

Spring 1995

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Recommended Citation

Carol Gregg, *The Legacy of Steve Goldstein*, 22 Fla. St. U. L. Rev. 825 (1995) .
<https://ir.law.fsu.edu/lr/vol22/iss4/11>

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THE LEGACY OF STEVE GOLDSTEIN

CAROL GREGG*

By the time Steve Goldstein hired me in 1974 to be his assistant at the College of Law's new legal services clinical program I knew I wanted to work in public service law. As a recent law school graduate, though, I was not sure where, specifically. Steve provided me a focus, and in the process, changed my life.

The legal services clinic was funded by a Ford Foundation program designed to improve clinical teaching in American law schools while providing legal services to the indigent. Dean Joshua Morse, who has always had a knack for spotting talent, hired Steve from the Legal Services Center in Jacksonville and presented him with the challenge of creating the clinic from the ground up.

The clinic began operations in the fall of 1974 in Tallahassee's Frenchtown, a low-income neighborhood several blocks north of the law school. It was our intention to be near the people who needed us most. We opened shop in a two-room office with a single manual typewriter and two dozen eager student interns. We had plenty of business. At the time, Tallahassee was the only state capital in the country without a federally funded legal services program and the demand for legal services was overwhelming.

From the outset, Steve put the courts and legal community on notice that every client would be receiving first-rate legal representation. He also put those of us who worked at the clinic on notice that he expected nothing less than our best effort.

The law students who worked in the clinic—and I considered myself Steve's student as well—learned the value of sound legal preparation. We also learned to be persistent and stubborn. By example Steve taught us never to be satisfied with substandard legal work. He taught us that justice itself depended on our efforts.

Everything Steve did as a lawyer was first rate. A memorable example of the quality of Steve's legal work involves a case I watched him argue before the legendary federal Judge John Wisdom, in New Or-

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leans federal court. Toward the end of proceedings, during which Steve represented an indigent client faced with losing her public benefits, the judge made note of the fact that Steve was a member of the FSU law faculty. "Do you teach federal jurisdiction?" he asked. When Steve said that he did not, the judge replied solemnly: "You should."

As important as Steve's lessons in legal competence, was his counsel about how to deal with people. Again, he taught by example. We learned about respect, patience—even love. We saw Steve treat everyone with dignity, whether it was the poorest, most uneducated client, an opposing counsel showing contempt for his case, or a judge trying to understand a sophisticated defense. Steve never lost his temper. He never lost his faith in the legal process.

When the clinic closed its doors in 1976, replaced by Legal Services of North Florida, Inc., which Steve helped to organize and fund, I knew why I had gone to law school. I also understood my responsibilities as a lawyer, and better understood my responsibilities as a human being. I believe most of the students who interned at the clinic feel the same way.

Although the legacy of Steve's legal work for the poor, the condemned, and the unrepresented is legendary—and it is essential that it be remembered and carried on—I will remember Steve primarily as a friend. I will remember the great joy he took in living. I will also remember his keen sense of humor and his kindness. I miss him dearly.