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A Tribute to Professor and Dean Emeritus John J. Sciallo

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ATRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR AND DEAN EMERITUS JOHN J. SCIULLO

Since its founding in 1911, Duquesne University School of Law has had more than its share of excellent teachers and fine deans. But rarely, if ever before, have we had among us a professor who has combined teaching excellence, academic leadership, and innate decency as completely and consistently as has John J. Sciullo, Dean Emeritus and Professor of Law.

John Sciullo joined the Duquesne Law School faculty in 1963. During his long career at Duquesne, he has taught Property, Land-Use Planning, and Legal Research and Writing, but his principal course has long been Estates and Trusts. Even in his earliest years in the classroom, he did an extraordinary job of enabling the students to come to understand conceptually difficult material, not by giving "the answers," but by stimulating the students to think more carefully, to question more precisely, and to evaluate more thoroughly. By the time he became Associate Dean in the early 1970s, John Sciullo had come to be regarded, by students and colleagues alike, as the most effective teacher on the faculty. As one professor from another law school put it, John "makes Estates and Trusts come alive." In 1982, at the Law School's commencement, when the University President announced John Sciullo's appointment as Dean, the announcement produced a standing ovation.

John Sciullo was an excellent dean. He restored a sense of collegiality to a sharply divided faculty and demonstrated a genuine concern for the students. Among the innovations of his deanship were the strengthening of the Legal Research and Writing Program, and the initiation (in conjunction with N.E.E.D.) of a program to assist minority students. His conviction that the heart of a law school is the classroom was poignantly demonstrated by the fact that he continued to teach both Day and Evening sections of Estates and Trusts, despite invitations from two University administrations that, while dean, he reduce his teaching load. The truth is that for John Sciullo, being in the classroom was not a "load" or a burden, but the very reason for his presence at Duquesne.

Throughout his years at Duquesne, Dean Sciullo has performed a number of important services to the public and the profession, including service as a member of the City of Pittsburgh Planning Commission (under two mayors), and as a member and Vice Chairman

of the Client Security Fund of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. His commitment to legal education was demonstrated most vividly in 1993, when he declined to seek a fourth term as dean. He was under no pressure to leave the deanship; on the contrary, he could have been reappointed with no difficulty. He did not give up the deanship in order to go elsewhere, or to pursue powers or honors anywhere (although he received numerous offers in that regard). His decision was based on his own sense of priorities and his respect for one of the great traditions of American legal education: he wanted to give undivided attention to the classroom, where he has continued to teach – and inspire – new generations. Upon leaving the deanship, he was given the title “Dean Emeritus,” the first person in the history of the Law School to hold that title. In 1998, he was the recipient of Duquesne’s President’s Award for Excellence in Teaching.

It is difficult to imagine that anyone could be more deeply committed to legal education, and to the principles of this University, than John Sciallo. In 1982, when he was about to become dean, and the Law School’s new building, Hanely Hall, was nearing completion, he was asked whether the nameplate outside his faculty office should read “Dean Sciallo” or “Professor Sciallo.” He replied, without hesitation, that although he might be a dean for a while, he hoped to be a professor always. That attitude, which has directed John Sciallo’s career, has redounded to the benefit of thousands of lawyers, students, and colleagues, for whom he will always personify the spirit of Duquesne Law School.

Dean Sciallo will be retiring from the faculty at the end of 1999. In deserving recognition of his countless achievements, with deepest appreciation for everything he has given to us and to our Law School, and with the best wishes for his continued success and happiness, we are pleased and proud to dedicate this issue of the *Duquesne Law Review* to Professor and Dean Emeritus John J. Sciallo.

—Volume 38 Editors, Staff, and Faculty Advisors