

4-1-2004

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Recommended Citation

Ronald Ravikoff, *Professor Daniel Murray: More Than Five Senses*, 58 U. Miami L. Rev. 949 (2004)
Available at: <https://repository.law.miami.edu/umlr/vol58/iss3/10>

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Professor Daniel Murray: More Than Five Senses

RONALD RAVIKOFF*

Some thirty years ago, as a first year law student, I received my first law review assignment — meet with “Doc” Murray to discuss my law review casenote. That afternoon, I wandered down to the office and found a small, out-of-the-way cubbyhole. I knocked on the door, heard a friendly “Come in,” and inside, everywhere, were more books and papers than I thought a space that size could possibly hold! As I looked for the occupant, all I saw was the bow tie. Of course, that’s the first thing we all remember about Dan Murray — the ever-present bow tie and cheery manner. What I had anticipated being a short, perfunctory meeting turned into a two-hour session during which we discussed my interests, his interests, and what areas I could write about. This was my first meeting with Dan Murray.

I find it an honor and a privilege to stand before you today to eulogize a man I have always respected, Daniel E. Murray. Professor Murray shaped a generation of lawyers with his finely honed legal and teaching skills. The University of Miami School of Law can consider itself very lucky to have had a man of the caliber of Dan Murray on the faculty, and those of us who have been his students know that it was his tutelage that has allowed us to excel in our careers today.

As I look out in the pews today, I see faces that mirror mine. They are etched in sorrow and lined with sadness. Yet behind the furrowed brows, I see love and respect for this man. While we certainly will take time to mourn Professor Murray’s death, it is perhaps more important that we take time to celebrate his life.

Dan Murray leaves legacies that will go on for generations to come. One of his legacies will live on in his family, through his wife, Elizabeth, and his son, Clay. Another legacy will live on in his prolific writing, which spanned decades. Yet another will live on in us who were his student and now contribute to the profession.

I knew Dan only as my professor, but he was a man I would consider a true gift to us all. He served his country with distinction during World War II, where he fought at the Battle of the Bulge. He received

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numerous medals, and after he was honorably discharged, he received his law degree from the University of Miami in 1949. After graduating, he practiced law for eight years. Eventually he left his law practice and came back to the academic world as a member of the Miami law faculty, where he became an icon.

For almost four decades, Professor Murray was a distinguished teacher and scholar, but more than that, he was a mentor and a guide to future lawyers. As I stand before you today, I represent the thousands of students who have counted Professor Murray as one of the best teachers they have ever had. I found him to be compassionate and respectful, knowledgeable and bright. I found that he changed with the times and was always able to keep abreast of new issues.

When I think back on my days as a student, I remember that I admired the fact that Professor Murray was always available to talk, and he was always open to what I had to say. He took time with each of us, and he offered practical advice. He was a man of great integrity, and he was a genuinely kind man. I remember, too, the office piled high with books. I can never think of going into Professor Murray's office without seeing all the stacks of books in my mind's eye.

As I prepared to enter the workforce, you can bet it was Dan Murray I turned to for career advice. He helped me research the firms that were hiring and helped me to make the decision to accept my first job offer. After graduation, I kept in touch with Professor Murray several times a year. Each time we talked, he was genuinely interested in what I had to say and how I was doing. More importantly though, he wanted to know how my law school education had benefited me.

It was easy to answer that one. It had prepared me to work with quality lawyers and to be knowledgeable in my field. I honestly feel that doors might not have been open to me had it not been for the likes of Dan Murray. My career provided me many benefits in both my private and professional lives. A large part of my successes can be attributed to Dan's guidance.

Those students who have had Professor Murray know how fortunate they have been, because teachers like him, who leave an impression for a lifetime, are rare. I consider myself blessed that I have been guided by his hand and enlightened with his knowledge. I am sure many others feel the same way.

Dan had more than five senses: More than sight, he had insight; more than hearing, he listened; more than taste, he had judgment; more than touch, he had feeling; and more than smell, he had sensitivity.

Dan Murray will be missed by each one of us. He was a gentleman and a gentle man, and he will always be in our thoughts and in our hearts — and his legacy will echo in the courtrooms and in the hearts of his students.