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### On the Occasion of Leon Lazer's 90th Birthday

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## ON THE OCCASION OF LEON LAZER'S 90<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY

*Jeffrey B. Morris*\*

Leon Lazer has been a marvelous colleague and friend – one of my greatest pleasures in two decades on the Touro faculty. Eternally young, fiery liberal, great friend of Israel, arch pessimist and shrewd political observer, at the age of ninety he remains virtually unsurpassed at cutting to the heart of judicial opinions, the ailments afflicting the American political system and the issues confronting the law school.

Leon and I served together for many years on committees dealing with the future of Touro Law School including the one that chose Touro's fourth Dean. The concern, commitment and vigor with which he plunges into such matters are those of a man of thirty. Never during the time I have known him has he missed a meeting or avoided a task on the grounds of age, health or for any other reason. His passion infects his colleagues; his knowledge widens our perspective; his common sense keeps us on solid ground.

This should not camouflage the fact that Leon's observations often have been rooted in a pessimism that, at times, out-Cassandras Cassandra. But, however grim his view of the future of the law school, the state of the Democratic Party or of the nation, it is belied by his undiminished efforts to make that future entirely different from what he believes is likely to happen. Pessimist or not, Leon's judgment has always been both wise and practical; his analysis penetrating; his advice sensible.

Leon enters his tenth decade still carrying a full teaching load, which over the years has included torts, land use planning, appellate advocacy, state and local government, remedies and several clinics. He continues to chair the state judiciary's pattern jury instruction committee which annually produces invaluable volumes essential for New York State judges. For this he stays abreast particularly of the

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decisions of the New York Court of Appeals. Leon is also still consulting as an attorney. Somehow, over the years, he and his beloved wife Renee have attended an awesome number of plays and operas. Representing his colleagues, I express our deep appreciation for what he has done for the law school and express the expectation that he has many years left to educate us and give us joy.