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In Memoriam: David P. Leonard

Ellen P. Aprill

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But in his last months, in the very shadow of death, he taught us his greatest lesson.

Professor Ellen P. Aprill⁵

When I retired from being an associate dean after serving in that position for four years and returned to being a full-time faculty member, David and I switched offices—he moved into the office I had had in the dean’s suite, and I took over the office he had occupied for almost twenty years.

He had served his first year as associate dean staying in his faculty office on the third floor of Burns. He wanted very much to experience, for whatever time he could, given the state of his health, the rhythm of life in the dean’s suite on the second floor, and immerse himself in the constant stream of visitors and issues and have the ability to call out to the other deans for advice and support. When it came time to move, however, he felt, naturally enough, some ambivalence about leaving the space that had been like a kind of home for so many years. He proudly told me what a good office it had been. He gave me advice on where I might put chairs or a table and whether I could add a bookcase, and about a drawer that needed repair or replacement. He packed up his posters and collection characters from “The Simpsons” to move to my former office.

I have been in his old office for not quite a year now. I continue to feel David’s presence very strongly, some days more than others, of course, but still with a sense that it is somehow our office and that he is there with me. Sometimes the thought of him makes me smile and laugh—he was among the neatest of people and I am anything but. I will think, for a moment, that he would be appalled were he to see his old office so messy, but I quickly remember that he was perhaps the kindest and most accepting human being I have ever known and almost hear him saying to himself, with a smile, “If being

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surrounded by these piles of papers, this unorganized nest is what makes Ellen feel at home, if that is good for her, then that is fine.” Sometimes the thought makes me sad—I look at the pictures of my grown stepsons and their children and reflect that he will not have the joy of seeing his own sons become fathers themselves or of being a grandfather. But mostly thoughts of David inspire me. I think of him especially when I meet with students, remembering how devoted he was to his own students, how invested he was in the success of every student at Loyola, how proud he was to be part of our community and our common endeavor.

The faculty office I occupied before I became an associate dean was an interior office without any windows to the outside. David’s and my office has a window that looks out across Olympic Boulevard to the Tenth Street School, a school made up almost entirely of children of recent immigrants. In one of his law review articles, David wrote about how he often watched parents walk their children to school, hand in hand, and urged all of us, in a nation built by immigrants, to see differences between us as not something to be feared but as something that enriches. David, without underestimating difficulties, always saw everything in the best light possible. Memories of David add light to my life, as this office has a window that brings in the light of the world. Memories of David are like the window in our office, an ever present opportunity to identify ways to reach out with compassion to make the world a better place, in ways large and small.

Professor Richard L. Hasen⁶

David Leonard: Teacher, Scholar, Friend

David was a unique and wonderful individual. He was beloved by his students for his ability to combine rigorous teaching with good

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