

## **Stan Laughlin: Remembering a Professor and a Friend**

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If you ask any of Stan Laughlin's countless friends and colleagues about him, you will hear some variation on these three irrefutable truths: first and foremost, Stan was brilliant at most everything, but especially the law; in addition, he was the type of professor who pushed you—though always in a kind and respectful way—to open your mind to new ideas and to appreciate the perspectives of others; and, finally, he was a comedian at heart and one of the most gifted storytellers I have ever known.

I met Stan in 1973, during my first year as a law student at The Ohio State University College of Law. He had been a member of the faculty for about five years at that point, and he was unlike any law professor I encountered. He rode a motorcycle to campus and wore puka shell jewelry that he had brought home to Ohio from his extensive travels in the South Pacific. He was an avid sports fan with a lifelong love for Ohio State football and basketball, along with a fascination with baseball, especially the Cincinnati Reds. He was thoughtfully progressive, with the admirable ability to share and discuss his own strong beliefs while being open-minded and reasonable regarding conservative, liberal, and all stances in-between.

Stan was an exceptional legal scholar. While his specialty was in Constitutional Law and its application to the U.S. territories, he made his mark in other areas as well. In the early 1970s, he was instrumental in creating the first interdisciplinary course at Moritz that took legal cases involving ethical dilemmas and examined them from the points of view of all professionals involved.

The Ethical Issues of the Professions course brought together students and faculty from several professional colleges and schools, including Law, Medicine, Nursing and Social Work. To this day, it is unusual to find a course of this nature at most law schools, but it was unheard of at the time, making it the perfect venue to showcase Stan's singular talents as a professor and a trailblazer. I was honored to co-teach this course with Stan a number of times over the years. From the very first time he kindly allowed me to participate as a recent graduate to many years later when I joined him leading the class while I served as senior vice president and executive officer of the university, I continued to learn from his commentary that was immensely thought-provoking and incredibly insightful.

Stan could silence a room with his shrewd observations of the nuances of a case, and then moments later have everyone in stitches, delighted by his

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wonderful sense of humor. He was one of the most eminent professors at the law school and a distinguished mentor for generations of aspiring lawyers, but never once did he take himself too seriously.

One of my favorite memories of Stan's wit occurred at the end of my first year in the J.D. program. At the time, I was a foolhardy first-year and somewhat flippant about the legal education process. So at year's end I took the opportunity to orchestrate a comedy roast in the law school's "honor." Stan was the only faculty member willing to attend. Not only did he attend, but he *participated*—even indulging himself in some lighthearted teasing of the university president at the time, Harold Enarson, as well as the law school dean. In that moment, my admiration for him began and our lifelong friendship was established.

Many things made Stan a particularly special human being. He loved history and traveling to far-flung locales. He was inspired by and a loyal student of his faith. He was generous with his time, talents, and treasures, always supporting those in need. No matter how many years had passed, he had an uncanny recall for details and his students. Above all else, he was kindhearted and devoted to his family and his wife of fifty-eight years, Carolyn, up to his last breath.

Living with Alzheimer's, Carolyn needed additional care as her disease progressed. In 2014, she moved to First Community Village and Stan decided to move there as well. Not a single day went by where Stan was not by her side. He was a loving and tender caregiver.

Stan's presence made the world a richer place for all who knew him. I look forward to the day that my own grief at his passing will fade until all that is left is my gratitude for the wisdom, wit, and constant friendship he shared with me.