

## Gift

*James J. Faught\**

There are occasions of protocol and there are occasions of the heart. This is the happy encounter of both. It is my great honor to have this opportunity to offer a reflection on the wonderful career of my mentor and friend, Nina Appel. It was my good fortune to have worked with her closely for thirty-nine years of her forty-five-year career at Loyola University Chicago School of Law. It was an added benefit that for many of those years, since we lived in the same neighborhood, she drove me home from Loyola and we shared wonderful conversations.<sup>1</sup> To try to capture Nina's many contributions in this brief piece is a daunting task, and I will not try. I am aware that so many of her friends and colleagues at Loyola, throughout the legal profession, and in her personal life would love to be in my place to describe the many ways that she has made a difference for others. I appreciate how fortunate I am to have this opportunity. My aim is simply to add a couple thoughts to those of my colleagues who also have been given this opportunity by the *Loyola University Chicago Law Journal*.

This is also a daunting task because it is difficult to know where to begin. However, to know Nina is to understand that the foundation that has sustained her throughout has been her family. Her late husband Alfred, her daughter Karen, her son Richard, her sister Carol, and their families are never far from her thoughts. I know that she has always drawn great strength from their love and support. As we thank Nina for her many contributions, we must also thank them for their support over the years.

Throughout our 110-year history, Loyola University Chicago School of Law has been blessed with individuals who, through their leadership, their teaching, their scholarship, and their example, have built a tradition of excellence. They have prepared our law students for careers of service in the practice of law and elsewhere. We are all the beneficiaries of their uncompromising efforts, and the careers of generations of men and women who have earned Loyola's law degree stand as proof of their

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1. I must add that I was also a student in 1974 in her Administrative Law class that assembled a historically distinguished group of lawyers-in-training!

contributions. Nina Appel stands out among them. If she were a person of singular accomplishment, it would be easier to begin to characterize her career. However, Nina is not a person of singular accomplishment. She is not someone whose gifts can be described easily. Her contributions to Loyola University Chicago School of Law and to legal education cannot be measured in ways that we might normally judge the contributions of a dean, a professor, or a colleague. This is because she has contributed to so many in so many ways. Moreover, the duration of her leadership as dean is, in itself, a remarkable achievement. The average tenure of a dean at an American law school is about four years. Nina Appel was Loyola's Dean for twenty-one years—one of the longest tenures ever among law school deans.

In 1983, when Nina Appel became Loyola's ninth Dean, American legal education was in the midst of a critical transformation. National applicant pools rose dramatically; competition for the best students, teachers, and facilities increased; and law schools searched for ways to distinguish themselves in new ways to serve the profession and society. Loyola met these challenges as the student body grew in size, applicants began to be drawn from throughout the country, and our admission standards rose. The size of our faculty also increased to meet the new demands for a diverse and innovative law curriculum. Under Nina's leadership, our nationally recognized Beazley Institute for Health Law and Policy and the Civitas ChildLaw Center were established. Later, the Dan K. Webb Center for Advocacy, our Elder Law Initiative, and the Center for Public Interest were established. She joined with faculty and students to expand Loyola's student publications to include the *Annals of Health Law*, the *Children's Legal Rights Journal*, the *International Law Review*, the *Consumer Law Review*, and the *Public Interest Law Reporter* in addition to Loyola's *Law Journal*. She promoted unique degree opportunities through our LL.M. and Master of Jurisprudence programs, and Loyola became a national leader in the development of online programs.

In addition to her service as Dean and Professor of Law, Nina served as a member of the American Bar Association Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar and as the Chair of the Council in 1992–93. Her participation was constantly in demand by bar associations, judicial commissions, and a range of other professional and civic organizations. During this time, she served as a member of the Illinois Compensation Review Board, the Chicago Bar Association Long-Term Planning Committee, and the Special Commission on the Administration of Justice in Cook County. She also was a leading participant in Illinois and national judicial education programs.

This is only a partial inventory of her activities as Dean, but I want to

add two additional thoughts. The first is that you will never hear Nina Appel take credit for any of these achievements. She is the first to credit the work of others for anything that was accomplished during her deanship. In Professor Tom Haney's *The First 100 Years: The Centennial History of Loyola University Chicago School of Law*, in which he so beautifully recounts the first one-hundred years of the history of the School of Law, there is a photograph that was taken when Nina stepped down from the deanship in 1984.<sup>2</sup> The photograph featured her, Dean Haney, Ellen O'Gallagher (our wonderful Manager of Law School Operations), and me joining hands as "the team that administered the law school together for two decades."<sup>3</sup> I am deeply flattered to have been included with my teammates in this way. However, as one who worked with Nina during that wonderful time, I can say that this characterization is an example of Nina's generosity of spirit and her willingness to share credit for her achievements with others. The truth is that Nina was the force and the energy that drove our successes. Like all great teachers, she was never in it for the thanks or the adulation. That is not a part of her makeup.

The second thought reflects upon a quality in her that, to me, has been the most important. When we think of the many accomplishments of her deanship, and when we hear people talk about her lasting impact on Loyola and on legal education, please remember this: Dean Appel was always busy (as anyone who was around her knows). Her schedule was usually full from morning to night and her responsibilities were formidable. But regardless of the demands that drove her schedule, if a student ever came to the fifth floor of Maguire Hall with a problem, Dean Appel would stop what she was working on and do everything possible to help that student. There was never a time—and I mean never—when a student with a problem did not receive Dean Appel's full attention, even if it meant that she had to change her busy schedule and those of her colleagues. Sometimes the student's problem was resolved. Sometimes it wasn't. Most students walked away pleased. Some did not. But I believe that everyone left her office knowing that they had been heard by someone who cared about their professional development and about them as a person. And in some cases, there were those students whose lives were transformed. She left no doubt in anyone's mind that our students were the highest priority. In doing so, she continued the observance of a value set long ago by Loyola's greatest educators and leaders: Our students come first. I doubt that she is fully aware of how her example inspired me and her colleagues at the School of Law.

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2. THOMAS M. HANEY, *THE FIRST 100 YEARS: THE CENTENNIAL HISTORY OF LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO SCHOOL OF LAW* 105 (2009).

3. *Id.*

Finally, our mission at Loyola University Chicago motivates us to honor the values that guide us as a student-focused law center inspired by the Jesuit tradition of academic excellence, intellectual openness, and service to others. We proudly emphasize social justice and promote ethical awareness in and out of our classrooms. A commitment to these values is the hallmark of our community of students, faculty, alumni, and staff. To be genuine and meaningful, that commitment must always begin at the top. There is no greater champion of the values that have distinguished and sustained our Loyola community than Nina Appel. Through her leadership and example over a forty-five-year career at Loyola, she reinforced these values because they are a genuine part of her nature. As a leader of our law school community, she lives these values daily and she continues to inspire our students and graduates to adopt them in their lives and in their careers. She has often reminded us that we want our graduates “to do well, but also to do good.” Nina Appel’s career at Loyola serves as a constant reminder of our highest calling and it has been a lasting gift to our community. On the occasion of her retirement from Loyola, we owe her our deepest thanks.