GLEN DAWSON: A LIFE WELL LIVED, NOW WELL TOLD

Glen was born into a world of books, libraries, and mountain climbing only seven years after his father opened “Ernest Dawson’s Antique Book Shop” on South Broadway in 1905. His father would be his early mentor and his destiny was set, a destiny now engagingly told by Elizabeth Pomeroy. She invites you into both worlds – and more – as she skillfully unpacks Glen’s remarkable life story and shows how his footprints not only measured the Sierra Nevada and other mountain peaks, but his presence was a sure way to measure the antiquarian book world of Los Angeles.

I first wandered into Dawson’s Book Shop on South Figueroa as a newly minted history major during my senior year at Pasadena College. It was in Dawson’s that I realized that I wanted to live with books and one day have my own collection. For half a century starting in 1966 Glen became a trusted teacher, mentor, friend, and guide to all things involving books and history. He was to me the “small renaissance, southern California style” that Jake Zeitlin had described in the 1930s. But it was his understanding of history that captivated me, and as Pomeroy points out, it also made Glen Dawson unique among the antiquarian booksellers of his time. Because of his many publications I kidded him that he was really a historian trapped in the body of a bookseller.

Although I felt privileged to have such a personal friendship with Glen – a quiet and modest person – I have learned so many valuable insights into his life from reading this remarkable manuscript, now a book. Pomeroy has captured so beautifully the man, his ancestry, his family, his business, his publications, his involvement and support of organizations and institutions, and the ever-widening circle of friends that he attracted, that she brings welcomed order and understanding to his 103-year life’s journey.

Here in Pomeroy’s exciting narrative, you find the qualities that anchored Glen Dawson’s entire life: hope, always looking forward to tomorrow with anticipation and planning; thankfulness, always embracing gratitude, love, and forgiveness; empathy, always willing to see the world through others’ eyes; engagement, always desiring to do things with people; and integrity, always being ethically and morally trustworthy and dependable.

In conclusion, I want to share a comment by Robert Kirsch who wrote: “In the end a sense of history is part of the very nature of man; . . . it is the quality that endows him with endurance and worth that is indispensable to survival and structure of values.” So it was with Glen Dawson and so it is now with his biography, a gift to us from Elizabeth Pomeroy.

Thomas F. Andrews
Glen Dawson
Mountaineer and Bookman

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