A Farewell to Don

by Joel Seligman
Dean and Ethan A.H. Shepley
University Professor

The death of Donald P. Gallop, JD ’59, on May 22, 2002, after a long battle with cancer, was a tremendous loss for the School of Law community and for me personally.

Don personified warmth, loyalty to his family and friends, a quiet dignity, and wisdom. He inspired a sense of trust that I have never felt from anyone outside of my own family. There are a few people whose memory each of us cherishes long after their deaths. My father’s memory will always be that for me. So now will be my memory of Don.

Don had a gift for friendship. He made friends and was loyal to them with an intensity that I have never known in another human being.

Don inspired the deepest possible loyalty from others because he cared for them so much. Mel Brown once put it aptly: “He was a gentleman in both senses of the word.” He was a man who combined dignity and decorum with a kindness and gentleness of manner.

He built a great law firm and long served as chairman of Gallop, Johnson & Neuman LC. It was a firm based on its integrity as much as legal acumen and brilliant counsel. Don lived a life of regard for others and inspired mutual respect.

Don was chair of the School of Law’s National Council from 1993 until 2002. I often met with him or telephoned to discuss the progress of the School. Don’s loyalty felt like a benediction. There was an intuitive sense that all who knew him had—that Don was open, honest, compassionate, and wise. You could not ask more from a member of your family, a friend, or a counselor.

He was a great community builder. For decades, he supported dean after dean at the School of Law, notably as a member of our National Council since 1989, as executive vice chair of the School’s Building for a New Century capital campaign between 1994 and 1997, and co-chair of our current Building on Strength campaign. He felt great loyalty to Washington University as a whole and was proud of his service on the University’s Board of Trustees between 1994 and 1998. He also felt a particular loyalty to the School of Medicine, especially its Siteman Cancer Center.

He was a member of the board of directors of Barnes-Jewish Hospital, which was a source of evident pride to him. He served on the boards of Webster University, the Municipal Theatre Association of St. Louis, the Whitaker Foundation, and the St. Louis Regional Business Council. Don was a valued counselor to many business corporations, including Falcon Products, Medicine Shoppe, and Landmark Bancshares.

He often said to me that “if I were to die now, I would have no regrets. I have lived the life I wanted to.” He nonetheless fought courageously against his illness in his final days. It was another way of showing his loyalty and love for his family and friends.

Don was more than a great man, he was a good man. His character was an inspiration to all of us. My memory of his warmth, his kindness, and his quiet strength will be with me always.

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