

FOREWARD: CIVILITY AND PROFESSIONALISM IN THE LAW – THE ROAD TO JUSTICE

The Greenberg Family is delighted and honored that this edition of the *St. Thomas Law Review* is being published in honor of our father, Murray Greenberg. Although we thought of him as just our Dad, we know that he was beloved and deeply appreciated by generations of lawyers, law students, and others throughout South Florida for his contributions to our community and the Bar. This volume, with its emphasis on professionalism and civility in the practice of law, speaks to many of the issues that he cared about most and that he exemplified as a lawyer and a person.

By way of background, aside from a few years in private practice near the beginning and end of his career, Murray Greenberg spent his entire career at the Miami Dade County Attorney's Office, serving for most of that time as First Assistant and then spending a few years as County Attorney before he retired. In that capacity, he oversaw the growth of the County Attorney's Office into what is widely considered to be the premier municipal law office in the country. He did this by taking great care to hire lawyers who had not only the skill and intellect to represent the County well, but also the character, compassion, and integrity to bring honor to the office. Such strong hiring and focus on quality people allowed the County Attorney's Office to guide the County's Commissioners, Mayors, administrators, and citizens through periods of unprecedented growth, upheaval, opportunity, and challenge. Murray personally handled some of the most fascinating and important of these, including the development of bilingualism ordinances, dramatic reforms to the voting and apportionment processes, drastic changes in zoning and environmental laws, and – most headline-grabbing of all – the 2000 Presidential Election.

Murray always made sure never to lose sight of things that meant most: character, integrity and civility. Although he could certainly go to battle for his client in the courtroom, Murray remembered at all times that we as lawyers are a community, and he made sure to treat everyone, including opposing lawyers, with respect. He was also never afraid to speak bluntly and candidly with courts, clients, and counsel, as he knew that honesty and openness were far more important than anything else. By maintaining this sort of perspective, not to mention his ever-present sense of humor, Murray was able to stay happy throughout his fascinating career. This was, to say the least, a tremendous accomplishment.

As part of his commitment to the profession, no matter how busy he became, Murray always placed the highest emphasis on mentoring younger lawyers. He did this by guiding generations of attorneys at the County Attorney's Office – many of whom have gone on to high leadership roles of their own – and by spending four decades as an adjunct professor at St. Thomas and other law schools. Aside from his actual duties teaching classes in such topics as Local Government Law, Election Law, and State and Local Taxation, Murray made sure to integrate himself into the law school community, speaking on panels, working with students, and simply presenting himself as a resource for faculty. We are constantly amazed how many people come up to us and tell us that, even though they never worked with him, they viewed our father as a mentor based on contact with him through a class, a job interview, or some other casual encounter.

Through all of this, Murray managed to pull off another feat that is often impossible for many lawyers – staying balanced. Notwithstanding all of his professional accomplishments, our Dad cared about one thing above all else in life: his family, particularly his wife Phyllis, his two sons, and, later, his six grandchildren. No matter what, he never missed an important family event or even an unimportant one. Even before smartphones made all lawyers mobile, our Dad made it to every school event, every baseball game, and just about every single family dinner. Probably without intending to, he taught his sons a lesson that everyone should try to remember: being a great lawyer is nice, but being a great parent, spouse, and grandparent is paramount. Any lawyer who keeps that lesson in mind cannot help but be a balanced, civil, and happy lawyer. It is, perhaps, no surprise that both of his sons decided to enter the profession that he practiced so well and loved so much.

Our Dad always loved the St. Thomas University School of Law, and we know that he would have been deeply touched by this volume. We share that sentiment and thank the staff for this wonderful tribute.

With deepest appreciation,

Benjamin Greenberg and Gerald Greenberg