



It was a Monday morning in Barcelona when I learned the news by email, then clicked over to Facebook to see the confirmation from her family: “Wendy C. passed away tonight. She went peacefully and surrounded by love.” Wendy Archibald had served as the Law School’s dean of students and internal affairs since 2008, the year after my arrival at BYU. We worked together closely during my time as associate dean and even more closely during my first three years as dean. It was not supposed to end like this.

Wendy was diagnosed with cancer in late August of last year. She was dedicated to the Law School, and she kept coming to the office through late September, just days before undergoing surgery to biopsy a brain tumor. Although she was judged to be a candidate for immunotherapy, which seemed like good news at the time, she suffered unexpected setbacks after that initial surgery. As a result, the doctor recommended no visitors outside of the immediate family while she was in therapy. In early November she needed another surgery to address a brain hemorrhage, and after that second surgery, we never spoke again.

Wendy had many gifts, but most prominent was her ability to make everyone feel valued and respected. In response to the announcement of her passing, many former students expressed their gratitude to Wendy, saying that she was the reason they survived law school. Hundreds of people attended her funeral, at which members of the Tabernacle Choir and others sang “Alleluia” by Giulio Caccini, to, in the words of Wendy’s husband, “usher her into heaven with a choir of angels.”

As I listened to the tributes to Wendy at her funeral, I reflected on our last interactions in September. We had talked about who would cover her varied responsibilities during her absence. We had talked about the process of going on disability. We had talked about her family. We had talked about when we might expect her to return to the Law School. Although I knew her diagnosis was serious, we did not talk about the possibility that she might not return. In the immediate wake of her diagnosis, all of us were still hoping for a miracle recovery, and it did not feel appropriate to talk about the possibility that she might not survive. That would have felt like a concession, like a failure of hope. As it turned out, all of us were startled at the pace of her decline, and too many things were left unsaid.

Over the years I had expressed my gratitude to Wendy on various occasions for her good work on this or that project or for her intervention with this or that student. But I had never taken the opportunity to express my appreciation for the sum of her work, for all that she had done for the Law School and for me personally. Perhaps occasional expressions of gratitude should suffice, but as I sat in her funeral, I regretted not having said more.

That I happened to be in Barcelona when I heard of her passing was entirely appropriate because Wendy had served a mission there, and she loved Spain. The day after I received the news of her passing, I visited the *Basílica de la Sagrada Família*, a large unfinished Roman Catholic basilica designed by Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí. I entered the building as the sun, which was setting in the west, caused brilliant reds, yellows, oranges, and greens to spray through the stained-glass mosaics. I was still thinking about Wendy, and it occurred to me that she must have loved those mosaics as a young missionary. Each piece of cut glass was just a fragment, but every piece was essential to create the magnificent community of colors. If even one piece were missing, you would recognize that the mosaic was incomplete. Wendy treated the people around her like that—like essential pieces in a beautiful mosaic.

I returned to Utah just in time to attend Wendy’s funeral. When I walked into the foyer of the church building, I was greeted by a table display of mementos from Wendy’s life, including a print of the *Basílica de la Sagrada Família*. Pondering those mosaics, I have decided to take more time to speak with the many people who make my life and my work better. I want them to know that they are part of the mosaic that brings light and joy to my life. Those things should never be left unsaid.



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