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A Tribute to Judge Lazer

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A TRIBUTE TO JUDGE LAZER

*Rena C. Seplowitz**

Leon Lazer, my friend, colleague and suitemate for more than twenty-two years, is one of the wisest people I know. His perceptiveness, keen intelligence, acerbic wit and devotion to Touro as an institution make him one of the most respected figures on campus and in the legal community. Despite the prominence he attained as a judge and as chair of the Pattern Jury Instructions Committee, Leon is always available to listen to a student with questions or a colleague who needs advice.

Leon is ageless and the paradigmatic Renaissance man. His penetrating views on social, political and legal issues are molded by a rare historical perspective. Unlike others, however, he is not mired in the past; rather his experiences in World War II and on the Appellate Division fuel his commentary on contemporary events, ranging from disintegration of the economy, intractable international disputes and military conflicts, and problematic judicial decisions. A prolific reader, an ardent opera lover and an enthusiast of theater and cinema, Leon consistently provides insightful and pithy views on the arts. Indeed, Leon's unquenchable interests also extend to virtually all aspects of popular culture, including technological innovations and music, in part to be familiar with the icons of his students.

Over the years, I have come to treasure my lunches with Leon during which we dissect not only the most recent political and international disasters, but also the latest law school controversy. Although a self-described pessimist, Leon generally suggests a resolution of even the most troublesome issues. Throughout these discussions, his empathy and devotion to his family and friends also emerge clearly. I return to my office, energized by the conversation, disappointed at its termination and eager to resume it.

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Leon has been a pivotal member of the Touro community. His sage and frank comments at faculty and committee meetings have helped to guide the law school, preventing unnecessary diversions and resolving divisions. His appreciation of the skills needed by our students to succeed as ethical and able lawyers has influenced curricular and appointment decisions. Leon's public discourses, whether at a colloquium, symposium or program honoring him, display a command of the subject matter and compelling analysis of the issues packaged in a dynamic and entertaining presentation. His speaking skills and expertise are apparent in the classroom where Leon inspires the respect and love of his students.

I am truly privileged to be Leon's colleague and friend. I wish him many more years of health and fulfillment and look forward to his continued presence at Touro.