

REMEMBERING PROFESSOR EMERITA SUSAN ADLER CHANNICK '80



The California Western School of Law community is deeply saddened by the loss of one of our own, Professor Emerita Susan Adler Channick '80, who passed away earlier this month.

Originally from Ann Arbor, Michigan, Susan came to California Western later in life, while raising her two children. As a student, she thrived in the classroom and as a member of the Law Review and the Appellate Moot Court team. After graduating magna cum laude in 1980, Susan quickly found success as a private tax and estate-planning attorney.

When she accepted a one-year visiting professorship at her law school alma mater in 1987, she was not expecting her career to take the turn that it did. "But something fortuitous happened. I realized I loved teaching, and it was something I wanted to do as a career," said Susan, reflecting on her career in 2016. "It led to a terrific 29 years here at California Western." Susan was the first CWSL graduate to become a tenured professor at the school, and over the course of those 29 years, she established herself as a rigorous scholar, a dedicated professor, and a warm and supportive colleague.

Professor Channick spent her first thirteen years at California Western teaching Contracts, Remedies, Trusts, and Estate Planning, before making another ambitious career shift into Health Law. As a physician's daughter and the wife of a doctor, Susan said, "What really fascinated me was the intersection of health and law, but of course, I had no real experience or training in that field, so I decided to use my next sabbatical to get a Master of Public Health from Harvard with an emphasis on health policy. It turned out to be a great decision because it informed and enhanced the rest of my career at California Western."



Bringing her passion for inquiry to what was a new field at the time, Professor Channick became a trailblazer, creating the first health law concentration on the West Coast. She wrote prolifically and spoke around the country on issues relating to healthcare access, aging populations, healthcare reform, and cost containment. She served as the Co-Director of CWSL's Institute for Health Law Studies and Director of the California Western/UC San Diego Joint Master's Degree in Health Law and Policy. Professor Channick said in 2016, "California Western's early move to embrace health law has paid huge dividends because with our excellent program, we have an important niche in a rapidly expanding and increasingly critical area of law. It is great for students who are interested in health law because there are now so many career opportunities available after they graduate."

After her retirement, Susan continued to share her legal expertise with the community but was also grateful to have ample time to spend with her children and grandchildren. "I will certainly miss the wonderful students we have here and the fantastic colleagues I came to respect so much," said Susan about her retirement. "It's hard to explain how appreciative I am towards the school because it has meant so much to my life. I got my J.D. here and spent nearly three decades here as a professor. I loved every minute of it."

The California Western community is deeply appreciative of Professor Susan Adler Channick, an alumna and professor who has meant so much to us. She will be deeply missed.

Family and friends of Susan Channick have established an endowed scholarship in Susan's honor to support CWSL students that are balancing academic work and family obligations. If you would like to make a donation to this scholarship, **please click here** and select "The Professor Susan A. Channick Memorial Endowed Scholarship" from the drop-down list. If you prefer to donate by check, please make the check payable to "California Western School of Law" and write "Susan Channick Memorial Scholarship" in the memo. Checks can be made payable to and mailed to California Western School of Law.

As we honor the legacy of Professor Channick, we invite you to read the heartfelt tributes from her colleagues who had the privilege of working closely with her. Their reflections offer a personal glimpse into the profound impact Susan had on those around her and the enduring respect and affection she inspired throughout her remarkable career.

From Professor Emerita Floralynn Einesman

Susan was one of a kind. I don't think I have ever met anyone who had so many interests and had so much energy to pursue those interests. When I told people Susan's age at the time of her death, most people were shocked. Everyone thought she was 20 years younger than her actual age. That is a tribute to her energy, curiosity and stamina.

I greatly admired Susan's passion and fearlessness. She was always ready to shake up her life to pursue teaching opportunities whether in Malta, Prague, New Zealand, London, Ireland or San Francisco. In the middle of her teaching career, Susan decided to move to Boston to become a student again (no easy task for a long-time teacher) and pursue a Master of Public Health at Harvard. Following that accomplishment, she became a prolific author and frequent presenter on Health Policy, and particularly the Affordable Care Act.

She was an innovative and thoughtful teacher. She understood how to engage a large class or motivate a small seminar. Her inquisitiveness made her interesting and interested. She cared deeply about all her students, and in particular her anxious first year Contracts students who leaned on her for support and guidance.

But there was so much more to Susan than her academic career. She was smart, funny, determined, curious, and insightful. She loved the arts, including music, theater and film. She surprised and delighted me when she agreed to

see Bruce Springsteen on Broadway with me. (We both loved it!) She followed political issues closely and offered generous support to those she respected. She loved exercising and enthusiastically skied, hiked and played tennis. Later in life she became a Pilates aficionado. She loved to walk and for many years we trekked around Mission Bay and the San Diego Harbor, sharing our thoughts. In short, she loved life.

Susan was fiercely supportive of her female colleagues and helped all of us become better teachers, better scholars and better CWSL citizens. I will never forget that on the day I interviewed for a teaching position at CWSL, Susan generously met with me in the morning and briefed me on every person who I would meet during the day long process. (My full confession now that I am retired!)

Susan loved to travel, and she made sure she visited every corner of the world. —India, Canada, Thailand, Israel, Europe, Japan, Viet Nam and Cambodia. Just last year, despite health issues, she visited Africa with her family to fulfill a dream she had long held. I had the pleasure of traveling with Susan to several places. One of my proudest achievements was having Susan turn to me on the flight home from Vancouver and tell me, "Floralynn you tired me out this weekend." Never in my wildest dreams did I think I ever would be able to do that!



And finally, Susan loved being a mother and a grandmother. She kvelled with pride when discussing her children, Marc and Jen, and her grandchildren, Sophie, Eli and Charlie. She spent a great deal of time with all of them and she loved to regale her friends and colleagues with stories about all the kids and their varied achievements.

To me Susan was a patient mentor, a supportive colleague and most importantly, a trusted friend. She helped me through some rough times as I did with her. To quote Bob Dylan, "Susan, 'you're going to make me lonesome when you go.'" I already am.

Floralynn

From Professor Jessica Fink

Susan Channick was one of the first people who I met at California Western. Perhaps because I was assigned to teach in an area where she had expertise and where I had no academic experience at all (Remedies), she was assigned as my faculty mentor. It's hard to convey how much I learned from her over the years. From sitting in on her classes, to having conversations in her office, to the countless coffees and lunches and walks that we shared both before and especially after she retired, she had a tremendous impact on me and taught me how to navigate this job in so many ways. Sure, she is who I would go to when I had questions about the Remedies course material, and I took countless tips on teaching more generally from her. (Her students absolutely adored her.) But she taught me so much more than that: She taught me how to navigate the politics of an academic workplace (something that she did far more successfully than I do). She taught me about the importance of work/life balance. (She absolutely adored her children and grandchildren, and glowed every time she spoke about them). Watching her, I saw someone who could be both direct and diplomatic, and even the most difficult situations – from a contentious Dean search, to heated faculty meetings, to navigating student concerns with the appropriate amount of seriousness and perspective.

Susan taught me to write my exam and model answer before the beginning of every semester – a practice that I continue to this day, thinking of her every time I do, and silently thanking her every time I get to the end of a busy semester realizing that that work is already done. She was the first person I can remember encountering who used the word “thoughtful” not just to refer to someone who is kind and caring, but also to refer to someone who is a good, deep thinker. Susan was both kinds of thoughtful – someone who could help you puzzle through an intellectual problem, and the person who made sure to host a baby shower for me at work when I was pregnant with my first child.



Susan never took herself too seriously – she was absolutely brilliant, but you would not know that, at least not right away, if you were just having a casual conversation with her. Her intelligence wasn't something that she wore on her sleeve. But ask her a question about Health Law, or Contracts, or Remedies, and she would take whatever difficult concept you were asking about, explain it to you in terms that you could understand, and not make you feel silly for asking the question in the first place. She was brave and tough and I can't remember a single time that I saw her intimidated by anyone or anything. She made me feel OK, as a junior faculty member, showing up to a faculty meeting in jeans because there was a good chance she would be in her workout clothes.

It is almost impossible for me to think about my time at California Western, especially my early years, without Susan front and center. I feel like I can close my eyes and be back sitting in her office, with her showing me photos of her grandkids and us realizing that we've been talking for 45 minutes without getting to the issue that we intended to discuss because we went off on so many funny tangents. She had such a distinctive voice and speaking style – those who knew her well know exactly what I mean. I can still hear her in my head. She will be very, very missed.