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Tribute to Professor Judith Lipton

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Peter A. Joy†

TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR JUDITH LIPTON

I first met Judy Lipton in the early 1980s. I was working in the Case Western Reserve Law Clinic, and Mary Jo Long, who was the director of the Clinic at the time, introduced us. Judy was coordinating the law and social-work program, working primarily out of the School of Social Work. Later, in 1983, Judy joined the Law School's faculty to work in the Clinic. That same year, Mary Jo left the Clinic to move to Albany, New York, and I became the director of the Clinic.

What struck me first about Judy was how passionate she was in working with students representing our clients, and how compassionate she was with our clients. Judy was also very effective in helping law-student interns become able advocates for their clinic clients. Judy modeled the type of effective, ethical lawyer that law students wish to become.

In addition to Judy's legal experience, she also brought with her a background in social work. This proved to be an invaluable asset for clients. In addition to handling clients' legal issues, Judy's approach with students was also to see if there were social services that could also assist clients. I am not sure if there was a name to this approach at the time, but today it is known as providing holistic services to clients, focusing on the whole person and the whole problem.

Judy had a background in family law, and a large part of our caseload involved representing women seeking protective orders or who were involved in problematic divorces. Judy often ended up with some of the more difficult cases. There are several cases that involved Judy and her students taking extraordinary actions to guarantee their clients' safety, and to obtain a measure of justice for them. I remember one case in particular where the client was from another country where the court system treated women unequally and gave them very few rights. Judy spent a great deal of time with her client both reassuring her that the court system in the U.S. would be fairer as well as helping her find a safe place to live.

Judy handled a large share of the family law cases, and she eventually co-taught the Family Law course with Ken Margolis. Judy also started taking on other types of cases from the first day she started in the Clinic. She inherited many of Mary Jo's cases, including one case involving the failure of a federal prison to provide adequate medical treatment for a diabetic inmate. Judy and two students worked tirelessly on the case, and eventually had a week-long trial in federal

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district court in Toledo, Ohio. The case did not end with a verdict for their client, but he had his day (actually a week!) in court, and he was treated as a person, not a number. While he did not receive a monetary judgment in his favor, as a result of the lawsuit and the trial the prison took his and other inmates' dietary needs more seriously.

Judy also handled cases in what was then called the Criminal Clinic (now the Criminal Justice Clinic). Judy's legal experience had involved civil matters, but she really enjoyed the criminal cases. She was just as passionate in defending our clients who faced criminal charges as she was in representing clients in family law matters. In fact, Judy ended up teaching primarily in the Criminal Justice Clinic over the last several years.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the Clinic basically served as the public defender for the Cleveland Heights Municipal Court and, to some extent, for some of the other suburban courts. Those courts did not have full-time public defenders (as the Cleveland Municipal Court did), and they either relied on pro bono lawyers or private lawyers who were paid a very small, flat fee. As a result, persons charged in those courts received greatly varied levels of representation. Fortunately, some judges, like Judge Sara Hunter in Cleveland Heights, recognized that indigent persons appearing before them would receive consistently excellent representation by clinic students carefully supervised by faculty such as Judy.

Judy ended up doing a great deal of counseling for and mentoring of students. Because she was teaching Family Law with Ken Margolis, she reached students beyond those enrolled in the Clinic. Our offices were nearby, and I frequently saw students spending long sessions with Judy. When she was not with a student or team of students, Judy's door was always open.

One former student Judy mentored a great deal was Spencer Rand. Like Judy, Spencer has both a Masters of Social Work and a J.D. Spencer did a social-work placement in the Clinic under Judy's supervision, and then took the Clinic as a student. After law school, Spencer worked in legal services, just like Judy did, and then joined the faculty at Temple University's Beasley School of Law. Today Spencer is Professor Spencer Rand, and he teaches both in Temple's clinic and courses such as Poverty Law, Disability Law and Policy, and Interviewing and Counseling. I think it is safe to say that Judy is the single most important influence on Spencer's career path, and a great influence on countless other former students.

In addition to her teaching and mentoring, Judy has also performed a number of different roles at the Law School. Judy co-directed the Kramer Law Clinic with Ken Margolis from 1998 to 2011. She then directed the Kramer Law Clinic by herself until 2014, when she became the Associate Dean for Experiential Education. During her tenure as the Associate Dean for Experiential Education, Judy developed a new experiential curriculum including a first-year practical experience

component, the expansion of the externship program, and the implementation of a third-year semester-in-practice requirement.

The Law School and the University recognized Judy's many contributions by naming her the inaugural holder of the Honorable Blanche E. Krupansky and Frank. W. Vargo, Jr. Professor of Law Chair in 2015. In receiving this recognition, Judy became the first faculty member teaching primarily in the Clinic to receive an endowed professorship.

It has been a privilege to know Judy Lipton for more than thirty years as a friend and to have worked with her for fifteen years. As a friend and colleague, Judy has been wonderful. As a lawyer and law professor, she set a very high standard that anyone starting out as a lawyer or law professor should aim to emulate. Although Judy is retiring, her impact and influence will continue to be present in the work of her former students representing clients and mentoring new lawyers. I wish Judy much happiness for the future.