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In Memoriam: David P. Leonard

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humor and self-effacement. He was also a thoughtful scholar: precise, inquisitive, and clear in his thinking and writing. He loved Loyola Law School as much as anyone I know. Everything he did professionally was to further the interests of the institution in its pursuit of social justice and excellence in legal education. I personally owe him a great debt as he was one of my strongest supporters as I tried to get a job on the Loyola faculty.

Most of all, David was a quality human being, a mensch. Even in his illness, he always cared about the experiences of others—ever offering words of support and wisdom, and usually accompanied by his offbeat sense of humor. Everyone who knew him knew of his love for “The Simpsons,” but he was also a huge fan of the satirical newspaper, *The Onion*. In recent years, world events sometimes made it hard to tell the difference between *The Onion*’s satire and reality. David laughed at some of those stories, but he felt passionately about world events and about bettering conditions for all people.

David approached everything he did with an earnestness and fullness of purpose. He did not act strategically even as he held the important position of associate dean. He believed every issue should be decided on the merits, letting the chips fall where they may. Even in his illness, as he struggled with a variety of ailments, he gave his all for the school he loved so much.

David loved life and loved helping others. He spoke with great pride of his children, and had a great love for his wife, Susan. I miss seeing him each day at Loyola, and fondly remember his friendship and wise counsel.

*Professor Yxta Maya Murray*⁷

One tends to romanticize the dead when writing their eulogies, but it is not possible for me to be too enthusiastic in my description

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of David Leonard. Of course I admired David as a teacher, scholar and administrator. He was a triple threat, and one of the most gifted that this school will ever see, but, as I suspect other contributors will agree, it was his great talents as a family man and friend that will survive with even more intensity in our memories.

Here is an image of him, from perhaps two years ago: David is sitting on Victor Gold's sofa with a glass of wine in his hand, and laughing as a group of us watch a DVD of *The Graduate*. He is cracking up at Dustin Hoffman, who is enraged and terrified at his inability to get inside a white church and kidnap "Elaine" before she marries the scary-looking Nordic guy. David knows he is ill. But he's laughing, with us. There are three others of us there, and we're present nominally as a friendly group of movie nuts, but actually each of the three of us believes that we have attended as members of a David support group. That is, we believe that we are doing the supporting of David during his time of need. David's drinking Chardonnay and eating little mini-chips out of a plastic bowl. He begins talking about how much this film meant to him when he was a "young man," and how in the film Mike Nichols communicated a generational sense of ennui and foreclosure with such potency that 1970s moviegoers emerging from the shadowy eaves of the movie theaters embraced this *Vietnamish* pessimism as their era's *Weltschmerz*. However, David is not so precious as to use the inbent, looked-up German term for *world-pain*, or "pain caused by the evils and limitations of human existence." David uses the word "outlook." Another in the group, marginally younger, talks about how *she* grew up on movies like *Star Wars*, which conveyed the polar opposite sense of generational unbounded promise, heroism, and adventure-seeking. The speaker goes on, talking about falling in love with Mark Hamill at the age of twelve or thirteen. David listens, smiling and nodding. He is interested, he even seems happy to hear such nattering. Anyone in a similar situation may well have wanted to hit said *Star Wars* hero over the head with the plastic bowl and send the little chips flying all over the carpet. Everyone who has even been through a serious illness or can imagine such an experience will understand what I mean: any other human being sitting where David sat would not have exemplified Mark Hamill-like heroism in his easy bearing with other people, his sweet and kind camaraderie.

Of course, David was the one supporting us. Sometimes I think that his gentle, non-stoic, friendly, and generous bearing in the face of death was a feat of nearly inhuman strength. He taught me so much at the end of his life. The rest of us rattle the doors, trying to break in and out of our fates like raging mad men. The trick is to emulate David, as much as one can, feeling both the overwhelming sense of world-pain that his death creates and trying to face it with grace.

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David Stories

David Leonard profoundly touched the lives of many people, including me. The extraordinary depth and breadth of the respect and love expressed for David since his death particularly struck me on the day after David died and again as I have read the “David stories” that so many people have submitted to the Loyola Law School tribute blog for David.

I learned of David’s death about twenty minutes before I was scheduled to teach a large Business Associations class. I was not sure I would be able to teach the class because I was so distraught, but thinking about David and how he continued his teaching and service throughout his illness inspired me to go forward with the class. During the first hour of the two-hour class, I felt strangely disconnected from the words going back and forth between my students and me. At the ten-minute break in the middle of the class, I took a deep breath and tried to clear my mind.

Toward the end of the break, one of my students, Anna, approached me. She apologized for being upset and explained that she had just learned about David’s death. As she recounted a story about the kind, generous way in which David had helped her with

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