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The late Ordway Hilton was for many years one of the foremost experts in the field of forensic document examination in general and handwriting examination in particular. His magnum opus was *Scientific Examination of Questioned Documents*, originally published in 1956 and published in revised form in 1982. He also wrote *Detecting and Deciphering Erased Pencil Writing*, published in 1991. He wrote more than 90 published articles and presented many other papers at professional meetings. From 1959 to 1960, Mr. Hilton served as President of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences and from 1960 to 1962, President of the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners. Ordway Hilton died in 1998 after 55 years in the profession of forensic document examination.

In the following article, Mr. Hilton outlines some of the basic rules of handwriting identification. Mr. Hilton held degrees in mathematics and here he applies the form of mathematical rules

and corollaries to the principles of handwriting examination. The result is concise and cogent treatment of the basic principles undergirding the identification of handwriting. The reprinting of this article is considered especially timely given the increased scrutiny that handwriting examination has been receiving in some court systems. While some of the material is a bit dated (research using computers is now confirming what document examiners have known all along, that each person's handwriting is individual to that person), for the most part, the information in this article has stood the test of time.

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Some Basic Rules for the Identification of Handwriting

Ordway Hilton

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Articles For the Non-Specialist

The following article by Mr. Ordway Hilton, one of America's leading experts in suspect document examination, is the first of a series of articles written by medical and scientific experts for the lawyer (and other non-specialists) on topics affecting his everyday practice.

The importance to the lawyer, and not only the criminal lawyer, of some knowledge of the basic rules of handwriting identification ought not to have to be stressed, considering the weighty is-

ssues which frequently depend on the authenticity of a document. In the field of criminal law the following offences were known to the police in 1960: blackmail 241, falsifying accounts 1,551, forgery and uttering 6,502, libel 31, while in civil proceedings the disposal of wealth depends on the proof of the signature on an agreement or on a will.

The rules and corollaries stated in this paper represent some of the basic concepts necessary