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Farewells to Dean Gunter

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Farewells to Dean Guter

Dean Donald J. Guter was with us for all too short a time. Rather than lament the sad (and serious) consequences of his departure, I would like to focus on what he did for all of us while we were lucky enough to have him with us.

Dean Guter, Duquesne Law '77, brought the alumni back into the life of the Law School in a way that was new, exciting, and revivifying. He truly values our graduates.

Dean Guter, Duquesne Law '77, brought our law school to unrivaled heights of success in the Pennsylvania bar exam and in national moot court competitions. He truly values our reputation.

Dean Donald J. Guter, Duquesne Law '77, connected with our students, was their mentor, guide, and confidante, in a way no other dean (including yours truly) had ever done before. He truly values our students.

Dean Donald J. Guter, Duquesne Law '77, exemplified the highest ethical values of our profession, never conceding to fear, force, dishonesty, or lack of character. He truly values what it means to be a lawyer.

*Nicholas P. Cafardi**

My father, Joe Rago, passed away this February. He was an honest, hardworking, and extraordinarily decent man who possessed of all of the best virtues any son could hope to know. His death reminds me that we are never too old or too sophisticated to say aloud that we have heroes in our lives. Indeed, only small-minded people will say that they have no heroes.

In this passage, I celebrate another hero of mine . . . my very dear friend and colleague, Dean Donald J. Guter, who reminds me that heroes make vivid the values by which we try to live.

Admiral Guter arrived at Duquesne nearly four years ago. He returned to his alma mater determined to give his best efforts to the place (and people) he felt had given him so much. And that he did. As a Navy man, Don spent his years here tacking into strong

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winds, always moving forward and always guided by his principled nature and personal code. He nurtured in this law school something without which no institution can long endure: a sense that all problems are tractable and that hard work will get you through the storm. In the face of adversity, as well as opportunity, he taught the less clear-sighted—myself chief among them, I freely admit—how to combine realism, hard work, and serenity.

Don's primary view on leadership is that you help people to recognize that which they do best, provide them with the opportunities to do so in context with the broader mission, and then get out of their way. With historic success in our bar results, the establishment of a genuinely diverse Law School community, academic innovations that have brought Duquesne Law into the national light it deserves, and so much more, the Law School has produced an enviable record of achievement in four short years, providing numerous lessons on the key to success that spring from Don's brand of principled servant leadership.

I suppose if we wonder who the real leaders are, we can look to see who has real followers—people who follow a leader onto a path of life, who adopt their values, and aspire to emulate their virtues on a course navigated by the stars they teach us to see. They become our heroes. In this very special light, I think of Joe Rago and Don Guter.

There are those—and they are many—who call themselves “a Guter person.” I echo the voice and thoughts of many when I say that much of what we do has been made possible by—and all that we do has been made better by—the leadership of Donald J. Guter. I am proud to say, he is my friend and my dean.

*John T. Rago***

Good-bye, Don. It is with great sadness that I watch you go.

I have been here for more years that I care to count, through six deans and interim deans, and there was never, ever a better leader or inspiration than you. There was also never, ever a dean or interim dean that surpassed your motivational accomplishments or the personal relationships you developed with both the

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students and the alumni. This Law School flourished under your direction.

But to me, you represented even more than that—you represented Duquesne Law School, in that you were the first of our graduates to ever be selected to serve as dean. I was looking forward to celebrating the Law School's 100th anniversary in 2011 with you, a Duquesne Law graduate, as our leader. That celebration just will not have the same heart or passion should it be directed by leadership which was not shaped and molded by our traditions and whose alumni loyalties lie elsewhere. (Diversity is a wonderful goal, but can never eclipse pride in your own family.)

Speaking of those traditions, if integrity is one, you learned it well. And, you showed us that with every challenge and obstacle placed before you. You are a man of impeccable honor and unquestionable character. I am proud to call you friend—and will always call you dean.

*S. Michael Streib****

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