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Legacy Giving

Norman L. Pecora leaves a legacy to the Law School

Norman J. Pecora, a Williamsville lawyer who funded the Norman J. Pecora Judge's Chambers at the University at Buffalo Law School, died May 27 in the Texas Neuro Rehab Center in Austin, Texas, after a brief illness. He was 98. Born in Buffalo, Mr. Pecora attended Holy Angels School, graduated from the UB Law School in 1931 and continued practicing law into his early 90s.

Early in his career, he worked for the private firm of Kevin Kileen and for the U.S. Department of Immigration and Naturalization as a naturalization officer. In the 1940s, he joined the law firm of Judge Michael J. Montesero and worked there until 1958. He also began his own practice, in association with the Buffalo law firm Cohen and Lombardo.

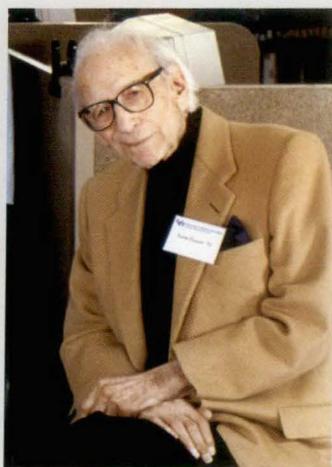
Well known for his pro bono work, and he gave \$300,000 to fund the Judge's Chambers, a facility for training law students at UB.

His wife of 40 years, the former Henrietta Steinman, died in 1980.

Among the speakers at his funeral was Vice Dean Alan S. Carrel, with whom Pecora shared a close relationship.

"Every day in every year was full," Carrel said. "He had a flair for living with a zest, a passion and enthusiasm that was unique. He mentioned to me on many occasions that his mother, who also lived into her late 90s, told him, 'Life goes by quickly, so enjoy every moment,' and he did.

"Some parts of his life that he loved



most included the theater. A talented actor, he worked closely with the famous and highly regarded Jane Keeler at the well-known Studio Theater.

"A second love was baseball. He was a top player in Buffalo's highly competitive Municipal League. He batted .474 and was offered a contract with the Buffalo Bisons, a chance to become a professional ballplayer. He thought about it, but turned

down that offer to become a lawyer.

"A third love was dancing. He took up competitive ballroom dancing at age 75 and danced in amateur competitions for 15 years. He credited dancing for his long life. He won many trophies and awards. A highlight for him was the 1986 Winter Dance Olympics, held in Toronto. At 80, Norm took first place in the meringue, the tango and the international fox trot, and was awarded a Top Dancer Trophy for the highest overall score. Two years later, he duplicated his accomplishment. He once danced with Eleanor Roosevelt.

"A fourth love was the law, which he considered a calling. He often said he wanted to be a priest until he was 6

years old, when someone told him priests couldn't drink beer. Since Norm wanted to be able to drink beer someday, he changed callings and became a lawyer.

"A fifth love was the Transit Valley Country Club, where he belonged for more than half a century. This was his second home. He took great pride in being the Club's attorney for more than 50 years, in serving on its Board of Directors for decades and in helping initiate many improvements. In recognition of his valuable and longstanding service, Transit Valley made him a free lifetime member. He was thrilled that his service had been so greatly appreciated and was honored that a new category of membership was created especially for him.

"A sixth major love of Norm's was people. He enjoyed being with them, and he enjoyed helping them.

"He loved so many things, because Normy J., as he liked to be called, loved life.

"He especially loved the courtroom in the Law School with its magnificent judge's chambers and the highly visible sign at its entrance which reads, The Norman J. Pecora Judge's Chambers. It sure felt wonderful when he told me with tears in his eyes, 'Thanks, Alan, for giving me the opportunity to leave a legacy in the profession I loved so dearly.'"