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Laura Chisolm: Colleague, Peer, Friend

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TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR LAURA CHISOLM

LAURA CHISOLM: COLLEAGUE, PEER, FRIEND

Jonathan L. Entin[†]

Laura Chisolm and I joined the faculty of Case Western Reserve University School of Law at the same time. She was my oldest and one of my closest friends on the faculty. Our friendship dates back to before we officially started teaching, when Laura and Mac welcomed Carol and me to Cleveland during our house-hunting trip. For our first couple of years, Laura and I held each other's hand as we learned how to teach Property. I'll never forget our first day of teaching. We had decided to begin with *Johnson v. M'Intosh*,¹ an 1823 Supreme Court case in which the basic issue was who owned a large tract of Eastern Illinois.² One party traced his claim to the U.S. government and before that to the British crown;³ the other traced his claim to the Illinois Indian tribe.⁴ You don't have to know any law to figure out

[†] Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, School of Law, and Professor of Law and Political Science, Case Western Reserve University. This is a slightly revised version of the remarks that I gave at the celebration of Laura's life in May 2011.

¹ 21 U.S. (8 Wheat.) 543 (1823).

² See *id.* at 560 ("That the lands described and granted in and by this patent, are situated within the State of Illinois . . . purporting to be granted and conveyed to Louis Viviat . . . and that William M'Intosh . . . entered upon these lands under and by virtue of his patent, and became possessed thereof before the institution of this suit.").

³ *Id.* at 543–44, 559–60.

⁴ *Id.* at 550–54.

who won,⁵ but the opinion addresses many significant legal issues that have continuing relevance nearly two centuries later.⁶

About an hour before class, Laura stopped by my office to tell me about her dream the night before: that she had asked her class who the plaintiff was in the *Johnson* case and nobody knew! We had a good laugh, then went our separate ways. Laura, having had her nightmare, knew better than to ask who the plaintiff was. I, on the other hand, did not. The student I called on to state the complex facts did well enough until, without thinking, I asked, "By the way, who was the plaintiff?" Laura was right—not one of my 120 students could identify the plaintiff. We had another good laugh after class when I told her what had happened, but, loyal friend that she was, Laura never, by word, gesture, or even arched eyebrow, said, "I told you so."

As we gained confidence, we began to discuss teaching in more sophisticated ways. Not only did we talk about Property, but we also explored topics in our other courses. Laura taught Nonprofit Organizations and Legislation, and I taught the First Amendment and Administrative Law. Her courses and mine dealt with similar questions but from different perspectives. Our teaching and our scholarship benefitted enormously from years of conversations in which we probed, challenged, and helped each other sort out such questions as what kinds of restrictions the government may put on political activities by nonprofit organizations and how courts should interpret complex and frequently ambiguous statutes.

As we began to write, we shared drafts. This was an uneven, almost an unfair, exchange: I always got a lot more help from Laura's comments on my work than she got from mine about hers. That was because, from the beginning, it was apparent that Laura was a star. She was astonishingly intelligent—colleagues who taught her still use her as their standard for evaluating students—and she wrote elegantly. It was no wonder that she had a huge impact on her field from the appearance of her first article.⁷ I only wish that she had written more than she did. But she was active in a wide range of professional activities where she had a significant impact, including the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws,

⁵ Lest there be any confusion, the party claiming through the U.S. government prevailed. *Id.* at 604–05.

⁶ Among those issues are the legal status of American Indians and the relationship between courts and the government of which they are a part. The case also featured some influential figures: Chief Justice John Marshall wrote the opinion, *id.* at 571; Daniel Webster argued on behalf of the party claiming through the Indian tribe, *id.* at 562.

⁷ Laura B. Chisolm, *Exempt Organization Advocacy: Matching the Rules to the Rationales*, 63 *IND. L.J.* 201 (1987) (cited by *Nationalist Movement v. Comm'r*, 102 *T.C.* 558, 579 (1994) and over forty secondary sources).

the American Bar Association's Tax Section, the National Center on Philanthropy and the Law, and the Nonprofit Forum. Further, she played a pivotal role in the university's Mandel Center for Nonprofit Organizations. Most recently, she was the founding director of the law school's Center for Social Justice.

Laura was never into ego games or other superficialities. She had keen, tactical shrewdness that enabled her to avoid confrontation while making her point. For example, because of the law school's convoluted office-allocation formula, Laura did not get a window office until two years after she got tenure. That long-standing formula did not accommodate people like her who had interrupted their education for an extended period. Laura never directly challenged the formula, but she did suggest that we allocate offices through a bake-off. Anyone who ever had the privilege of eating anything she prepared will understand that she could have gotten any office anywhere under such a system.

Then there was her service on the university's Library of the Future Committee about fifteen years ago. The administrator who chaired that committee believed that books and traditional scholarly journals were (or soon would be) obsolete, so he wanted to establish a campus-wide fiber optic network that would ultimately replace what he derisively called "the warehouse for books." At one committee meeting, this man proudly announced that the law school was now the first fully wired building on campus. Afterward, Laura told him that she could not access the new network, to which this bureaucrat replied, "That's a lie." Laura politely asked him to help her learn what she was doing wrong, so he went to her office and discovered that he too could not log into the network. Things got fixed in a hurry after that.

Still, behind her typically placid demeanor lurked a caustic wit. For instance, Laura once sent me a note about a silly memo from the dean: "You don't suppose," she had written, that some obvious fact "had, to use perhaps too lofty a term, slipped the dean's mind?"

Often her humor was more subtle: her office contained several art works depicting cows—an *homage* to a Property casebook that we used for several years, which began with a series of cases involving cattle eating crops on adjoining farmland.⁸

My last conversation with Laura will stay with me. I called to let her know that some of the leading scholars in the law of nonprofit

⁸ See PAUL GOLDSTEIN, *REAL PROPERTY* 8–36 (1984) (reprinting *Holden v. Lynn*, 120 P. 246 (Okla. 1911); *Maguire v. Yanke*, 590 P.2d 85 (Idaho 1978); and *McDonnold v. Weinacht*, 465 S.W.2d 136 (Tex. 1971)).

organizations had heard that she was having medical problems and wanted to commission a series of tributes and articles in her honor. She was overwhelmed that anyone would do such a thing for her. Those papers appear in this issue of the *Case Western Reserve Law Review*. It has been a labor of love for all of us.

On behalf of the students you taught with such dedication, the faculty members you supported so strongly, and the law school you served with such grace, thank you, Laura. We'll miss you, but we won't forget how much you've meant to us.

LAURA'S CONTRIBUTIONS

Wilbur C. Leatherberry[†]

Those who participate in the activities of any enterprise contribute to it in various ways. Some contributions are major, some minor, and they have a positive or negative impact. In an academic enterprise like the law school, students; faculty; staff; and alumni all make contributions.

Laura made a major positive impact on the law school in her years as a student, alumna, and faculty member.

I first met Laura when she was enrolled in my Contracts class in her first year as a law student. She was one of many students in that class who were older than the average 1L. She began her college career at the University of Maryland but interrupted her studies for family reasons after marrying Mac. She resumed work on her degree as an undergrad here after Mac took a teaching position at Case.

Sometime early in her first semester in law school, I discovered that she was a bit ahead of her classmates in her understanding of the course materials. I cannot recall whether she impressed me when I first called on her for a case or when she asked a question or volunteered a comment. I suspect, though, that it was when I chose her to recite. She did not volunteer frequently, nor did she often ask questions. Some of the older students tend to dominate class discussions in the early weeks because they are not as intimidated as their younger colleagues. Laura was certainly not intimidated, but she probably did not have many questions—at least not many I could have easily answered—and felt no need to “perform” for the assembled audience.

I quickly found that she sometimes volunteered to help me undo confusion that I was causing. Although I had been teaching for several years, I had taught Contracts only for a year or two. Laura

[†] Professor and Director of Skills Program and Externships, Case Western Reserve University School of Law.

always intervened in a helpful, non-threatening way—never putting down fellow students or making me look or feel as confused as I often was. She had a way of cutting through the fog and helping us all see the important issues and arguments more clearly.

Those classroom experiences meant that I was not surprised to find her at the top of the class on the exam, at the top of her entering class that year, and still at the top when she graduated.

Given her exceptional record, Laura could have gone off to a major law firm where she would no doubt have impressed the partners with her brilliance, just as she had impressed her teachers. She chose instead to work for a nonprofit child advocacy group, sacrificing income and status to work for social justice.

Her commitment to the nonprofit sector continued when she came to the law school as a junior faculty member. She taught Property and Wills and Trusts—courses that a former colleague who taught those courses called “the law of the rich.” She also taught a nonprofit organizations course here in the law school, as well as in the Mandel Center’s Master of Nonprofit Organizations program, which prepares people to run such organizations.

When the law school established the Center for Social Justice, Laura was the natural choice to become its director. She was always dedicated to teaching and mentoring her students. The Center provided a vehicle through which she could guide, and find support for, students interested in pursuing a career path directed toward societal objectives like alleviation of poverty, ending discrimination, and protecting the environment. Sadly, her work with the Center lasted just a short time because of her illness.

As a teacher and a scholar, Laura’s contributions to the law school, the university, and the nonprofit organizations field were extraordinary. From the beginning, she was clearly one of our best classroom teachers. Early in her career, Dean Gellhorn asked me to read and give Laura comments on a draft of an article she was preparing to send out for publication. At that time she was teaching a course in legislation, a course I had taught for several years. I do not recall much about the article. It was probably about the tax treatment of nonprofit organizations. What I do recall is that as I read the piece, I came across a textual footnote that had the same effect on me that some of her classroom comments had had. The footnote had to do with how courts interpret—or should interpret—statutes. Because of the legislation course, I had done considerable reading on that subject. In that one footnote, probably not more than one page long, Laura clearly and cogently analyzed the issues and presented the best

treatment of that subject I had ever seen. When we consider academic work by colleagues in the tenure process, we ask whether the work makes a valuable contribution to the literature. That footnote alone made a contribution well beyond that made by the typical article. It was valuable both for the quality of the analysis and for the clarity of expression because Laura was both a deep thinker and an exceptional writer. Few law professors, indeed few people in any field, could match her ability as a writer.

On the other hand, few colleagues could match the clutter in her office. The offices of Jonathan Entin and the late Professor Junger come to mind, but even they did not surpass her on this score. Somehow, though, like everything else she did, she could find her way through the clutter to produce what she needed.

Laura served on numerous law school and university committees. We worked together on the law school's Budget Committee during the last year or two before illness took her away. At that time and now, the school faced serious issues about how to match revenues to expenditures while maintaining or improving the quality of the students we attract and the teaching and scholarship we do. The faculty has struggled with these priority issues for many years. The committee dug into the budget data to present options to the faculty and the dean for reallocating budget priorities to align with strategic objectives. As always, Laura was practical, reasonable, and able to work with faculty colleagues with conflicting views. She was a calming force when disagreements deteriorated into conflicts. Her influence has been sorely missed since her illness prevented her from continuing her work.

Finally, allow me a word about Laura as an alumna. At graduation ceremonies, speakers always entreat graduates to seek opportunities to use their talents productively, to do quality work, and to strive to make an impact both where they work and in the community around them. Faculty and alumni take pride in the accomplishments of graduates as they enter practice and rise in their firms and fields. Rarely, as in Laura's case, does an alumnus return to advance the interests of the school and the alumni so directly and so effectively. She taught many of those who graduated in the last quarter of a century and was an outstanding role model. Her brilliance, her work ethic, and her humor were well known to classmates and other alumni.

Laura lives on in the memories of alumni, faculty colleagues, staff members, and others whose lives she touched. She is irreplaceable,

but each of us can strive to work and live as she did. That would be the most fitting memorial.

Laura Brown Chisolm

Karen Nelson Moore[†]

Laura Brown Chisolm was a faithful friend and cherished colleague. All of us fortunate to have known her will attest to her stellar qualities in everything she did, personally and professionally. Although taken from us far too soon, Laura's star shines brightly in our hearts and minds and memories.

I remember first meeting Laura when she was a student in my civil procedure class in the fall of her first year of law school. I had just started teaching at Case Western Reserve University School of Law ("CWRU"), and Laura's star intellect became apparent immediately. She inevitably had a deep and thoughtful response to every question; she was unfailingly prepared and always accurate. In other words, she was a new law professor's dream, especially when she volunteered to answer questions no other student would touch and filled those awkward gaps that can plague a new professor. Her comments after class reflected her penetrating insight and also her care for those less fortunate or less equipped to deal with the established legal system. It was a privilege to have her as a student.

Laura's stellar qualities were recognized by all at the law school. She graduated first in her class, with accolades from everyone who had the pleasure of teaching her and learning from her. With her outstanding record, she could have pursued the traditional routes of judicial clerkship and/or major national law firm. Instead, Laura went with her passion, working as a lawyer at the Institute for Child Advocacy here in Cleveland, demonstrating her dedication to the betterment of others, rather than focusing on financial gain or personal prestige.

[†] Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. Judge Moore served on the faculty of the Case Western Reserve University School of Law from 1977 until she received her judicial commission in 1995.

Three years after graduating, Laura joined the law school's faculty. At the time there was a dubiousness at many law schools about hiring their own graduates for the faculty, but in Laura's case we had no doubt that she was extraordinary. From the beginning, students respected her first-rate mind and her compassionate character. Her classroom was devoted to the joy of learning and the exploration of complicated legal concepts; her classroom humor could be sly, but not at the expense of her students.

For the decade that we served together on the CWRU faculty, I was fortunate to count Laura as my trusted colleague and dear friend. I frequently sought out her advice on matters ranging from professional writing and classroom teaching to child rearing and gardening. Laura and I spent many lunch hours at the Botanical Gardens across the street from the law school, where she modestly demonstrated her amazing knowledge of flowers. She never flaunted her knowledge, but whether the subject was flowers or property law or the law of nonprofit organizations, her knowledge was deep and profound. We talked often of family—her daughter Adrienne and husband Mac were the stars in her universe—and she provided wise advice to me as I navigated the complexities of a young family. She was the kind of friend who could thoughtfully help solve problems; she was the colleague who would carefully read and comment on draft articles of others at the expense of time for her own work.

When it came time for me to leave the faculty, Laura was the one faculty member I requested to speak at my judicial investiture about my years at the law school. Laura honored me more than I can express simply by accepting my request. And her comments about the responsibilities of a judge motivate and guide me each day.

As you can see, Laura was a treasured student, colleague, and friend. Although she is not here with us physically, she remains a shining spirit, with her life of character, compassion, and joy motivating all who knew her to work harder to make this world better, especially for those in need. Laura, you are deeply missed.

LAURA CHISOLM AND THE MANDEL CENTER FOR NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

David C. Hammack[†]

I share the general admiration of Laura Chisolm's intelligence, hard work, focus, sense of perspective, and sparkling good humor. What I especially want to celebrate is the remarkable contribution she made to the Mandel Center for Nonprofit Organizations over what is likely to be the entire quarter century of the Center's history. I worked closely with Laura for more than fifteen years at the Mandel Center. We were both proud of our work for the Center, though we felt at every stage that there was much, much more to be done, and that our best efforts had not brought about the essential changes and commitments that we sought. Laura's illness and premature death ended our efforts far too soon.

Laura first became involved with the center when we were developing its innovative Master's of Nonprofit Organizations degree ("MNO"). That a member of the law school faculty played an important role in this degree was eminently appropriate. Mort Mandel had decided to create the Mandel Center after talking with several people including John Simon of the Yale Law School. According to one story, at least, Mr. Mandel first approached the Case Western Reserve ("CWRU") Law School about the possibility of creating a nonprofit leadership program. When CWRU's schools of social work and management agreed to take the lead and sponsor the center, the law school was quickly added, and under the initial arrangements the Center's director reported to a "troika" of three deans—one each from the three schools.

[†] Haydn Professor of History, Case Western Reserve University

From the beginning it was agreed that a course on the law of tax-exempt, nonprofit organizations would form a key part of the Masters of Nonprofit Organizations degree. The idea was not to turn nonprofit leaders into lawyers, or to pretend to enable them to make legal judgments. The goal was, rather, to equip nonprofit leaders with enough knowledge about the law to enable them to recognize most legal issues when they met them. It was also to help nonprofit leaders think clearly about policy alternatives. Laura often pointed out that a law degree could also prepare people for nonprofit leadership, and I know she was proud of the law school's record in educating nonprofit lawyers. But she also agreed strongly that education in legal thinking should clearly be included in the ideal curriculum for the nonprofit field. The nonprofit law course has been one of the MNO's distinguishing features.¹

Laura Chisolm was exceptionally well suited to develop the nonprofit law course—and to playing an important leadership role in the Mandel Center in general. As others have noted (and as my daughter—who earned her law degree at the law school and studied with Professor Chisolm—has told me), she was an excellent teacher of the law. The range of her law courses, from legislation and social policy to property and to wills and trusts, as well as the law of nonprofit organizations—was particularly relevant to the nonprofit field. Over the course of her career, she built extensive experience with nonprofit leaders in many fields: as a member of a Rainbow Babies and Children's Hospital Advisory Committee on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, an Ohio Committee on Child Welfare Services, a Support Centers of America Committee on Quality Education for Trustees, and as pro bono legal advisor to several small nonprofit organizations. I'm sure she had more experience with university legal matters than she might have wished as a member of Case Western Reserve University's Faculty Grievance Panel, its Promotion and Tenure Committee, and several committees concerned with matters especially relevant to women faculty. Laura also served as a trustee of Covenant Early Childhood Programs, WomanSpace, and the Ohio Ballet.

Laura Chisolm brought more than intelligence, good sense, humor, and experience to the Mandel Center. She also brought recognized professional expertise. For two decades she played a prominent part in NYU's National Center on Philanthropy and the Law.² She long

¹ *MAND 450-Law of Nonprofit Organizations*, MANDEL CENTER FOR NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS: CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY, <http://mandelcenter.case.edu/academics/courses/MAND450> (last visited Jan. 30, 2011).

² N.Y. Univ. Sch. of Law, *Past Advisory Board Members*, NATIONAL CENTER ON

chaired the Important Developments Subcommittee of the ABA Taxation Section's Committee on Exempt Organizations.³ And she worked with the American Law Institute's Law of Nonprofit Organizations Project, as well as the Study Committee on the Regulation of Charities of the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws.⁴ Among her last publications was *The Federal Tax Treatment of Charitable Organizations* (which she wrote with John Simon of Yale and Harvey Dale of NYU) in the field—defining *The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook*.⁵ She published on such varied topics as health organizations and tax exemption,⁶ politics and charity and tax exemption,⁷ “tax-induced distortions,”⁸ and nonprofit advocacy.⁹ Some of her most important published work dealt with the tension between “accountability” and the right to advocate—and to raise money for advocacy.¹⁰

I want to end by emphasizing the quality of the vision that Laura Chisolm brought to her leadership roles within the Mandel Center, and also by emphasizing her tough, persistent commitment to the notion that the Mandel Center could play a role of great value for Case Western Reserve University, and for the nonprofit, nongovernment field in general.

Laura represented the CWRU Law School in the Mandel Center's faculty leadership from 1994 to the end of her life. In the internal

PHILANTHROPY AND THE LAW, http://www1.law.nyu.edu/ncpl/about/past_members.html (last visited Jan. 30, 2011).

³ Case Western Reserve University, *Law School to Honor Professor Laura Chisolm*, THE DAILY (Sep. 20, 2011), <http://cwru-daily.com/news/?p=2536>.

⁴ The Nat'l Conference of Commissioners on Unif. State Law, *Minutes Meeting of the Executive Committee Uniform Law Commission*, UNIFORM LAW COMMISSION 1 (July 8, 2010), <http://www.uniformlaws.org/Shared/Docs/Executive/ExecMin070810.pdf>.

⁵ John Simon, Harvey Dale & Laura Chisolm, *The Federal Tax Treatment of Charitable Organizations*, in THE NONPROFIT SECTOR: A RESEARCH HANDBOOK 267 (Walter W. Powell & Richard Steinberg eds., 2d ed. 2006).

⁶ See Victoria Bjorklund & Laura B. Chisolm, *Exempt Organizations*, 55 TAX. LAW. 1167, 1171 (2002) (discussing application of the community benefit standard to health maintenance organizations).

⁷ See Laura Brown Chisolm, *Politics and Charity: A Proposal for Peaceful Coexistence*, 58 GEO. WASH. L. REV. 308 (1990) (arguing that, as currently applied, the section 501(c)(3) prohibition on campaign intervention is constitutionally questionable).

⁸ See Laura B. Chisolm, *Exempt Organization Advocacy: Matching the Rules to the Rationales*, 63 IND. L.J. 201, 286–87 (1988) (discussing the distortion of the charitable form for private gain in the context of nonprofit advocacy activities).

⁹ See *id.* (providing a comprehensive treatment of the ongoing debate over nonprofit organization advocacy).

¹⁰ See *id.* at 277–299 (discussing the conflict between a charitable institution's advocacy activities and its ability to adequately represent the views of those it seeks to serve, and suggesting ways in which the limits placed on nonprofit advocacy activities could be restructured to reflect the underlying rationales).

affairs of the Center, she was probably the most active senior member of the faculty apart from those who served in the executive director role. She represented the faculty on the Center's Program Faculty Executive Council and served for many years on a series of committees in which the Center's Executive Director and a few leading members of the faculty met with representatives from the Mandel Foundation. Consistently, she pushed for the highest standards in recruiting students—the highest standards in terms of leadership potential as well as academic capabilities. She pushed for an effort to attract and recruit students on a national and indeed international basis. She insisted that an "A" meant "truly excellent work." She pressed for the highest standard of research and publication by the Center's faculty and in its journal. She understood that the best way for a serious research university to contribute to nonprofit leadership in its own city was to offer the best possible education in each field it takes up—and she knew from her wide personal experience that Cleveland's legal community and internationally notable nonprofit organizations make it one of the best places anywhere for excellence in nonprofit leadership education. Her own record of professional achievement and first-rate teaching perfectly illustrates her case. I miss her.

LAURA CHISOLM: THE LIGHT IN THE ROOM

Harvey P. Dale[†]

I met Laura Chisolm in Cleveland on a sunny day in the mid-1980s. The New York University School of Law had recently begun a “Study on Philanthropy and the Law” that I was directing.¹ The Mandel Center for Nonprofit Organizations was already in operation at Case Western Reserve University, and I wanted to understand its mission, programs, processes, and organization. Laura was the Law School’s representative at the Mandel Center, and she agreed to spend some time with me to discuss these matters.

Laura—not then yet a tenured full Professor—spent several hours with me that day, patiently explaining everything I wanted to know about the Mandel Center. By the time I left to fly back to New York City, I had learned a lot. Some of what I learned involved the Mandel Center, but my strongest impressions were of Laura herself. Even in those first few hours, she impressed me with her intelligence, kindness, patience, good humor, and amazing warmth. It was the beginning of a wonderful friendship.

Before long, I had (to my good fortune) managed to enlist Laura’s support for the “Study” I was undertaking, and then for the “Program” and the “National Center” that followed.² Over many years, Laura was an unfailing source of good judgment, good cheer, and good companionship. She served as a member of the Board of Advisors to the NCPL. She prepared and presented two major papers

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¹ Two years later, the “Study on Philanthropy and the Law” morphed into the “Program on Philanthropy and the Law” at NYU, and that, in turn, transmogrified, in the early 1990s, into the National Center on Philanthropy and the Law (hereinafter the “NCPL”).

² *Id.*

at annual conferences of the NCPL.³ She was a stalwart and enthusiastic participant in the work of the NCPL. She was always cheerfully available to lend a hand and provide thoughtful guidance.

In the late 1980s, a small group of academics and practitioners, all of whom shared a deep interest in legal issues affecting not-for-profit organizations, organized an informal “club” called the Nonprofit Forum. The Forum has met in New York City every other month (except for the summer months) since then. Each member, in rotation, prepares a paper on an area in which the law impacts charities and presents that paper at a Forum dinner. The ensuing dialog and debate are rigorous and often boisterous. Laura was one of the first members of the Forum. She rarely missed those dinners (even though she had to travel from Cleveland to attend them) and she was an unfailingly energetic participant in those discussions. Her contributions were many and her enthusiasm was always palpable.

One of Laura’s and my closest colleagues, Professor John Simon of the Yale Law School, had—in 1987—written a chapter on the federal tax treatment of charitable organizations for a “research handbook” on nonprofits.⁴ When the handbook’s original editor suggested, more than a decade later, that the chapter should be updated, John asked Laura and me to join him in that task as co-authors. The three of us labored on that chapter for about five years, sharing drafts, comments, and insights frequently. We met on dozens of occasions to work on our emerging text. We had been admonished by the editors that the final product should be about thirty typed pages in length. What we finally submitted (and what was then published) was more than three times that length, despite our best efforts to achieve brevity, because of the immense complexity of the subject matter.⁵

Out of all of the hundreds of hours that Laura and I spent together, I remember many things. I remember her trenchant intellect and the manner in which she could clarify issues or criticize others’ views without ever offending personally. I remember how she could provide

³ Laura Brown Chisolm, A Brief and Selective Survey of the Constitutional Framework Relevant to Restrictions on the Political Activities of Tax Exempt Organizations (Oct. 29–30, 1998), available at http://www1.law.nyu.edu/ncpl/pdfs/1998/Conf1998_Chisolm_Final.pdf; Laura Brown Chisolm, Political Advocacy Meets the Internal Revenue Code: “There’s Got to Be a Better Way” (1994), available at <http://www1.law.nyu.edu/ncpl/pdfs/1994/Conf1994Chisolmpaper.pdf>.

⁴ John G. Simon, *The Tax Treatment of Nonprofit Organizations: A Review of Federal and State Policies*, in *THE NONPROFIT SECTOR: A RESEARCH HANDBOOK* 67 (Walter W. Powell ed., 1987).

⁵ John Simon, Harvey Dale & Laura Chisolm, *The Federal Tax Treatment of Charitable Organizations*, in *THE NONPROFIT SECTOR: A RESEARCH HANDBOOK* 267 (Walter W. Powell & Richard Steinberg eds., 2d ed. 2006).

insights into seemingly impenetrable complexity, and how she could illuminate paths towards solutions of gnarled problems. I remember her joy at being engaged in challenging discussions. I remember her laughter, which was husky, happy, and infectious. I remember her effortless kindness and sensitivity to everyone with whom she interacted. I remember the impact she had merely entering a room of colleagues because all of them shared enormous affection for her. I remember her grace and her beauty.

In all these ways—in mind, heart, friendship, and grace—Laura was always the light in the room. The room now is sadly darker. I shall miss her, but her memory will always remain to lift my spirits and to remind me of that wonderful, ineffable, warmly glowing light that she brought to every room she entered and everyone she knew. What a gift! I am and will forever be immensely grateful for having been a recipient.

AN ODE IN MEMORY OF DEAR LAURA

John Simon[†]

Because Professor Harvey Dale and I shared several activities with our wonderful colleague, Laura Chisolm—writing a nonprofit institutions book chapter,¹ participation in the Nonprofit Forum (“NP Forum”) and the National Center on Philanthropy and the Law (“NCPL”), as well as involvement with the Mandel Center for Nonprofit Organizations (“Mandel”)—my own prose covering these interactions would track Harvey’s account to a point suggestive of plagiarism. Accordingly, I am at a point where words fail, as the saying goes, but they fail a little less, perhaps, if I turn from prose to poetry (or at least some brief doggerel) to cover some of the Dale-Simon common ground—and to convey my appreciation, bordering on worship, of Laura: wonderful scholar, colleague and friend. Now the little ode:

Laura’s life was one great story,
Every chapter rates applause.
Lawyer, teacher, scholar, mother—
Did it all without a pause.

Everywhere that Laura walked she
Offered wit and wisdom too.
To Mandel she gave sound counsel,
As she did at NYU

All of NCPL’s sessions
Were enriched by Laura’s work—

♦ † Augustus E. Lines Professor Emeritus of Law and Professorial Lecturer in Law, Yale Law School.

¹ John Simon, Harvey Dale & Laura Chisolm, *The Federal Tax Treatment of Charitable Organizations*, in *THE NONPROFIT SECTOR: A RESEARCH HANDBOOK* 267–306 (Walter W. Powell & Richard Steinberg eds., 2d ed. 2006).

As were more than twenty years of
NP Forums in New York.

Now we turn to Laura's gifts to
Her co-authors: Harvey, John.
Both her genius and her grace made
Her a partner paragon.

Endless labor on our chapter,
But it was a happy climb
Thanks to so much care and spirit
Laura gave us all the time!

Tears for Laura? To be sure. Though
Drying them will take a while,
Even now we're finding out that
Thoughts of Laura bring a smile!

LAURA CHISOLM: AN ADVOCATE AND ALLY

B. Jessie Hill[†]

I worked with Laura Chisolm primarily in my capacity as Associate Director of the Center for Social Justice, of which she was the founding Director. Yet—as is probably true of many of my colleagues at the law school—I came to know and admire her most as a fellow faculty member, friend, and mentor. I will never forget the many kindnesses from Laura—not least of all the baby gift she sent me after my older daughter was born. It was a beautiful, fuzzy, hand-knit sweater that kept both my older daughter and my younger daughter warm for, literally, years. Where on earth such an accomplished and busy person found time to knit a sweater, I have no idea, but this sort of thing was typical, given Laura's thoughtfulness, her overwhelming kindness, and her capacious talents.

Laura was a reliable advocate and trustworthy friend to her more junior colleagues, and she especially looked out for the other women on the faculty. Though Laura never went looking for a fight, you always knew which side she was on—that was the right side, and usually the side of the more vulnerable party. Though Laura was a warm colleague and a caring teacher, she was also a fierce advocate for women, for her junior colleagues, for students, and for the less fortunate.

I think many people associate me with Laura primarily because of the Center for Social Justice. The Center was a perfect fit for Laura, and she for it. She was extraordinarily energetic and committed as its leader, and among the many tragic aspects of Laura's passing at an early age is that she never got to fully realize her vision for the Center—and we never got a chance to see where it would go under her stewardship. Yet she made her mark, and the Center's work bears

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many indicia of her vision. Most of all, this is visible in the Center's primary focus on students. As Director, Laura was completely focused on what the Center meant to students and what it could do for them. For example, her expenditure of Center funds could be downright parsimonious, *except* in spending for students. She wanted to save every available penny for them—in particular to fund student summer public interest fellowships. Under Laura's leadership, I am proud to say, there was a time when nearly every eligible student with a qualifying summer job could receive some funding from the Center.

But Laura's vision stretched beyond enabling students to afford to spend their summer in public interest work; the Center's real mission, as she saw it, was to create a community. As she rightly recognized, there was no "home" in the law school for students who cared about, and wanted to work toward, social justice. In taking the reins of the Center, Laura did not care about empire building or flashy programming. She cared most about creating a community for students who—it turns out—were desperately seeking one. She wanted to create a welcoming space for a group that had long felt marginalized. Thus, it is not surprising that under Laura's leadership, an extraordinarily dedicated and vibrant student organization—Law Students for Social Justice—sprang up and sprang into action. These students continue to meet regularly and to arrange an impressive array of pro bono projects, speakers, and other social justice-oriented programs. Together with law students and the post-graduate Vista Fellows that Laura managed to secure for the Center, Laura oversaw the initiation of the Center's involvement with the Ohio Benefits Bank at the East Cleveland Public Library, where law students screen and assist community residents in applying for public benefits such as food stamps and heating assistance.

It has been gratifying for me to be involved in all of the Center's good work and to have had the opportunity to assist Laura with it. Ironically, though, I felt that I did not get the chance to work as closely with Laura on Center matters as I would have liked. For most of the time that Laura was running the Center, I was an untenured member of the faculty, and she was fiercely protective of me. (There it is again—that word "fierce." It is a word that fits her quiet but determined style particularly well.) Of course, Laura was not much of a delegator to begin with. She was exactly the opposite of the kind of leader who would saddle others with all the work and then take credit for it. She had difficulty taking credit for all she did—in fact, if there was any aspect of administering the Center at which she did not excel, it would have to be the nearly unavoidable but unsavory self-

promotion that nearly every administrator and leader has to engage in. Laura was humble. She rarely placed demands on me but always insisted on sharing credit with me, even when that credit was not exactly due.

Finally, a word about Laura as a fellow teacher. Laura confided to me once that, even after her decades as a law professor, she still felt nervous before teaching each class. At the time, I was a brand new assistant professor, and I remember finding this absolutely astounding, especially given Laura's reputation as a wonderful, skilled, but also laid-back and engaging teacher. Now, of course, I see that this admission, too, demonstrates her humility, as well as her profound respect for the students whose education was in her hands.

It is not hard to see why Laura was so admired. Her deep dedication to students, combined with her obvious smarts and genuine humility, are no doubt what made her an excellent teacher, an inspiring Center Director, and, of course, a treasured colleague. I will miss her.

A TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR CHISOLM

Daniel Van Grol[†]

I am fortunate to count myself among the lucky one-third of Case Western Reserve University School of Law's 2009 graduating class that had the distinction of taking Property with Professor Chisolm.

As someone who needed extra attention in the subject, she always made time to meet after class, in her office (if you could find a place to sit), in the hall, in line at Schticks (the law school's in-house restaurant), or wherever. She always welcomed questions and debate on issues, although it is hard to call any conversation I had with Professor Chisolm much of a debate, as she was always right. Her dedication to her students was admirable to me then, and, as I look back to everything else that was going on in her life in the Spring of 2007, it is downright remarkable.

I was privileged to have the opportunity to get to know Professor Chisolm in a different capacity when she selected me as a Fellow for the Center for Social Justice in the summer after my graduation. Under Professor Chisolm's leadership as Director, the Center has helped fund dozens of unpaid summer public interest internships, allowing law students to volunteer and experience opportunities that they may not have had the financial capability to do otherwise. To say that through these magnificent students, Professor Chisolm's influence has traversed continents and oceans is no exaggeration. For example, one recipient spent the summer in Nairobi, Kenya working on child sexual assault, illegal detention, and police brutality issues, while another worked at the Appalachian Citizens Law Center in Whitesburg, Kentucky helping to resolve issues raised by coal miners that ranged from black-lung benefit claims to retaliation claims for reporting unsafe mining conditions. Several others were given the opportunity to work for various Public Defenders Offices and Legal Aid Clinics, both here in Cleveland and as far away as California and

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Florida. These are just a few examples of students whose work in the area of public interest was made more easily attainable with the help of Professor Chisolm's leadership.

Many of the projects undertaken by the Center under the directorship of Professor Chisolm were often daunting, but her brilliance and encouragement were unrelenting. I personally witnessed her actively engaged in the establishment and fostering of the Social Justice Alliance at Case Western Reserve University. The Alliance is an interdisciplinary group comprised of distinctive faculty and staff from the greater University with the intention of building collaborations to tackle various issues relating to the Center's goals. Through her vision and help, the University held meetings with civic leaders in East Cleveland with the goal of establishing ties with our municipal neighbor to combat social justice problems on our home front. The Center also established a successful and ongoing working relationship with the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences Poverty Center.

Professor Chisolm was my law Professor, my first boss as a law school graduate and attorney, a mentor, and a friend. To know Laura was to respect and admire her. By my estimation, her kindness and generosity were the only things capable of living up to her genius. I was a better student because of her, am a better lawyer because of her, and continue to strive to be a better person because of her.