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PHILANTHROPY

A gift for good teaching, in honor of a master

David Manch ’70 was sitting in the student lounge in the basement of the Law School’s old Eagle Street campus. It wasn’t bright; it wasn’t fancy. In walked Professor Ken Joyce, then in the early years of his teaching career. “Professor Joyce!” Manch said to him. “Welcome to our hovel.”

When they spoke by phone more than 40 years later, Joyce remembered that story. Good students leave an impression. And good teachers, of course, can change lives.

The paths of student and teacher have crossed again now that both have entered retirement. Manch has made a major gift to establish the Professor Kenneth F. Joyce Excellence in Teaching Fund. The endowed fund will foster great teaching by making it possible for Law School instructors to enhance their teaching skills, for example funding their attendance at teaching seminars or to watch skilled teachers in action.

“It’s time for me to give back,” says Manch, who built his law career on the tax and ERISA aspects of qualified retirement plans, along with estate planning and wealth transfer. “I got this license to practice law, and I’ve been able to do pretty well over 45 years, and I owe it to those who provided me with the tools to fashion that career.”

He also knew that he wanted to recognize Joyce’s influence on the thousands of students who learned the intricacies of tax and estate law in his courses. “Anybody who had Ken Joyce remembers him,” Manch says. “He had the remarkable ability to teach with intense enthusiasm, and he had an incredible mastery of his subject matter. That combination of enthusiasm and mastery made it really special.”

Not that it was always smooth sailing. Manch tells another story about the day in his second-year Gratuitous Transfers class when somebody just didn’t get it. “There are always a couple of people who don’t pay attention and ask too many questions,” he says. “And somebody was going on and on, and with the Buffalo law firm Hodgson Russ and the balance of his career with the Phoenix-based firm Lewis Roca Rothgerber Christie. “It’s highly statutory, as opposed to having developed over hundreds of years through common law. I quickly realized that’s what I wanted to do. I like the intellectual challenge of it, and I liked that I could spend time dealing with clients directly, not just dealing with other lawyers. Ken taught tax in such a way that you could really understand the principles behind things.”

Thinking about how to give to the Law School in a meaningful way, and after discussing the possibilities with his longtime friend and former partner, Diane Bennett ’75, he saw an opportunity to ensure that the next generations of future lawyers will benefit from the same effective teaching he experienced half a lifetime ago. And such mentoring will pay tribute as well to Joyce’s own apprenticeship with legendary Buffalo Law tax professor Lou Del Cotto.

The fund is being seeded with Manch’s $25,000 initial donation and a further gift of $100,000 as a bequest. Others who have benefited from Joyce’s teaching, or who have an interest in furthering great teaching, are invited to contribute; visit Giving or contact Karen R. Kaczmarski, vice dean for philanthropy, at (716) 645-6429 or krkca@buffalo.edu.

“UB School of Law has always recognized the importance of the classroom,” Joyce says. “The establishment of this fund, made possible by David’s thoughtfulness and generosity, is yet another demonstration of the school’s dedication to improving the educational experience of its students and the resulting benefit to society.”

“’It’s time for me to give back.’ – David Manch ’70