



2006

Professor Steven P. Frankino, Dean Steven P. Frankino

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Recommended Citation

Mark S. Dichter, *Professor Steven P. Frankino, Dean Steven P. Frankino*, 51 Vill. L. Rev. 3 (2006).

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.law.villanova.edu/vlr/vol51/iss1/2>

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PROFESSOR STEVEN P. FRANKINO,
DEAN STEVEN P. FRANKINO

MARK S. DICHTER*

I knew Steven Frankino for thirty-nine years. First, as Professor Frankino, then Dean Frankino and most significantly, as my dearest friend, Steve. From a first year law student in 1966 (Steve's second year teaching at Villanova) to cooking meals together this past summer in a farm house in Umbria, the years in between were filled with wonderful memories of the many facets of Steve. Through Professor Frankino, I learned the intricacies of conflict of laws principles and concepts that I have to apply in my practice regularly. When I was a student at Villanova Law School, we frequently heard the phrase that if we wanted justice, you had to go across the street to the Divinity School. When you were in Steve's presence, you had not only a sense of justice but an overwhelming sense of fairness and ethics—the most valuable lesson one could learn in law school. Through Steve's skillful guidance as the faculty advisor to the *Villanova Law Review*, we learned how to deal with pompous scholars as we unmercifully edited or rejected their articles, published my article on marijuana and the law and held a groundbreaking symposium on heart transplants and the law.

With his expertise as a world traveler, Steve and his incredible wife Rosemarie, planned our first trip to Italy, restaurant by restaurant, museum by museum and church by church, with stops in between to meet with Steve's friends. The memories of Steve are so vivid because Steve brought so much to every occasion. And when Steve had an event—a simple dinner party for four or one of his grand receptions at Villa Assisi in Wayne—it was an occasion. The times with Steve were always filled with enlightening and stimulating discussions of law, politics, religion, history, art, travel and life. There was a trip in the U-Haul truck to Boston in 1969, when Steve was moving there to teach at Harvard Law School for a year while he and Rosemarie lent the other half of their furniture to my wife Tobey and me for our new unfurnished home. I remember well how this Renaissance man could fix a broken truck, keep up his spirit, discuss everything under the sun for eight hours and enjoy life enough to insist we stop for a steak dinner. This past summer while we were in Italy, Professor Frankino helped me deal with a complex conflict of laws issue, while Dean Frankino discussed the future of legal education and Chef Frankino guided the preparation of our Italian feasts as we solved many of the world's problems with the help of good bottles of wine.

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I gained insight into Steve as a dean when he was dean of Creighton University School of Law and Catholic University School of Law and working with him at Villanova Law School while serving on the Board of Consultants. Through Steve's leadership, Villanova gained international recognition. Steve was responsible for establishing a Villanova Law School program in Israel; quite an accomplishment for a Catholic law school. As dean and later as a professor, (he said he graduated upward, as he always held teaching in the highest esteem), Steve provided much needed legal consultation and guidance to the emerging Eastern European countries. At Catholic University, Steve not only served as the dean of the Law School but also as the general counsel of the University. In his general counsel role, he brought sensitive judgment and keen legal skills to deal with the most challenging issues Catholic University faced at that time. We frequently hear talk of someone being a lawyer's lawyer. While Steve entirely fit that title, he was also a dean's dean. He was looked to by law school deans throughout the country for his guidance. He served for many years on the ABA Law School Accreditation Committee and helped many law schools in their creation and development.

Discussions and debates with Steve were magical because of his unique talents. Steve would educate without ever being pedantic. He would never appear to be a "know it all" or have superior knowledge even though of course he did. Among the fondest memories are those of extended discussions into the wee hours of the morning over Italian meals exquisitely cooked by Steve while several of us discussed the intersection of law, religion and politics. Steve brought the same enthusiasm, knowledge and dedication to preparing gourmet meals, planning a trip and discussing complex constitutional issues.

He would handle a discussion about religion or politics with the same diplomacy as a discussion about food or music. Discussions turned into debates and debates turned into discussions. Whether you ended up agreeing or disagreeing with Steve, you always ended up knowing more about the subject and came away with a much clearer analysis of the issues—the essence of a great professor. I am grateful for having had him in my life and miss him already as my professor and my friend.