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THE FRANKINO STYLE

DONALD W. DOWD*

STEVE Frankino has had a long and, but for one short, forgivable dalliance with practice, a constant requited love affair with legal education.

In 1962, immediately after graduating from Catholic University Law School, where he served as an editor of its *Law Review*, Steve became a teaching fellow at Northwestern. In 1963, he was called back to his old law school as a teacher where he caught the perceptive eye of Dean Harold Gill Reuschlein who was there on an inspection visit and successfully lured Steve to Villanova.

Steve arrived a bit late in the fall of 1965 to begin teaching at Villanova. We all forgave his tardiness because it was occasioned by his honeymoon and, therefore, we got not only Steve, but Rosemarie, who became very much a part of our then small Villanova family. Steve and Villanova proved an ideal fit. He fulfilled all of Dean Reuschlein's expectations. He was an ebullient teacher and a valued advisor to the *Villanova Law Review* and formed strong friendships with his students which have lasted through the years.

Steve was a delightful colleague. He and Rosemarie were generous and frequent hosts to all of us. His house rang with good music, good food and good conversation. We were happy to have him with us and when he left for study in Italy and Harvard we eagerly looked forward to his return. He did return full of new ideas and new recipes, but we were greatly disappointed to learn that he was soon to be leaving us again to become the Dean of the School of Law at Creighton University in 1971.

I had a chance to visit Steve and Rosemarie at Creighton and was not surprised to see that he was carrying on in his characteristic grand and splendid fashion. He built a new law school building and inaugurated a very successful relationship with the bar, creating what was one of the first major centers for continuing legal education in this country. He soon became widely known and respected in Omaha. Again, he caught the eye of a perceptive lawyer, this time not a dean, but the founding partner of one of the preeminent law firms in the Midwest, Bob Kutak of Kutak, Rock & Huie. Bob persuaded Steve to give the practice of law a fling and he was with the Kutak firm from 1977 until he returned to his old law school, Catholic University to become its Dean in 1979. He served there as Dean until 1987 when he was again lured to Villanova. His relationship with Catholic University remains warm as evidenced by the fact that he was recently honored by being chosen for the Alumni Achievement Award for Law.

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The Frankinos returned to Villanova to the warm welcome of some old friends and many new colleagues who would soon become their friends too. The school had grown and changed in many ways since he had taught here in the 1960s, but the spirit and mission of the school remained much the same. Steve formed a warm and rewarding relationship with the president of the university assuring continued support of the Law School by the university administration.

Steve returned to Villanova with considerable experience as a Dean and with wide connections throughout the nation. He continued his service with the American Association of Law Schools and the American Bar Association (ABA), and brought Villanova a great deal of exposure and acclaim in the community of law schools. In particular, Steve was instrumental in forming and giving life to the Central and East European Law Initiative (CEELI), and he continues to serve on the Accreditation Committee of the ABA and many inspection teams.

Under Steve's leadership, the law school flourished. Steve strongly supported the faculty in its scholarship and innovative programs. For instance, through his connection with CEELI, he brought a stream of interesting European scholars to the school who greatly broadened our perspective. He supported Professor John Murphy in the development of Villanova's international law program and backed up Professor (now Dean) Perritt's Project Bosnia. He also oversaw major revisions to the library making it one of the most technologically advanced in the country. Steve was especially supportive of our students, assisting them in a wide variety of student enterprises and providing greater student amenities. He made our courtyard bloom and, perhaps most significantly, he led the effort to establish the Reuschlein Chair, Villanova Law School's first endowed professorship.

Steve brought to his job the flair which was so characteristic of him. At Domus Assisi, his wonderful theatrical house, he entertained administrators, consultants, alumni, faculty and students alike. Villanova Law School has been most fortunate in its deans. Since its brilliant beginning under Dean Reuschlein, each successive dean has left the school stronger than he found it. This is certainly true for Steve. The Frankino years will be warmly remembered like the Reuschlein years, the O'Brien years and the short Murray years. Indeed, it will be hard to top "the Frankino style."

Finishing ten years of leadership, Steve chose to step down from the deanship and be, as he put it, "elevated" again to a full-time professor of law. After a well-earned respite, in which he can study, travel and, as we know, have a very good time, he will return as a colleague and everything will be "just perfect."