

Tribute to Judy Weightman

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Vivacious, loving, dynamic, bright, committed, supportive, curious, courageous, effervescent, irreverent, insightful, hard-working, fun-to-be-with. These words can only begin to paint a picture of our good friend and colleague, Judy Weightman. Widely regarded as the “heart” of the law school, she directed the Pre-Admission Program at the William S. Richardson School of Law for ten years and each year provided her very special guidance to a dozen future leaders for Hawai‘i and the Pacific. To both her students and her colleagues, she demonstrated through her life and her priorities how one’s lawyering skills can be used for the benefit of the community. Without being judgmental, she always reminded us—through the way she lived her own life—what we could achieve as lawyers and as people if we only would readjust our focus to concentrate on what is truly important. She fervently believed that law is a tool to bring about the sometimes exclusive, but nonetheless attainable, twin goals of justice and fairness of all.

Her students and their contributions to our society are probably her most important lasting legacy, but her work on the Hawai‘i Holocaust Project will also endure as a reminder to us all of the failures and triumphs of the human condition. The Holocaust was one of the most unbelievably terrible events of our century, and Judy understood the importance of ensuring that current and future generations remember what happened and why. But she also sought to highlight little known but important aspects of this overwhelming disaster by focusing our attention on the Japanese-American soldiers (who themselves had to overcome racial discrimination) who helped to free those who were trapped in the horror of the German concentration camps. Her excellent movie preserving this event—*From Hawai‘i to the Holocaust, A Shared Moment in History*—richly deserves the many awards it has garnered and will be seen over and over by those seeking to understand our time. Her two written volumes, entitled DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE: HAWAI‘I WITNESSES TO THE HOLOCAUST, complete the film by recording the oral testimony of the Hawai‘i soldiers who liberated the victims.

Judy received an M.A. in American Studies from the University of Hawai‘i and a J.D. from our Law School in 1981. She was a member of a distinguished class that included our current Dean, Larry Foster, as well as individuals who have become judges and community leaders in a variety of ways. Her classmates remember Judy as a special sparkplug, always

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generating fun activities as well as assisting others in mastering the intricacies of legal thinking. She was an excellent student who earned strong grades in her classes. After obtaining her law degree and passing the bar, she clerked for Chief Judge James S. Burns at the Intermediate Court of Appeals, served as a Deputy Public Defender, and then a Staff Attorney for the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs. In her "spare" time, she was an inventor who held four patents, including one for a popular soft and comfortable lamb-skin shoulder seat belt cover.

Judy helped our Law School in so many big and little ways. As director of the Pre-Admission Program, she not only helped her students with their academics, but also provided hours of counseling, earning her the nickname of "Mom." She initiated a scholarship program and established a tutoring class for the bar exam after graduation. She also brought her considerable skills and talents to our writing program, teaching Legal Methods Seminar, Appellate Advocacy, and the Second Year Seminar. She had the ability to touch her students' hearts in a way that gave them confidence in themselves, whatever challenges they had to face. And she freely shared her wisdom with her colleagues as well. She ably represented the Law School for a number of years as its representative on the University Faculty Senate and was one of the select few elected by her fellow Senators to serve on the five-member Executive Committee which meets regularly with the President of the University to discuss academic matters.

Judy's community service was extensive, ranging from her long tenure as director and officer of the American Civil Liberties Union and Jewish Federation of Hawai'i to chairing the education committee of her Neighborhood Board. She touched the lives of so many people through her basic human kindness, her conversational skills, her infectious laugh, and her sense of wonderment at all of life's pleasures. Whenever we needed strength or courage, her love was there to bolster us, even when she herself was debilitated by her illness. She helped us not only through her words, but also by example. She faced life's adversities, including her cancer, with courage and hope. To help others faced with cancer in their lives, she began a film documenting her own experiences in adjusting to life with cancer. Her family has pledged to finish her film.

We miss Judy a lot. We honor her for a life well-lived. We will continue to draw on her strength and example for the rest of our lives and will strive to pass on her life's legacy to future generations of law students.