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IN MEMORY OF GABBY HANNA: FACULTY NOTE

We are grateful to have had the opportunity to teach—and to learn from—Gabby Hanna. She truly was an extraordinary and gifted student. With her characteristic smile and her quick intellect, she brightened her classes in both senses of the word “bright.” She took on the challenges of law school with a cheerful sense of adventure and focused discipline. In class, Gabby did not always feel compelled to offer an opinion or comment on every issue, but when she spoke she always was worth listening to. She unerringly had something interesting and perceptive to share. She also listened closely, a quality that is less common than it should be, both in law school and in life. Professors sometimes try and find “safe harbors” in their classes—students who reliably can be counted on to provide a correct response when a classroom discussion gets bogged down with answers that miss the mark. Gabby was a “safe harbor” student, and she made both teaching and learning markedly more productive, engaging, and enjoyable.

As teachers, we take enormous pride in watching our students grow, observing them learn to grasp the essence of complex questions, organize their thoughts, forge smart and persuasive arguments, and engage in difficult conversations. We also see the time and effort students pour into their law school community, even as they commit to their studies, their families, and to advancing justice in the world. During law school, students learn who they are, and how they want to be in both their professional and personal lives. But some students seem to enter law school with their moral and professional compasses already pointing to true north. They come to us nearly fully formed and ready to be lawyers, right “out of the box.” Gabby was one of those rare students. Almost from the start, she was a leader, a thoughtful and impassioned advocate, a skilled writer, and the kind of person on whom everyone leaned. We therefore can take little credit for Gabby’s legal skills, never mind her compassion or her infectious laugh. It is almost certain that she improved us, rather than the other way around. But we are forever grateful to have been part of her life’s journey.

Professor Elizabeth Porter
Professor Jeff Feldman
December 8, 2022

