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Luigi Del Duca: Sempre Più Giovane

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Whenever anyone asked my colleague and friend, Luigi Del Duca, how he was, the inevitable response would be some combination of “Sempre più giovane” (Always younger), “Sempre più bello” (Always better looking), and “Sempre più contento” (Always happier). And, in Lou’s mind and heart, all three were always true.

I came to know Prof. Louis F. Del Duca when I joined the faculty of the “proud and independent” Dickinson School of Law in 1983. By that time, Lou had already clocked in more than a quarter century of teaching the law and had become a legend in the local, state, national, and international legal and legal education professions. As it turned out, he was just hitting his stride.

Although perhaps first and foremost Lou was an expert on commercial law and the UCC, it was hard to find a course he hadn’t taught at one time or another at the law school. And he maintained a lively interest in those few subject matters that he never taught. I can speak from experience that if an untenured young law professor had a classroom observational visit from Lou, the relative novice could expect to be peppered during that class with multiple probing questions about the issues at hand.

It is well known that Lou was a pioneer in international legal education, both in bringing foreign law graduates to Dickinson for advanced degrees and in creating overseas programs for American law students. This dovetailed with his prodigious and widely regarded scholarship. I once asked an LLM student from a former Eastern Bloc country why he had selected the Dickinson School of Law in Carlisle, Pa, for his LL.M. degree, and without hesitation he replied that it was because Prof. Del Duca was here.

As far as I could tell, Lou did not have a shy bone in his body. He thought nothing of contacting the highest level justices and scholars from all over the world and asking them to participate in some program or other. Because of Lou’s stature (and insistence), as often as not, they agreed. Lou could be *very* persuasive. Thus our students and students from other schools attending our programs had the incredible benefit of lectures from the likes of Chief Justices Rehnquist and Roberts, plus many associate justices, as well as foreign jurists of the highest rank.

Lou was not a snob. Although he hobnobbed with leading jurists and intellectuals and movers and shakers around the world, he was equally content and enthused,

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attending county bar meetings and interacting with local judges and practitioners, many of whom had been his students years or decades or even generations earlier. An attorney might remind Lou that Lou had not only taught her, but her father, and grandfather, as well!

Lou had incredible energy. When he ran a foreign summer program for American law students, he *ran* it. He always arranged cultural tours, usually on foot, in the cities we visited. It was vastly amusing to watch a gaggle of law students in their early 20s struggling to keep up with this octogenarian as he led them from one museum or courthouse to the next.

Even after he “retired” in 2013, Lou continued to set a pace that few people half his age could maintain. He was often the first member of the faculty to arrive at the school, and, of course, that would be after he and his wife Frances had had their early morning workout at the Y. It was not uncommon for us at the law school to see Lou emerging from his office at the end of the day with his compact travel bag packed, about to start off for another high level meeting or symposium or lecture at the United Nations in New York, or Vienna, or India, or wherever.

The “retired” Lou managed to keep not one, not two, but three research assistants busy. As the publishers of this Journal and the UCC Law Journal well know, Lou continued, up to the very end, to work diligently, interacting with the bench, bar and academy, to edit and produce high quality scholarship. We at the law school are still uncovering projects he was working on or planning.

Did Lou slow down just a little in the last few months as he neared his 90th birthday? Perhaps. But to me, Luigi will forever remain “*sempre più giovane.*”