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Dean Logan's Blog

The Passing of a Friend

Posted by David Logan on 12/21/2010 at 09:46 AM



I am sad to announce the death of a close friend of the School of Law, Joe Fernandez. Joe was well-known in the RI legal community as the City Solicitor under Providence Mayor David Cicilline and most recently as a candidate for RI Attorney General. Joe also ran President Obama's primary and general election efforts in Rhode Island (Joe was a classmate at Harvard Law School). Besides the impressive professional resume, he was well-known in the Roger Williams community for providing our upper-level students with valuable hands on legal experience as externs in his Solicitor's Office.

But it was Joe's dedication to our diverse students that made a huge difference in the Roger Williams student experience. Joe was a regular participant in our annual Diversity Symposium/Dinner (which brings together minority high school, college, and law students with top lawyers and judges) as well as the Mentorship Program sponsored by the Thurgood Marshall Law Society of the RI Bar Association. Indeed, the last time I saw Joe was at an event in the law school in November, when he spoke at a Latino Law Students Association event. How fortunate our students were to be have the chance to learn from such a smart, idealistic, and deeply decent attorney.

Media coverage of Joe's death includes the [Providence Journal](#), the [Brown Daily Herald](#), [WRNI](#). Our Dean of Students, Lorraine Lalli (RWU Law class of '01), shares her reminiscence:

“
When I decided to attend law school, Joe Fernandez was one of the first local attorneys I met. I remember meeting with him in his private law firm in downtown Providence and him giving me advice about attending law school and the legal practice. It was almost a decade later that I got to know Joe better through my work at Roger Williams University and as a member of the Thurgood Marshall Law Society (TMLS) of which Joe was a member. I am deeply shocked and saddened by the sudden loss. I will remember Joe as a strong legal advocate and public servant thorough his work in private practice as the City Solicitor for the City of Providence. I will remember Joe as a role model for future attorneys and community leadersthrough his dedicated service as a mentor to our diverse law students. I will remember Joe for his optimism and idealism through his foray into politics supporting his Harvard Law classmate Barack Obama and as a candidate for Attorney General. Personally, I will remember Joe as a friend, a devoted husband and a wonderful father to his twin daughters.”

RWU Law will miss a dear friend.