

PROFESSOR AND DEAN DEBBIE BELL: A GENEROUS MENTOR AND FRIEND

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When he was Dean, Richard Gershon told me how much he valued faculty members who are “five-tool players,” a reference to baseball players who are good at everything (they can hit for power, hit for average, field, throw, and run). Debbie Bell is the epitome of a five-tool player, and nobody is more deserving of induction into the University of Mississippi School of Law Alumni Hall of Fame.

From the moment I started at the Law School in 2007, Debbie was someone who I deeply admired. Law professors are judged in three (not 5) areas: teaching, research and, service. Debbie was an exceptional and beloved teacher. She was (and remains) the go-to expert in the field of Family Law. And she was a thoughtful and conscientious colleague who worked tirelessly to make the Law School a better place. Although it is before my time, I understand she was a pretty good law student too!

Perhaps most important of all, Debbie has been a generous mentor and friend to so many of us. I still use teaching methods that I learned from her.

Debbie demonstrated how much she cared about the institution in 2015 when she agreed to serve as Interim Dean for two years after Richard Gershon returned to the faculty. I think we all knew that this was not a job that Debbie necessarily wanted – she would have preferred to be teaching her classes and keeping up to date on the latest developments in family law – but she agreed to do the job because she knew the Law School needed her.

And, of course, she was outstanding as Dean, just like she is at everything else. As her Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, I had a front row seat. She brought all of her considerable talents to bear in this new role. She was motivated by service to the institution and led with transparency. She treated all of the Law

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School's stakeholders – faculty, staff, students, and alums – with dignity and respect. And she worked long hours to make sure that the Law School was ready for its next chapter.

The University of Mississippi School of Law is an infinitely better place because of all that Professor Debbie Bell has given to it, and all of us who have had the pleasure to work with her and learn from her are infinitely better for the experience. Thank you, Debbie.