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Stephanie Aleong: A Friend, Colleague, and Inspiration

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STEPHANIE ALEONG: A FRIEND, COLLEAGUE, AND INSPIRATION

WILLIAM E. ADAMS

Professor Stephanie Aleong, like most of us, was a complex person with many aspects to her personality. I have previously discussed some of these facets in a eulogy I was privileged to present on behalf of the Law Center, which appears in an earlier version of this law review. This tribute will focus on Stephanie's role as a teacher and administrator in her role as Director of NSU's Master in Health Law Program. I was her supervisor in this job as Associate Dean for International, Online and Graduate Programs.

Stephanie assumed this position a few years after the creation of the program. A degree offered by a law school to persons not seeking a JD was still relatively unusual; therefore, there were few models upon which to draw guidance. Further, the degree was offered primarily in a distance learning format, something also quite rare at the time in law schools and still unfortunately so. To add to the challenge, the program needed to undergo a review of its learning outcome goals pursuant to the assessment regime required by regional accreditors, something that some universities had begun to practice, but almost unique to law schools. True to her personality, Stephanie was undaunted at undertaking such tasks. On the contrary, she loved challenges and tackled these with the energy and enthusiasm that she mustered for everything that she undertook.

The substance of the program was a natural for Stephanie. As a former prosecutor, she had zealously pursued those who profited from selling counterfeit drugs and, true to form, had developed a reputation of excellence, one that attracted the attention of journalists investigating the issue. Her commitment is a testament to Justice Holmes' musing that "an individual must involve herself with the issues of her time or be "at peril of being judged not to have lived." Her interest, expertise and passion for matters of health law made her struggles with her own health issues even more poignant. She fought the latter with the same courage, strength and indefatigable energy that she approached everything.

As with any administrative job, this one involved many tasks that are, to say the least, tedious. There were the inescapable reports and forms that needed to be completed and filed, meetings to be attended and reminders to be sent to supervisors, supervisees, faculty and students. Unlike some who rise to managerial roles because of their creativity and intelligence, Stephanie did not neglect the mundane and boring parts of her job nor push them onto someone else over whom she had supervisory powers. In regard to the pre-

viously-mentioned learning outcome assessment review and reports, she was an invaluable partner in mastering the jargon, this of the educational variety, that seems an inevitable part of any new administrative review mandate. She patiently revised reports that seemed, when submitted, to completely comply with prior instructions. She displayed the same fortitude in explaining to experienced attorneys and teachers why they needed to document and quantify what they were doing in their classes and listened patiently to their complaints about this interference from distant bureaucrats.

Although she dutifully fulfilled these mundane tasks, she truly excelled as a teacher and as a creative and thoughtful administrator. As she was in the live classroom, she inspired in the online classroom as well. Always one to push students to dig deep and find what they were capable of achieving; she nonetheless was beloved by those lucky enough to study with her. Similarly, she was interested in assisting those teaching in her program, most of whom were new to teaching in an online format. The program flourished under her guidance and will miss her.

Those of us lucky enough to toil in the field of education often draw inspiration from past teachers and colleagues to inform what we do. There will be many things that I will remember and miss about Stephanie as a friend and colleague, and there will be many things that I will try to emulate as I go forward in my career. However, most of all, I can only hope that I can capture some of the passion and energy that will live on in those students lucky enough to have encountered her. Farewell again, Stephanie, I still miss you and am still inspired.