On Behalf of Judge Staley's Former Law Clerks and Law Student-Messengers

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For those of us who had the rare privilege of serving Judge Austin L. Staley, whether as law clerks or as law student members of his staff, the experience was a uniquely enriching and rewarding one from both a professional and personal standpoint. Judge Staley taught us all how to become better lawyers, but he also taught us something about how to live.

On the professional side, the Judge was blessed with a keen, analytical mind which enabled him quickly to penetrate to the heart of any case. This uncanny ability was perhaps never more apparent than at oral argument when, with one or two probing questions, he would expose the core of even the most complex piece of litigation.

The Judge also had a gifted, Hemmingway-like writing style. That style was marked by clarity, brevity and decisiveness—traits which were characteristics of the man himself. Like his contemporary colleagues, Judges Maris, Goodrich and Hastie, Judge Staley abhorred excessive wordiness in judicial opinions.

He was thus an ideal appellate judge. What an honor it was then for those of us who were just beginning our careers in the law to have such a master legal craftsman as our teacher and advisor.

But the rewards of our professional relationship with Judge Staley were not confined to the knowledge we gained through his instruction and his example. For the judge was not by nature a didactic teacher. To the contrary, he enjoyed and strongly encouraged open, frank and robust debate and argument with his law clerks on the cases which were the subject of his work. And, because he had an open and ever-searching mind, he was always willing to be convinced but only by reasons which were sound, cogent and based upon solid legal principles.

Once having resolved the issues in a case through exhaustive research and discussion, the Judge was willing to delegate initial responsibility for the first draft of his opinion to his law clerk. Although that draft might bear little, if any, relationship to the ulti-

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mate opinion which Judge Staley himself wrote, his willingness to do this was a mark both of his generosity and his capacity as a teacher. Although it has now been some fifteen years since I served Judge Staley as a law clerk, I still cherish the opportunity he gave me to participate so directly in the judicial process of adjudication. I consider it to have been one of the most invaluable experiences of my professional life as an advocate.

But this summary of the judicial and professional side of Judge Staley tells only half the story. More than all else—more than his keen mind and the legal craftsmanship of his opinions, I will always remember Judge Staley's ultimate humanity, his warmth and generosity, his gruff and hearty laugh and, most of all, his unquenchable zest and enthusiasm for life. No martini has ever tasted quite so good to me as one prepared by the Judge. No flower has ever had quite the delicacy, color and beauty as one which he had nurtured in his garden.

Judge Staley's warm and generous spirit is perhaps best illustrated by a practice he started shortly after his ascendancy to the bench of appointing to his staff law students from the evening division of the Duquesne University School of Law, generally from working class backgrounds. Those of us who were privileged to be selected for that position will uniformly attest to the personal and professional benefits we derived from it. Indeed, many graduates of what I call the Staley Scholarship Program have become leading members of the bench and bar in Allegheny County and elsewhere.

Thus, in a very real sense—and he spoke of this often with a twinkle of pride in his eyes,—Judge Staley was a legal missionary sending forth the lawyer-disciples he had trained so well to spread the "good news" of their legal training to law firms and clients in Pittsburgh and elsewhere. Given the vicissitudes of time and circumstance, one wonders whether they would have done so well had it not been for their association with him. Of one thing we can be certain, their personal and professional lives were deeply enriched by that association.

It is for these reasons that those of us who are his sons in the law are grateful for the opportunity to have shared him. He will be missed by all of us—he will be forgotten by none of us!