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Ohio Northern University Law Review

Tributes to Professor Nancy P. Sabol

In Memoriam: Nancy Paine Sabol

For nineteen years, I had the privilege of working with Nancy Sabol. She was the best colleague and friend one could have, and I will always cherish her memory. She was also an extraordinary law teacher. The primary mission of any law school is to prepare men and women to practice law with skill and ethical discernment. Nancy did more to advance that mission than any law teacher I have ever known, and I would like to explain why she was so good at what she did.

First, Nancy was brilliant. She received her bachelor's and law degrees *summa cum laude*. She served as articles editor of the Ohio State Law Journal and was named to the Order of the Coif. She also practiced law at the highest level of the profession. For fourteen years, Nancy was a lawyer for Jones Day primarily engaged in labor and employment law matters. She knew from experience what practice demands of a professional. She handled challenging issues and counseled difficult clients. She developed the good judgment that only be learned through experience and she brought all that to her classroom. Second, Nancy was always extraordinarily well prepared for every class session she ever held. During her last illness, I took over Nancy's Remedies course. She kindly shared her teaching notes with me. I was astonished at the breadth and detail in those notes. Nancy had a rare capacity for steady productive work, and she did not leave anything to chance. She knew exactly what she wanted to accomplish in every class. She put hours of work into making the session the best it could be.

Third, Nancy was as demanding of her students as she was of herself. She built most of her courses around challenging exercises. I taught a section of a course she designed for our January term one year and I never graded so many papers in my life. Understand that Nancy really graded every exercise and test she ever assigned. She was not one for grade inflation. She thought

a student's grade should reflect the student's accomplishments. If a student's performance did not attain a level of minimum competence, she was not reticent about grading the performance accordingly.

For the most part, Nancy's students never resented the work or the tough grades. The reason for that lies in the greatest gift brought to her teaching. The enterprise was never about her. She cared first, foremost, and only about the students' success and the students knew that. Nancy was "other-directed" in her teaching and everything else she did.

This trait made her a wonderful colleague. Nancy wanted to celebrate every birthday, particularly her own. She congratulated everyone on their accomplishments and never touted her own, a rare trait in most people, nearly unknown among law professors. She was excited by the birth of every child, every wedding, every promotion, and she wanted to have a party for each one. Nancy cared for everyone who worked with her and showed it in so many ways. When Nancy traveled, for example, she brought back trinkets for her friends. Those things are treasures to me now.

In the end, the connection between a student and a teacher is like most other human relationships. We remember and honor the people in our lives who gave all of themselves. Nancy always did. She will never be forgotten by those lucky enough to have worked or studied with her.

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