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In Honor of a Lifetime of Justice Work

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IN HONOR OF A LIFETIME OF JUSTICE WORK

*William Holston**

MAUREEN Armour exemplifies Socrates's line that: "Nothing is to be preferred before justice." Maureen has devoted her entire professional life to the pursuit of justice. She is also one hell of a lawyer. To honor my friend Maureen, it is necessary to utilize great philosophical thought as well as profanity. Nothing less would be appropriate.

I met Professor Armour before she was a professor, when we were 1Ls in 1978. I knew immediately I was in the presence of someone special, as it is not often that you meet someone with her impressive intellect but also as down to earth and personable as she was—and is. Because the truth is, she is exactly the same person that I met in 1978, only now with a career of impressive achievement behind her.

Of course, she excelled academically. I recall being nervous knowing she was in my third-year Federal Courts class because I knew the professor would be reading her essays along with mine. Who could stand up to that competition? She's just that smart. I was once asked, "Are you in Maureen's class?" I replied truthfully, "No, I'm hardly in her class, but we will graduate the same year."

After graduation, Maureen had the good fortune to clerk for the Honorable Barefoot Sanders, a legendary Dallas jurist. Judge Sanders was esteemed by our entire Bar, and to be selected as one of his clerks told the legal community you were a standout. She went on to be a trial lawyer at the stellar national law firm of Akin Gump. She became a partner there. This is no small achievement. No doubt she would have had a stellar career there, but she chose a different path.

She left private law practice and devoted the next twenty-five years of her legal career to teaching law students. And she chose to do it in the clinical context. I cannot think of a greater legacy as a legal academic than a career devoted to the training of law students in what it means to practice law. I can say without exaggeration, I would be a better lawyer if I'd had the benefit of a clinical education with Maureen. She did an out-

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standing job of calling her students to intellectual rigor, but also focused on the practical skills necessary to be a good lawyer. That's impressive enough, but she also continuously directed her students to fully understand that they were representing vulnerable people and to never lose sight of a client's humanity. It is important to understand the fact that a legal matter involving a small financial matter is often inversely proportionate to the complexity of the issue. A \$400 legal dispute can involve the research of legislative history. And because the clinic clients could not pay, the matter was always the highest form of legal service. There is a reason it is called *pro bono publico*.

One thing was always clear to the students: Professor Armour cared about them. It is why after her retirement they started a scholarship in her honor. And it's why she was awarded the Willis M. Tate Award.

I think it is important to acknowledge that legal clinical education can be held in lower regard by the legal academy. But that is wrong. I think it is critical that law schools bear in mind that the rights of our fellow citizens will be impacted by the competence of lawyers, and it is the job of law schools to do everything they can to prepare lawyers to practice law. The integrity of our system depends on that. Maureen understood that and devoted herself to that. Clients all over the United States are well served because of her professional service.

Please allow a personal observation. Maureen is not only a great lawyer; she is a great person. She has been an extraordinarily loyal daughter, wife, mother, sibling, and friend. She has been and remains a good friend to me. She never permitted her devotion to her career to interfere with her responsibilities as a moral and ethical person. And last, but not least, she had a great time while she did it.

I'll close with a quote from the great Texas columnist Molly Ivins:

So keep fightin' for freedom and justice, beloveds, but don't you forget to have fun doin' it. . . . Be outrageous, . . . rejoice in all the oddities that freedom can produce. And when you get through . . . celebratin' the sheer joy of a good fight, be sure to tell those who come after how much fun it was.¹

That, my beloveds, is Professor Maureen Armour, and something tells me she's not through having fun or fighting.

1. Molly Ivins, *The Fun's in the Fight*, MOTHER JONES, <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/1993/05/funs-fight> (last visited April 14, 2019).