SPEECH GIVEN BY ELAINE REPLANSKY, 
DAUGHTER OF DENNIS H. REPLANSKY, 

for the 

14th ANNUAL DENNIS H. REPLANSKY MEMORIAL AWARD 

JANUARY 25, 2011

It is hard to believe that the 14th Dennis H. Replansky Memorial Award is being presented this year. Just yesterday, I remember my father teaching me to shoot hoops on the driveway. He would patiently wait until I sunk a shot and encouraged me to “end on a good note”. I can recall him coming home from the office in a three piece suit, and then getting on all fours and giving me a horse ride to bed. That was my dad.

It was not until I was an adult that I understood the relationship my father had with others in the legal community. I never understood that he was an author and a mentor. Selfishly, I thought the lessons of truth, integrity, and humility were lessons he offered only to us. I am proud to know they spread much further than our home. I am proud to know he was as exceptional a lawyer as he was a father and husband. His rare, yet amazing ability to balance his life allowed him to be the lawyer and family man he was.

When I was young, visiting Dad at the office, or spending Saturday afternoon was awesome! (As long as I had plenty of high lighters and legal pads to keep me busy!) I recall his office being typical, a big desk, couch, end table, clock, and a Ficus. It was what you could not see that made his office so special. Toys and crayons hidden in cabinets….When you opened the closet in his office, there was a rush of dozens of fluttering post-it notes carefully taped to the inside of the door. Notes from children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, of other kid visitors to Blank Rome. He saved them all, in the hopes that when they returned, they would know that they had a special place in his heart.

Kevin C. O’Malley, mentored by my father, shared the following story with me about him:

“I was a first year associate and Dennis asked me to draft a Promissory Note for a major transaction. After devoting HOURS to that relatively simple task, Dennis
called me to his office to review my work. Well….I couldn't believe how much red ink appeared on my draft. Of course, Dennis told me that it was an EXCELLENT first try and he encouraged me to submit another draft to him the following day. However, even Dennis' encouraging tone couldn't fool me…..I KNEW that my draft wasn't very good and he obviously saw the disappointment in my face. I left Dennis' Office with my head hanging and slowly returned to my office.”

“I closed the door and fought back tears….I looked at the red-covered draft in front of me and concluded that I had no business being an attorney. I just wasn't smart enough and it was time to start thinking about another career before it was too late. I had just finished making plans for my new career when my office door burst open and Dennis rushed in. Dennis slid a file folder across my desk and said: "Take a look at THAT document kid." Inside the file folder was ANOTHER Promissory Note COVERED in even more red ink than mine! After I finished looking at that other draft Dennis told me that was it was a draft that HE submitted to Mort Newman two decades prior to that day when HE was a first year Associate!! It seemed incomprehensible to me that this legend…the senior partner sitting across from me could ever have drafted ANYTHING that required so many corrections.”

“After I read Dennis' two decade old draft and pretended that I wasn't fighting back tears of failure from MY work product Dennis looked me in the eye and with a kind encouraging voice told me: "We've ALL been there kid….just hang on, keep working hard and you'll be one of the best." I've never forgotten that day.”

“Since then, I've shown many young Associates the red-lined Note that I drafted for Dennis. I've watched hope come back into their eyes. There are many of us who owe their careers and their happiness to that very special man and gifted teacher.”

Just knowing there is an award named in my father’s honor for a person who has demonstrated … “superior legal talent, made unique contributions to and significant achievements within the business law community in the Philadelphia area, has a reputation for mentoring young attorneys, has demonstrated significant participation in and contributions to civic and charitable causes,”” and most importantly “been an example of honesty, integrity and professionalism,” reminds me that my father continues to have a special place in all of our hearts.

On behalf of my family, I would like to congratulate this year’s recipient of the Dennis H. Replansky Memorial Award, Jane Leslie Dalton.