

June 14, 2017

Judge Shapiro was an amazing presence in my life for over 35 years. Our relationship went through many stages, each one a blessing to me. She was a wonderful boss, then mentor, then boss again, and, finally, a friend. At each stage, her courage, wisdom and warmth were a tremendous inspiration to me.

I can think of few people who influenced my life as much as “the Judge”. She hired me in 1980, a terrified 26 year-old. She taught me everything about the law, about writing, about women, about people. We had quite a year, as we slogged through the awful caseload that was left to her by the other judges. Over the next decades, she was always there with career advice and assistance. She helped me get my first job and counseled me on subsequent job changes. After I returned to Philadelphia from Chicago in 1996, she offered me a way to keep my hand in the profession, although by then I was primarily focused on raising my children. My part-time work on the Chester Housing Authority gave me a renewed insight into the Judge’s courage, as she tackled the world of urban poverty, federal housing and welfare laws and small-city politics. In 2004, she asked me to return full-time as her clerk (the only repeat clerk in Judge Shapiro history!!).

Aside from her influence on my professional life, she was a tremendous role model for my personal and family life. She showed me that women can have it all, and I knew I could always rely on her for wise counsel and advice about life, career and family. Her concern for the welfare of others was demonstrated time after time. When she flew to Erie, PA for my father’s funeral, it touched me beyond belief – to this day, 36 years later, it still seems one of the most thoughtful gestures I have ever experienced.

Judge Shapiro will always stand out for me as the best lawyer, the strongest female role model, and one of the most compassionate people I have ever known. She demonstrated constantly throughout her life what true friendship and caring are. I miss her.

Katherine Knox Hastings
Law Clerk, 1980-81; 2006-7