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TRIBUTE TO DEAN JOSEPH W. BELLACOSA

DOMINICK BARBIERI†

As evinced by the praise-filled words of colleagues and friends within this tribute, Dean Bellacosa exemplifies many first-rate qualities to many people. From the student perspective, Dean Bellacosa offers the model for the modern, ethical lawyer to emulate—a model of intelligence, dedication, hard work, compassion, and kindness.

In my own experience, the Dean continually acted as a true leader and source of wisdom. I first encountered the Dean as a prospective student attending an open-house event for admitted students in the spring of 2001. At the forum, I sat with a large group of prospective students to listen to a speech he gave. While I remember being interested in the speech at the time—the subject was the development of the common law and the rich tradition of St. John’s in service of the law—I vividly recall how the Dean projected his sincere belief in the importance of the lawyer’s role in our society. Needless to say, my first encounter with the Dean left me quite impressed with him and with our law school. My shared experience offers only the slightest insight into Dean Bellacosa as a man of service, integrity, honesty, and as a role model for all persons engaged in the study or practice of the law.

Anyone who glances at the Dean’s curriculum vitae sees his long list of accomplishments, which some colleagues recount here; however, there is more to Dean Bellacosa than is stated on that impressive list. What the student of the law needs to understand and internalize is the patience, kindness, and approachability that the Dean has brought to his position of leadership. This approachability was apparent whenever the

Dean would pass someone in the hall, see a student in an elevator or the cafeteria, or chat with those in attendance at after-school events. To me, the real story of Joseph Bellacosa is the story of a person gifted intelligence by God, who has respected that gift through service as a dedicated legal advocate, advisor, professor, Judge, and Dean. Ultimately, any attempt to sing the praises of a person like Dean Bellacosa falls short of the mark. Even so, I add my voice to the chorus, and I thank our Dean for his service to his Alma Mater as well as for his service to society and humanity.

As a newly minted graduate of the law school, I give thanks for the chance to have met Dean Bellacosa. Like all of my classmates, the law school, and the university, I have been enriched by studying under and getting to know Dean Bellacosa as a leader, role model, and friend. For your outstanding service and the generous gift of your time and wisdom, the community of students thanks you, Dean Joseph W. Bellacosa.

As a law school, our future is very bright. Mary C. Daly, who takes the reins of leadership at the law school effective August 2004, offers all the best qualities of a Dean. She is a proven leader, intelligent, well-spoken, extremely kind, and devoted to service. I thank her for her current and future service to our school. I, as so many others do, look forward with excitement to Dean Daly’s leadership as she builds on the strong heritage of the law school.