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Gideon Kanner

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*Edward L. Lascher**

I suspect that, given Gideon Kanner's fondness for his Loyola colleagues and fondness-plus for his students (past and present), his parting with full-time involvement in the law school consists of many parts of sadness. But I strongly suspect that the parting also had many elements of homecoming.

Homecoming to the practice of law is something Gideon never quite left entirely, and certainly could never bring himself to put out of mind or heart. He remained, throughout his tenure in academe, a lawyer whose assignment of the moment happened to be that of teaching novice lawyers. Far from being a weakness in Kanner the Educator, this was one of his strengths. It helped to produce a teacher of consummate practicality.

I do not mention practicality in the sense lawyers so often use it: Ideas on how to make the best buys on number 3 wire staples, ways of increasing the number of billable hours or the like. Instead, I salute Gideon's eminently practical approach to the legal tasks of the lawyer: How to best approach a case so that it may be handled with dispatch, and effectively, within the bounds of propriety. That, I believe, is a form of practicality which never hurt either law student or practicing lawyer.

Gideon knows, and discloses, that cases are not decided by abstract principles, rules or evidence, or anything of the sort. Instead, they are decided by momentary focusing of human impacts and human inputs on some very human decision-makers. He knows that courts are seldom composed of abstractions, as distinct from people, and he has been able to convey that knowledge to a near-generation of students. Not surprising, since it is a knowledge that informs his skills as a practicing lawyer.

He has been, and remains, a true friend of lawyers, in many senses—of the individual lawyer, of the profession in its totality, and, happily, to an ever-widening number of us who have some special claim or another on the friendship of an exceptional colleague. It's good to have Gideon all the way back.

* The author is a partner at Lascher & Lascher in Ventura, California and practices civil appellate law. The author has both opposed and worked with Professor Kanner and has counted him among his friends since the 1960s.