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Karl Krastin

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Karl Krastin

In the fall of 1976, I joined the Nova University law faculty. The Law Center had just completed its second year. With the incoming freshman class, the law school would become fully operational, with three complete classes, for the first time. Accordingly, the faculty was being expanded dramatically to become a full-size faculty. That group of new professors included Karl Krastin, but Karl was hardly a newcomer to law teaching.

In 1976, Karl had already “retired” once, having just stepped down after thirteen years as dean at the University of Toledo College of Law. He was returning to the sunny south where his academic career had reached maturity at the University of Florida. He had joined the University of Florida law faculty in the same year in which I was born. But Karl had, and still has, a pioneering spirit which led him to undertake the deanship at Toledo, and later to join the Nova law faculty on the virtual frontier of legal education.

Karl was bringing his maturity and experience to a new and somewhat speculative venture at Nova. At that time, Karl had more law-school teaching experience than the rest of the faculty and administration combined. He was a prize for a new institution, particularly an institution which was then drifting without too much direction.

It must have seemed to him, at times, like he had stumbled down the rabbit hole and into the Mad Hatter’s tea party. But Karl helped to bring order out of that chaos. He was always an active, enthusiastic and patient participant in every facet of the law school, but he never was heavy handed about pointing out how much more he knew about legal education than the rest of us. He would wait to be asked, and then he would willingly share his knowledge with those who were interested.

With Karl on hand, every idea had to be completely thought through. Karl, the master devil’s advocate, would subject every idea to the greatest scrutiny, regardless of the source. The proposal which he so thoroughly demolished in a faculty meeting might very well have been his own. The search for the best answer was what was important.

Much water has passed under the bridge since that fall thirteen years ago. Karl is now Professor Emeritus, and somehow the young

turks have become the school's elder statesmen.¹ But the senior statesman will always be Karl. He set the standard as an enthusiastic teacher and a valued colleague. This law school, and this writer, will always be indebted to him.

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1. Now that Karl had assumed emeritus status, Marc Rohr, Joseph F. Smith, Jr. and I are the only members of the 1976 group still teaching full time at the Law Center. Jon Sale, who started with us in 1976, teaches part time at the Law Center. Of the original 1974 faculty, only Bruce Rogow remains, and only Steven Wisotsky remains of the group that joined the faculty in 1975.