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REGIS W. CAMPFIELD: COLLEAGUE, MENTOR, AND FRIEND

*Joshua C. Tate**

I first met Regis Campfield in November of 2003, before I entered the teaching market. I was in the Dallas–Fort Worth area for a family reunion, and I spent most of the trip with relatives. But I stopped by SMU to have lunch with some of the law faculty after being contacted by John Lowe, who was chair of the appointments committee at that time. Regis sat next to me during that lunch, and he had many questions, including whether I was a member of the bar and whether I had ever drafted a trust. Thankfully, by that point I had passed the Connecticut bar examination and would soon be admitted to practice in that state. But I had to confess that, even though my father is an estate planner, I had never drafted a trust. I quickly took care of this upon returning to Yale and crafted an estate plan for myself that was relatively sophisticated for a graduate student with no significant assets. When I saw Regis again the next year, I had the right answer for his question.

This story illustrates a key aspect of my relationship with Regis as a mentor: He is always focused on the practical needs of our students. I have had many conversations with Regis about my Wills and Trusts course. When I taught the course for the first time in the spring of 2006, Regis helped me decide what topics are most important from an estate planning perspective and made sure that I covered those issues in my class. I remember Regis stopping by my office almost every day that semester to check on how things were going. Regis also gave me an important piece of advice that has been very helpful to me in preparing for my classes. When Regis goes in a classroom to teach, he always has in mind a few key points that he wants his students to take away from the discussion, and he makes sure to cover those key points thoroughly. I have tried to follow this practice in my own teaching. I have also stolen a few good lines and jokes from Regis over the years, for which I hope he will forgive me.

One thing I can say with absolute certainty about Regis is that he cares deeply about the relationship between SMU Dedman School of Law and the Dallas legal community. The summer before I started teaching, Regis introduced me to Judge Nikki DeShazo of the Dallas County Probate Court and arranged for me to spend a few weeks working in her chambers. That experience gave me some confidence when the time came to

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teach Wills and Trusts. It also convinced me to dedicate some time at the beginning of the course to the probate process.

Since my wife, Lisa, and I came to SMU, everyone on the faculty has been warm and welcoming to us. But no one has been more warm or welcoming than Regis and his wife, Mary. When Lisa was hired by the U.S. Attorney's office and we moved from the mid-cities to Dallas, Regis and Mary were the first to take us out to dinner to celebrate. We are always happy to see Regis and Mary, and we hope we will continue to see them on many occasions in the future.

In conclusion, Regis has been the best colleague, mentor, and friend a young teacher and scholar could ever want. I know that I cannot replace him at SMU, but I hope that I will at least live up to his expectations.

Thanks, Regis. SMU will miss having you in the classroom.

Articles

