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A Tribute and Farewell to Michael Goldsmith

*H. Reese Hansen**

Michael Goldsmith was a unique package of energy, enthusiasm, and optimism. He liked doing things, and he enjoyed people and ideas. When he joined the faculty of the Law School in the fall of 1985, he was a young, but very accomplished, lawyer and law teacher. His unique bundle of experiences as a prosecutor, staff counsel for the Select Committee on Assassinations at the U.S. House of Representatives, and counsel to the New York State Organized Crime Task Force helped him become an instant favorite of the students. But it was his infectious good nature, genuine love for the students, and his obvious concern for all of them that more importantly drew them to him.

He was an outstanding teacher and mentor. He was proud to be a lawyer and wanted his students to understand the opportunity and obligation they each had to make a difference in the world. He had a “can do” attitude that inspired students to believe that they could achieve wonderful things.

In some ways he was driven to succeed. He was a tireless worker. His body of scholarship was impressive from the very beginning. He became a willing advisor and mentor to younger faculty. Even after he suffered a life-threatening aneurysm, which he miraculously survived, he continued to push himself to the limits of his endurance. His determination to overcome in the face of this challenge was inspiration to everyone. Michael was a practitioner of the principle that it never hurts to ask, and that it is acceptable to push the envelope from time to time. When his requests were turned down, as they sometimes necessarily were, he cheerfully accepted a “no” answer. He was incredibly curious about everything. You could talk with him about anything. A visit from Michael was something to look forward to.

When he was struck with Lou Gehrig’s disease, he faced the tragic situation with enormous courage and determination. Even

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knowing the prognosis, he fought on. His challenge to Major League Baseball to contribute in a substantial way to support research to find a cure for ALS was, in many ways, typical of Michael because to him nothing was impossible, and it doesn't hurt to ask. When the progress of the disease affected his physical abilities, he developed a dignity to match his limitations. He was humble and never seemed bitter. Once again, he inspired us all.

We are all better because we knew Michael. He was an exemplary teacher and scholar. He was a congenial and trusted colleague. He was our friend. Michael made a difference in our world.