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Gerald F. Uelmen

Santa Clara University School of Law, guelmen@scu.edu

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*Gerald F. Uelmen**

Lloyd Tevis—The Perfect Mentor

While law professors frequently reflect on their roles as teachers and scholars, we seldom give much thought to the role that is most demanding of all, the role of mentor to our students, even to our colleagues. Webster defines a mentor as “a faithful counselor,” informing us that the word comes directly from the name of the friend to whom Odysseus entrusted his house and the education of his son when he set out for Troy.

Lloyd Tevis was a mentor to generations of students of Loyola Law School. Many of these relationships continued long after he retired. He also served as a mentor to many of his younger faculty colleagues, including this one. The gentle qualities Lloyd brought to this task offer a model of the perfect mentor.

The first quality of the perfect mentor is generosity. Being a mentor is very time-consuming. Much patient listening is required. When you walked into Lloyd Tevis’s neat and orderly office, anything else he was doing was immediately set aside. You had his complete and undivided attention for as long as you needed him.

The perfect mentor is also wise. Wisdom is an elusive quality, closely linked to maturity. Lloyd rarely offered “off the cuff” advice. When he said, “Let me think about that,” it was not a polite way of putting you off. It meant he really wanted some time to carefully weigh all of the ramifications. For Lloyd, rendering thoughtful advice was the essence of the lawyer’s function.

The final quality I would attribute to the perfect mentor is Webster’s adjective: faithful. There are two senses in which that word assumed heroic dimensions in Lloyd’s life. He was absolutely loyal to those who sought his advice. Confidences could be shared with absolute assurance that no one else would ever hear even veiled references. The other dimension was Lloyd’s deep and abiding faith in God. That faith anchored Lloyd’s life, and imbued all that he did with a real sense of purpose and meaning.

Having seen how many of Lloyd’s students took him as a role model, I was curious who Lloyd’s personal role models were. I quickly discovered his models did not include the ancestor for whom he was named! The first Lloyd Tevis was one of the wealthiest men in gold-rush San Francisco, whose personal fortune was the foundation for the Kern County Land Company. I recall bringing a book to show Lloyd a picture

* Dean and Professor of Law, Santa Clara University School of Law.

of the fabulous mansion the first Lloyd Tevis built on Nob Hill when he was president of Wells Fargo Bank. Lloyd seemed almost embarrassed, explaining that his branch of the family had little to do with the “moneyed” Tevises. Lloyd’s “model” was a very humble woman who makes poverty a holy calling—Mother Theresa of Calcutta. In hundreds of quiet ways, Lloyd worked to advance her cause throughout the world. She sums up the philosophy that governed Lloyd’s life—that love is something you *do*, not something you talk about.