



PennState
Dickinson Law

DICKINSON LAW REVIEW
PUBLISHED SINCE 1897

Volume 102
Issue 2 *Dickinson Law Review - Volume 102,*
1997-1998

1-1-1998

In Memoriam: Peter N. Kutulakis

Thomas M. Place

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ideas.dickinsonlaw.psu.edu/dlra>

Recommended Citation

Thomas M. Place, *In Memoriam: Peter N. Kutulakis*, 102 DICK. L. REV. 243 (1998).
Available at: <https://ideas.dickinsonlaw.psu.edu/dlra/vol102/iss2/3>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Law Reviews at Dickinson Law IDEAS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dickinson Law Review by an authorized editor of Dickinson Law IDEAS. For more information, please contact lja10@psu.edu.

In Memoriam: Peter N. Kutulakis

Thomas M. Place*

Peter Kutulakis' sudden death on August 5, 1997 left the law school without its heart and soul. For over twenty-three years, it was to his door that students and faculty turned when seeking answers to personal and professional problems. Trained as a lawyer, counselor, and mediator, Peter was an active listener, a sounding board, a source of encouragement, and wise counsel. His door was always open.

When I joined the faculty in 1974, Peter had just assumed the position as the school's first Director of Placement Services. I took advantage of his offer to help me as I settled into the community and my new position. My first memories of Peter are traveling with him through the countryside; I looked for property as he humorously filled me in on all the details of the new life I was entering. In time, I bought land adjacent to his farm and came to know him as a generous neighbor, loving father, loyal friend, and valued colleague.

During Peter's early years at the school, he poured his considerable energy and talent into developing the Placement Office. Peter was extremely effective in building bridges to prospective employers, and because of his warm personality and genuine interest in the lives of students, his office was more than an employment center. It was a refuge where students could candidly discuss school and family problems, and recent graduates could explore career options. His interest in providing first-rate job counseling and placement services to students and lawyers led Peter to join with other placement officers in forming the National Association for Law Placement. Peter served as president of the organization in its early years.

In 1977, Peter joined the full-time faculty and, in addition to assuming responsibility for the School's continuing legal education program, he began teaching a course in interviewing and counsel-

* Thomas M. Place, Professor of Law, The Dickinson School of Law of The Pennsylvania State University, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

ing. The course was one of the first in the country to be offered to non-clinic students.

When I was interested in starting an in-house Family Law Clinic in 1979, Peter generously volunteered to work with the Clinic during its first year. He worked tirelessly that year meeting with students, attending court appearances, co-teaching the Clinic's skills training course, while, at the same time, meeting his other responsibilities as a faculty member and administrator.

After eight years of assisting students and lawyers with career decisions, Peter enrolled in a graduate program in counseling and received his master's degree in 1984. Peter sought additional training because he had learned in his career counseling work that stress was a significant problem among lawyers that leads to substance abuse and high levels of dissatisfaction with the practice of law. Deeply interested in addressing the day-to-day problems facing practicing lawyers, Peter developed materials and began presenting programs locally and nationally on stress management.

Peter was also very interested in the developing alternative dispute resolution movement. He was distressed by the fact that litigation is not a desirable or affordable option for many who find themselves in a dispute and believed that there was a need to create more efficient and less costly alternatives to litigation. He believed that while conflict is inevitable, it can be used constructively, particularly in matters where the parties have an ongoing relationship. After receiving training as a mediator, Peter began co-teaching an alternative dispute resolution course and joined with another faculty member in developing one of the first law school mediation clinics. The Clinic provided a structured opportunity for students under Peter's supervision to mediate neighborhood disputes and other matters that otherwise would not have been resolved.

Peter graciously accepted new administrative responsibilities when, in 1991, then Dean John Maher asked him to serve as associate dean for student services. His administrative responsibilities increased even further when, in 1995, Dean Glenn asked Peter to serve as the school's Vice Dean. As Vice Dean, Peter was responsible for many of the day-to-day functions of the school. He managed the extensive renovations of the Community Law Clinic building on Pitt Street, oversaw the refurbishment of Trickett Hall, and brought into existence the school's *Cafe Per Se*. It was a special day for Peter when the *Cafe* opened. Peter had long talked

about having a place at the law school where faculty and students could share a meal or a cup of coffee.

Although his administrative responsibilities increased exponentially during the last years of his life, Peter found time to serve on—or chair—a number of committees of the American Bar Association, the Association of American Law Schools, the Pennsylvania Bar Association, and the International Bar Association. He wrote extensively during this period on stress management, communication skills, and lawyer recruitment with articles appearing in ABA publications, law reviews, and legal newspapers. He also organized and presented numerous programs for lawyers and judges on mediation and stress management. In addition, he served as a volunteer mediator and was actively involved in establishing mediation services in a number of communities.

Peter's life away from school was filled with passions that he pursued with the same energy and commitment he brought to his professional life. Horses were a central part of his life. A talented rider, he shared his knowledge and interest with my children and watched with enjoyment as they discovered his passion for horses. He particularly enjoyed fox hunting and for many years bred and raised horses with remarkable jumping ability.

Peter loved music and was blessed with a beautiful singing voice. He sang in church choirs and in choral performances in Carlisle, Harrisburg, and New York. Peter was an actor, a painter, and an accomplished cook. He was active in many community organizations and, for many years, brought meals to the sick on holidays.

For all his talents and interests, Peter was first and foremost a warm, generous, loyal, and loving person. From my early days at the law school and settling in Carlisle, through the years learning first to be a teacher, then later being a father, Peter was an endless source of help, good advice, and, most importantly, encouragement. The role he played in my life as a loyal and generous friend, he played in the lives of many people. He made our lives richer. He left the world a better place. We won't forget his love, his humor, his generous spirit, and his warm smile.

