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Memorial Service for James S. Mofsky*

MARY DOYLE**

The cause that brings us together this afternoon is one of grievous sadness and regret. But even so, I welcome you with a feeling of pride in our common memories and optimism for the future—as Jim Mofsky would bid me welcome you.

As he welcomed Bernie Oxman and me when we visited three short weeks before his death, “Barbara, if you please, bring some of that delicious cake for Bernie and Mary.” Barbara graciously headed out to the kitchen. “She’s the best,” he said to us. And of course we agreed, because she is.

So I presume to greet you today on Jim’s behalf, and to offer some sweet recollections of a talented and generous teacher, a lawyer of the finest calibre, a deeply loving and beloved husband and father, and a surpassingly fine friend, amply graced with compassion, with understanding, and, as my Dad would say, with the “spirit of jokes.”

Emily Dickinson has a haunting poem in which she describes a death in the family, the passing itself, the comings and goings that follow, and the tasks that have to be done putting things to right. The last line of the poem catches the sorrowful family and friends as they try finally to return to ordinary life:

Then an awful leisure was belief to regulate.

All of us are struggling with disbelief at Jim’s death, and that “awful leisure” is likely to be with us for a long, long time.

* On September 9, 1990, the University of Miami School of Law held a memorial service for Professor James S. Mofsky. The following tributes contain excerpts from that service.

** Mary Doyle is Dean of the University of Miami School of Law.