IN MEMORIAM
JOSEPH PATRICK HAZEL

Professor Joseph Patrick “Pat” Hazel, the Tiny Gooch Centennial Professor of Trial Practice at the University of Texas School of Law, was a visionary, passionate, and beloved teacher on the law school faculty. Throughout his time at The University of Texas at Austin and all his other pursuits in life, Pat dedicated his sharp intellect and boundless heart to serving others. As a Roman Catholic priest, high school teacher, trial lawyer, law professor, mediator, and Episcopal priest, “[t]he common theme to Pat Hazel’s life was helping his fellow man, especially the poor, the oppressed, those who, if it had not been for Pat, would have no one to speak for them,” noted Dicky Grigg at Pat’s funeral.

Born in Kilgore, Texas, in 1933, Pat Hazel enthusiastically embraced life and his ability to improve the world around him. He began his adult life as a Catholic priest, entering seminary in 1953 and then obtaining his License in Sacred Theology from Gregorian University in Rome in 1960. He went on to serve as a teacher in several Catholic schools in the Fort Worth area. After leaving the Catholic priesthood in 1967, he obtained a Master’s in Education in 1968 from Loyola University in Chicago and then attended the University of Texas School of Law, where he served as an associate editor of Texas Law Review, and graduated with honors in 1971. As a new lawyer, Pat joined the law practice of Bob Gibbins & Broadus Spivey and soon began lecturing at the School of Law. He joined the faculty as a full-time professor in 1978.

During the twenty-eight years Pat spent as a professor, he was known as a pioneer and national leader in the teaching of trial advocacy skills. He was one of the first professors in the country to develop a curriculum for teaching trial skills and developed the law school’s nationally renowned trial advocacy program. Pat’s innovations and dedication to trial advocacy led him to receive the Roscoe Pound Foundation National Award for Excellence in Teaching Trial Advocacy. The trial advocacy program he created also won the prestigious Emil Gumpert Award in 1991, given by the American College of Trial Lawyers for programs whose principal purpose is to maintain and improve the administration of justice. Pat also left his mark on the law school through his instrumental involvement in the design and construction of the Jeffers Courtroom and the Connally Center for Justice.

Pat touched the lives of countless lawyers with his classroom innovations. Literally thousands of lawyers across the country and throughout the State of Texas learned to try a lawsuit in Pat’s classes—and to do so with civility and the highest ethics. He integrated videotaping student performances when videotaping was still in its infancy. The law school’s “Basic Trial Advocacy Course,” which was developed by Pat, became one of the most requested courses in the law school. Pat was also committed to diversity in the faculty he chose to teach the trial courses, helping students learn that lawyers come in all colors and genders.

Working in collaboration with Jack Ratliff and others, Pat brought his unique teaching tools of videotapes, acronyms, and “Hazel’s Principles” to lawyers throughout the state and nation. Lawyers flocked to UT Austin to participate in the law school’s nine-day “Intensive Trial Advocacy Program” or the one-day “Jury Trial” seminar that he created and taught with Jack Ratliff. He also devoted his time to student organization groups through his role as advisor for the Board of Advocates and the Review of Litigation. The Board of Advocates named Pat as an Honorary Barrister in 1980.
Pat’s passion to teach even drove him to face the harsh winters in Cambridge, where he taught in the Harvard Law School Trial Advocacy Program every winter and continued teaching even after his retirement from the University of Texas. Pat was also an active participant on the faculty of the National Institute for Trial Advocacy.

Pat extended his services to the State Bar of Texas, where he was a tremendous leader and tireless advocate for improving civil trial systems. His contributions included service on the Texas Supreme Court Task Force on Jury Reform, the Civil Trial Law Advisory Commission, and the Court Rules Committee of the State Bar of Texas, where he served as chair. He also served as editor-in-chief of The Advocate, the newsletter published by the State Bar of Texas Litigation Section. Many attorneys considered Pat to be one of the state’s leading authorities on the issue of venue, and Pat created a series of oral histories of leading Texas lawyers that is still in demand today.

Pat retired from the School of Law faculty in 2003, although he continued to serve as a mediator in civil law disputes at the Lakeside Mediation Center. A few years before retiring, he was received as a priest in the Episcopal Church and served as assisting priest at St. David’s Episcopal Church until his death. While simultaneously being a priest and a lawyer may seem incongruous, Pat Hazel brought the best of those professions—listening, comforting, and advocating—together. A key to maintaining success in each of his endeavors was his wonderful sense of humor. The numerous students, parishioners, homeless individuals, clients, colleagues, and friends who benefited from his compassion and intellect can certainly be thankful for that.

Pat died on October 1, 2011, at the age of seventy-eight, after a fifty-two-year struggle with diabetes. He is survived by his beloved wife of fifteen years, Nan Hazel, along with many other family members and friends who miss him dearly.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Tracy McCormack (chair), Heather Way, and Olin Guy Wellborn.

Distributed to the dean of the School of Law on April 18, 2012, and posted under “Memorials” at: http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/.