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RANDY H. LEE

W. JEREMY DAVIS*

It is a rather daunting task to try to eulogize Randy Lee. So many have done so, and all have had beautiful stories of how Randy's nature and personality made a life-altering impression on them. As a colleague who knew Randy over thirty years, imagine the effect he had on me. It was wonderful reading the homilies on the web site, most reflecting on the personal attention he gave to everyone, but particularly students. He made students feel that they were very special to him. They were.

Randy understood what a privilege it was to be a law professor. He believed—and I know this because it was one thing about which we agreed completely and discussed often—that we had both somehow lucked into the best job in the legal profession. We were teachers of future lawyers. His priorities were not his teaching schedule or his teaching load or his office location or even his “research agenda.” His priorities were the students: their studies, their careers, their families, their problems and their accomplishments. Randy really cared, and showed it.

His commitment to the well-being of the students allowed him little tolerance for the perceived shortcoming of a colleague (or, dare I say, Dean) when some act or decision did not seem to him to work to the best interests of our students. Randy was very critical, and rightly so, in that regard. And while he seldom criticized publicly, he did have a somewhat caustic way of expressing himself in writing. I think that only once in the three decades we worked together did he get angry with me face-to-face; I have, however, collected stacks of “Randy-grams” over the years. These yellow legal-lined memoranda in his distinctive script and period-less paragraphs each scornfully explained the error of some recent misdeed. But it was never a personal attack and friendship never seemed in doubt. Randy was, after all, a gentleman.

I have a lot of recollections of Randy that confirm his generosity and his character, but the offer he made me just before I left UND to serve as dean at the Appalachian School of Law tells it best. Randy spent some of his childhood in Southwest Virginia, so he knew something of the area and

*Davis was already on the faculty of the UND School of Law when Professor Lee was hired in the mid-Seventies. He served as dean at the School of Law from 1982 until he left in December 2003 to become the dean at the Appalachian School of Law in Grundy, Virginia. Davis now serves as Vice President and holds the L. Anthony Sutin professorship at that law school.

its struggles. He also knew about ASL, its commitment to the people of this economically exploited area, its history, and its challenges. Randy promised me that when he retired, he would come to Grundy and teach—for free—if I needed him.

I miss a lot of old friends at UND and in Grand Forks. But at least I know I can call or e-mail them once in a while. No more can I call Randy. I miss him.
