Celebrating the Life of a Friend

The School of Law has lost a dear friend. Susan Adora Moxon Sullivan died of ovarian cancer on January 10, 2001, at North Memorial Hospice in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She was 51.

A nationally recognized leader in legal career counseling and recruitment, Susan came to the Washington University School of Law in 1983 after receiving her doctoral degree in education from the University of Missouri–Columbia. In 1984, her husband, Tom, joined the School’s faculty and later served a one-year term as associate dean.

“Susan joined the law school as director of career services in 1983,” recalls David Becker, associate dean for external relations and the Joseph H. Zumbalen Professor of Law of Property. “It did not take much time to recognize that she was an extraordinary professional, a person who was respected and admired by her peers in career services, by her colleagues at the law school, and most of all by the people she really served—the students.”

Although the Sullivans left the School of Law in 1989 following Tom’s appointment as law dean at the University of Arizona and later at the University of Minnesota, the couple made many lifelong friends in St. Louis.

“Several memories of Susan as an individual stand out, including her professional approach to her own career and to those of our students as well as the enormous courage she demonstrated during her illness,” says Susan Appleton, associate dean of faculty and the Lemma Barkeloo and Phoebe Couzins Professor of Law. “But equally unforgettable is the true partnership she and Tom shared, apparent in so many ways, from the warmth and joy one felt as a guest in their home to the unequivocal support each enthusiastically provided to ensure the success of the other.”

All those who recall Susan’s warmth, compassion, and exuberance were not surprised when Susan generously devoted her energy toward supporting other cancer patients and their families after her own diagnosis of cancer in 1996. She served as a volunteer facilitator for the Life Enhancement Support Group for gynecological cancer patients at Fairview-University Hospital in Minneapolis. In addition, friends from throughout the country referred patients who had been recently diagnosed with ovarian cancer to Susan for her support and encouragement.

“She was a remarkably warm and caring friend,” says Joel Seligman, dean and the Ethan A.H. Shepley University Professor. “Susan had a rare gift of empathy which enabled her to touch as many people as she did.”

“I will miss her terribly,” says Becker. “I am, however, consoled by her triumphal spirit. She nurtured people and friendships more than any person I have ever known. Most of all, she valued and enjoyed life under circumstances that would have forced others into early submission.”

Family and friends gathered to remember Susan at a “Celebration of Life and Friendships” held January 27 at the McNamara Alumni Center at the University of Minnesota.

Contributions to further ovarian cancer research may be made in Susan Sullivan’s memory to either of the following facilities:

The Women’s Health Fund (Sparboe Endowed Chair)
Minnesota Medical Foundation
Box 395
420 Delaware Street, S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455

The Arizona Cancer Center
The University of Arizona
Health Sciences Center
1501 N. Campbell Avenue
PO Box 245018
Tucson, AZ 85724-5018