose they began at birth to mother Julia Garate Burgos Feldman, a Catholic born in Lima, Peru, and Jewish father Brian Feldman from Brooklyn, New York. Faithfully Catholic for most of his life, he finally wearied not so much of Catholic doctrine as at authoritarian priests who inferred that voting Democratic had become at least a venal sin and perhaps a mortal one. Fed up with the politics of his Catholic church, he became a faithful, happy, and contented Episcopalian

That story is much more than a glimpse into the intellectual and professional world of Twentieth Century Southern politicized religion, a world that Glenn loved to study and one he wrote about in eleven books. It also provides a window into his psyche, temperament, and character. He was not a man who allowed other people to interject their traditional wisdom into the reality of his life or understanding of history. No matter how venerated the source or ancient the provenance, if it made no sense to Glenn and contradicted his sources and analysis, he would have none of it.

As his major professor at Auburn University, I argued with Glenn endlessly over the periodization of the Ku Klux Klan and the strength of the South's minority progressive tradition. Like most scholars of my generation, I favored the notion of three quite different Klan epochs (the violent, racist period of Reconstruction; the more diverse, anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant, one-hundred-percent American Klan of the 1920s; and the anti-black, anti-Civil Rights Klan of the 1950s forward). I also believed in certain hopeful, sunlit epochs of enlightenment within the long dreary night of reactionary politics, racism, and anti-intellectualism. Glenn martialed his evidence for a seamless historical Klan, always racist at its core and ever present in the South from Reconstruction on despite ebbs and flows in membership. Furthermore, no matter how much the South *seemed* to change for the better, at root it could never expunge its violence, racism, and intolerance. Despite our differences, I loved him like a son, and I think he reciprocated as if I have become his academic father. On a host of issues I represented traditional wisdom and he revisionism. But we maintained a relationship growing rarer by the day in Twenty-first Century Alabama and America: the capacity to disagree fundamentally and fiercely without jeopardizing friendship or mutual respect for each other.

Glenn's generosity of time and friendship, as well as his candid and constructive criticism of fellow graduate students' work, puzzled some of them though in time he won the respect of most. With a small cohort of similarly enthusiastic older doctoral students, he helped organize a phenomenally successful national symposium focusing on the recent South. It drew other senior doctoral students from such universities as Brandeis, Harvard, and other distinguished doctoral programs to Auburn. That two-day conference and the papers presented there entirely by students was seldom matched and never exceeded by annual sessions of the Southern Historical Association that I attended for half a century. And those young scholars soon took their places on the faculties of Tulane, Queens University in Belfast, Northern Ireland, the University of North Carolina, Pembroke, Western Carolina University, and elsewhere as the most productive scholars of the South in Glenn's generation.

Like his two daughters Hallie and Rebecca, his students and friends could not mistake either his high standards, his rapier wit, or his stern disagreement as anything other than tough love, nor his kindness and generosity as emanating from any motive or reservoir of the spirit other than concern for their welfare and long-term success. Sacrificing their own ease in Zion for the welfare of others became a way of life for Glenn and Jeannie. As a consequence of their appreciation for the annual graduate student dinners at our home, which my wife and I hosted, Glenn and Jeannie one Christmas gave me a beautiful gray jacket which I still wear and treasure two decades later. Their budget could not afford the jacket, just as his career could not afford controversy at UAB, or his love of Catholicism could afford his independent political thought and action, or his moral conscience could afford the racial and economic consequences of his sensitivity to the injustice of Alabama public life.

But that's just who Glenn was. For all his contradictions in family relations, religion, and temperament, he came as a whole package, not in parts. He successfully blended seemingly impossible parts: kindness, gentleness, sensitivity, justice, intellectual and scholarly detachment, tradition, and gravitas, with revisionism, tolerance of lifestyles and political views different from his own, pride of family, willingness to defy authority whether academic or religious, determination to defend his rights, adherence to deeply held personal moral and traditional religious and family values, a raucous, whimsical sense of humor, and a propensity to play the role of practical jokester that took strangers completely by surprise.

Perhaps it was that initial fusion of Jewish and Catholic religions or the immigrant streams from Europe and Latin America that made him so bold a critic of southern bigotry and exceptionalism. Or perhaps temperamentally he just enjoyed nothing better than a worthy intellectual challenger and historical disagreements worth a good fight. Or perhaps his fierce pride in his origins and opinions combined with his Manichean sense of right and wrong to send him into the courtroom when someone offended his sense of fairness and justice.

After one such confrontation with bullying UAB administrators convinced him that he would have to find a faculty position elsewhere, Glenn called me about possible jobs. For a fine, funny, likeable teacher who was also becoming one of the South's most prolific and productive scholars, I knew he would have little problem finding another job as good or better than the one at UAB. But as I began to suggest possibilities in various parts of the South and America, he interrupted with his qualifiers which greatly complicated his search. He was not interested in any position outside a one-hundred mile radius of Birmingham. He had parents, brothers, and friends in the Magic City, his beloved All Saints' Episcopal Church in Homewood, his wife and daughters' interests, schools, and friends, the distinguished series in Twentieth Century Southern Politics that he co-edited for the University of Alabama Press. Besides that he loved Alabama and planned to continue to live in Birmingham and commute to his new job. After all, Alabama's state motto, "We Dare Defend Our Rights", could have been the theme of his life, despite the fact that whoever thought of it and the legislators who enacted it obviously did not have Glenn in mind when they did so. Like always, Glenn had a way of complicating everything.