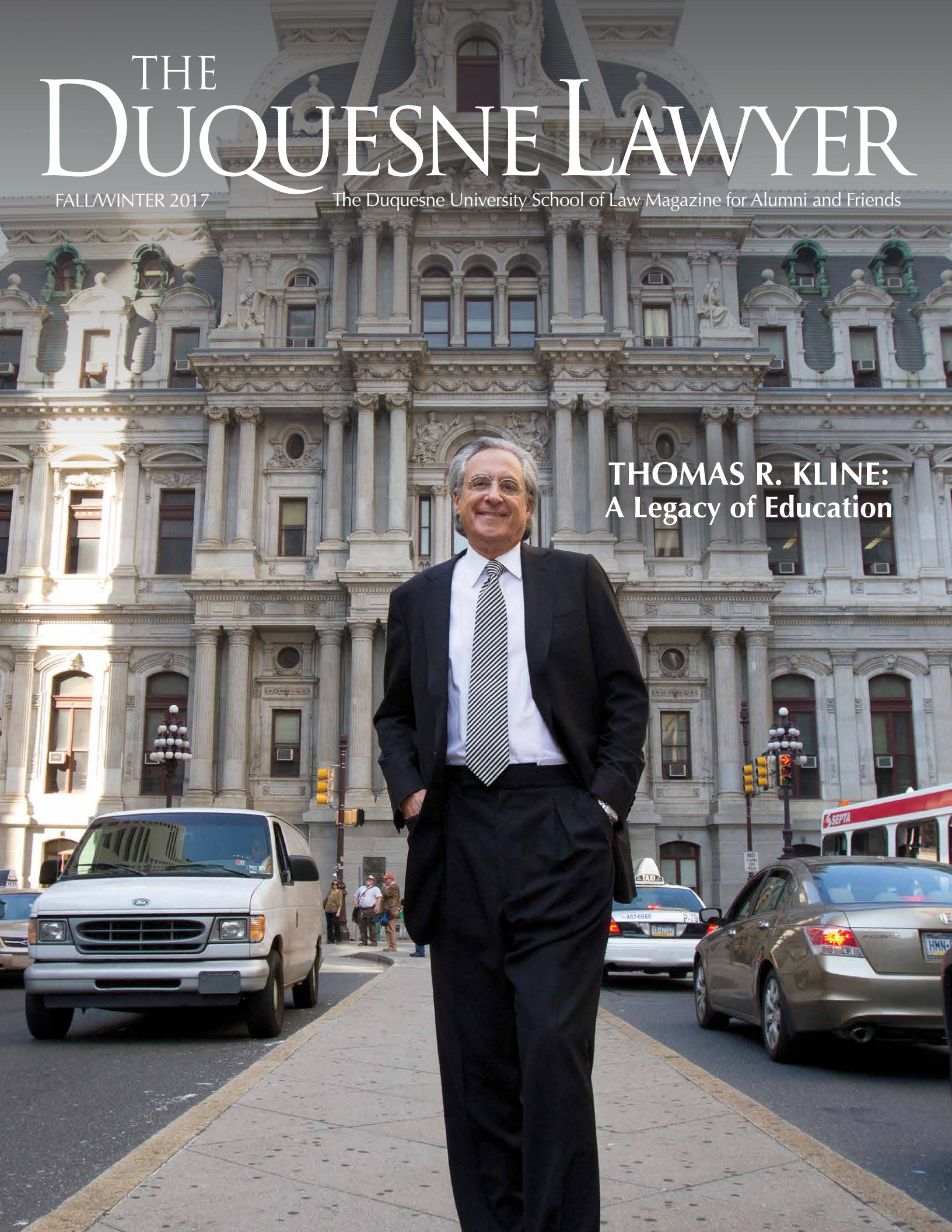


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**THOMAS R. KLINE:
A Legacy of Education**



THOMAS R. KLINE: A Legacy of Education

Largest individual gift to the School of Law establishes the
Thomas R. Kline Center for Judicial Education



Tom Kline, center, with Dean Maureen Lally-Green, President Ken Gormley and Justices of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania: David Wecht, Max Baer, Christine Donohue and Chief Justice Thomas Saylor.

“Duquesne has always been near and dear to my heart.”

— Thomas R. Kline, L’78

For Thomas R. Kline, L’78, teaching and education have always been inseparable from the legal profession. In addition to a lawyer’s responsibility to inform the judge and jury during a trial, each case is an opportunity to ultimately address a greater cause—to teach and inform society through litigation. Education, in its purest context, is an ongoing process in which everyone is potentially both teacher and student. When the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ordered mandatory continuing judicial education (CJE) requirements for the state’s judges in 2016, Duquesne President Ken Gormley was quick to act on the creation of the judicial education center he had already conceived during his years as dean of the Law School. Unsurprisingly, Kline was enthusiastic about the idea, and he offered a \$7.5 million gift toward its establishment. This combined effort resulted in the Thomas R. Kline Center for Judicial Education, which has now been officially unveiled at the Duquesne School of Law.

The Kline Center, established in partnership with the Judicial Education Department (Department) of the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC), is the first of its kind in the nation. Under the new requirements, each year judges must complete three credits on judicial ethics and an additional nine credits in other legal areas. Starting in 2018, at least four of those mandatory credits must be delivered by the Department. The Kline Center is assisting the Department in its development and delivery of free CJE courses that will fulfill that requirement. “We expect it to become a national model for judicial education in a new era,” President Gormley predicted. “We are deeply appreciative to our alumnus Tom Kline, who has been committed throughout his career to the highest possible level of legal education in our commonwealth, and has stepped up to support his alma mater with this history-making gift to create the Kline Center.”

Kline’s own education began in his hometown of Hazelton, Pa. He received his bachelor’s degree from Albright College in Reading, some 50 miles due south of Hazelton, in 1969. From there he went to Lehigh University in Bethlehem, about 50 miles northeast of Reading and 50 miles southeast of Hazelton. He emerged from this regional triangle with a master’s degree in American history (and finished the coursework and first draft of his dissertation toward a doctorate in American urban and social history).

In his first career-oriented position, Kline spent six years teaching social studies to sixth-graders. While this may seem like an inconsequential blip for someone on his way to becoming a celebrated trial lawyer, those six years remain a proud

foundation of Kline’s legal career. He is quick to point out that the fundamentals of education he experienced in the teaching of sixth-graders remain integral to his approach to the law and to the world. “Life, like law, is a continuing process of learning,” he states philosophically. But his professional ambitions stretched beyond the formal classroom. “I loved being a teacher, but I always wanted to be a lawyer.”

Armed with an impressive academic portfolio and a healthy amount of self-confidence, he began researching a wide array of law schools, but geographically he was pulled in a particular direction: He was attracted to Pittsburgh. Having grown up in the coal regions of Pennsylvania, he shared a kindred spirit with the Steel City. “At the time I wasn’t interested in coming to Philadelphia. That happened later. And, although I had applied to several law schools, Duquesne was *the* law school that I wanted to attend. No contest.”

After completing the formal application process, Kline decided to visit the campus. While this is not an unusual step to take, his approach was less than conventional. “Without an appointment, unannounced, I asked to see Associate Dean John Sciuлло and I told him, ‘This is where I want to go to law school.’



Kline speaks at the July 24 announcement of the establishment of the Thomas R. Kline Center for Judicial Education.

That was a day that changed my life because I was soon accepted to a school that trained me and many others extremely well for a career in the law.”

Graduating with the school’s Distinguished Student Award in 1978, Kline carries a deep sense of gratitude for his alma mater. “It’s important for everyone to give back to the community in a meaningful way. Duquesne has a long tradition of philanthropy, generosity and public service. I was fortunate to start my career at Duquesne with its mission of serving others.” After a clerkship with Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice Thomas W. Pomeroy, Kline joined James E. Beasley’s law firm in Philadelphia. Beasley, a nationally renowned trial lawyer for whom The Beasley School of Law at Temple University is named, served as a valuable role model for Kline inside and outside the courtroom during the early years of his career and as an inspiration for the eventual naming of Drexel’s Thomas R. Kline School of Law. At The Beasley Firm, Kline met Shanin Specter, who went on to become one of the great Pennsylvania trial lawyers and Kline’s best friend.

In 1995, Kline and Specter opened their own firm. Concentrating in catastrophic injury litigation, medical malpractice cases and whistleblower representation, Kline & Specter, PC, continues to be a preeminent law firm in the United States. Having already established himself as a trial lawyer of extraordinary talent during his time with The Beasley Firm, Kline has since achieved a magnitude of success where describing his achievements in superlatives has become routine. For instance, after the high-profile *Hall v. SEPTA* case in 1999, which resulted in a \$51 million verdict for a 4-year-old boy whose foot had been torn off by a subway escalator, the *Philadelphia Daily News* referred to Kline as “the Babe Ruth of personal injury litigation.” While that assessment might have reflected some local bias, the same court case led *The National Law Journal* to rank him as being among “Ten of America’s Top Litigators.”

During a career that now spans four decades, Kline has won hundreds of seven- and eight-figure jury verdicts and settlements. Among the more recent cases, in 2013 Kline won a \$42.9 million verdict—one of the largest medical malpractice verdicts in Pennsylvania history—for a child born with cerebral palsy who had received substandard medical treatment at a Philadelphia hospital. That same year he won an \$11.6 million settlement for a former University of Pennsylvania student who was a paraplegic as a result of falling through a raised skylight/ventilation opening at an off-campus residence. In 2015, Kline obtained a \$2.5 million

award for a young Alabama man in the first case to go to verdict among thousands filed against Janssen Pharmaceuticals, the maker of an antipsychotic drug linked to the growth of female breasts in boys and male adolescents.

Such accomplishments have led to his being among the most recognized attorneys in the profession. He was the 2016 recipient of the Michael A. Musmanno Award by the Philadelphia Trial Lawyers Association, an honor awarded to the person who best exemplifies “the same high integrity, scholarship, imagination, courage and concern for human rights” as the late Pennsylvania Supreme Court justice. He is on the *National Law Journal*’s “Winning Hall of Fame” as one of fewer than 100 lawyers selected for compiling “significant bench or jury trial verdicts and who has a record of success over many years.” He has been honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award by *The Legal Intelligencer*, a recognition representing “the figures who have helped to shape the law in Pennsylvania ... and who have had a distinct impact on the legal profession in the state.”

In 2015 Kline was elected to the prestigious American Law Institute, founded in 1923 and considered the leading independent organization working to clarify, modernize and improve the law in the United States. He is a past president of the Inner Circle of Advocates, the most exclusive trial lawyer group in the country, described by *The Washington Post* as a “select group of 100 of the nation’s most celebrated trial lawyers.” Super Lawyers has honored Kline from its inception in 2004 through 2016 as the No. 1 ranked lawyer among 65,000 lawyers in Pennsylvania, an accomplishment unmatched in any other state by any other lawyer. In 2015, *Lawdragon*, describing Kline as “the leading personal injury plaintiffs’ lawyer in Pennsylvania,” included him in its first collection of “The Lawdragon Legends,” a special group of “truly select lawyers” who have made the elite annual guide 10 times since its founding in 2005. And these accolades are just a few in an ever-growing ledger.

As his career portfolio testifies, Kline has represented clients in not only some of the most publicized courtroom victories but also some of the most influential—and that’s key to understanding the inner drive of this celebrated trial lawyer. He is able to obtain justice for his clients while also effecting positive change on the legal system and society as a whole. For Kline, true justice rises above verdicts and settlements. There are vital components of purpose and compassion that transcend each individual case.

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— Duquesne President Ken Gormley

“I know that I would not have been able to achieve what I have accomplished for clients that I represented—and hopefully I have influenced significant changes in the way that government and industry and physicians and others work in the process—without my start at Duquesne.”

— Thomas R. Kline, L’78



Tom and Zac Kline

“What gets lost in the shuffle is the cause,” Kline explained. “Personal injury cases are by definition about achieving both money to compensate and money to deter—compensatory and punitive damages. But the cause is much larger and the goal is much higher, and I’ve set my sights on those goals. My goal has consistently been ‘what can I do to make the world safer or better through the individual who I represent in any particular case.’ Recognizing an obligation first and foremost to an individual client with the additional goal of achieving a larger measure of justice, of reform, of safety, of other benefits to society has become a very important part of my practice.

“I’ve been able to champion the cause against fraternity hazing through the tragic death of Tim Piazza; I’ve been able to champion the cause against sexual violence through the case of a man known as Victim No. 5 in the Jerry Sandusky case; I’ve been able to champion the cause against illegal police shootings through the case of a young man named Phil Holland. In each one of those cases, just to pick three examples, I have been able to champion for an individual but also for a greater cause. In each case there is a unifying theme. The devastation in these calamities starts with the need for help and the healing of families. Part of that healing can be the participation in the process of litigation, the results of which ideally provide a greater good for society.”

This same visionary approach has marked Kline’s dedication to philanthropy, which in turn has strengthened his commitment to education. On Sept. 17, 2014, Kline announced a \$50 million personal gift to the law school at Drexel University, now named the Thomas R. Kline School of Law. “In a world where the discourse is coarse, and where incivility tragically appears to become the norm, we all need to use all of our energy to rise up against it and change it. That’s why education from the first day of law school to the last for a judge on the bench is vital.”

This viewpoint was a natural step to Kline’s becoming involved with the project that would ultimately become known as the Thomas R. Kline Center for Judicial Education. “I was convinced that the project proposed by Ken Gormley was a perfect fit for me because my philanthropy has been aimed at

both ends of the spectrum: Teaching law students who are not yet lawyers and teaching judges who have achieved professional distinction and honor.”

The Kline Center will assist the Department to provide an innovative, high-level judicial education to more than 600 Pennsylvania jurists across the state, a concept that especially caught Kline’s attention. “The idea of Duquesne not going it alone but being a leader appealed to me because, in addition to other educational concerns, I have a great stake in the legal education provided by the Kline School of Law. Here was an opportunity to create a consortium of every law school, led by Duquesne.”

Kline is particularly adept at defining the mission of the new Kline Center in light of the CJE requirements established by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. “The law is dynamic. As the world changes, the law must of necessity adapt. Judges by definition need to know the law because they are the ones who ultimately apply the law. Knowing and understanding the law—how it intersects with changing technology and a changing world—is a core principle behind the establishment of the Kline Center. In order to function in a world of changing technology, science and medicine, judges need to consistently educate themselves individually and also as a formal group.”

For Kline, the continuing education of the judiciary is vital to nourishing the higher causes of the legal system. There is a cycle of growth and healing that depends on there being no weak—i.e., uneducated—connections. “We mustn’t lose sight of civility and the necessity of having a fair and an open dialogue among lawyers and with the judiciary, which translates into the good of society. The very people I have represented for four decades depend on a judiciary which is rock solid, well-grounded and educated to make sure that justice is not only applied but efficiently sustained.”

The location of the Kline Center is an example of the synergistic coming together of the need, the solution and the donor. “I can’t overstate the influence that Ken Gormley has had on this project,” Kline said. “Ken knew that it would interest

me because he knows of my career in the Pennsylvania courts. I have appeared in hundreds of courtrooms in front of hundreds of judges. I know the stake my clients have—and every lawyer’s clients have—in a well-educated and honorable judiciary. And there is no better place than my alma mater for launching this worthy project. You can initiate basic judicial education and have the box checked, or you can offer something unique and innovative. This project contains both of the latter components.”

School of Law Dean Maureen Lally-Green, who served as a judge on the Superior Court of Pennsylvania for 11 years, shares Kline’s confidence in the location. “We are thrilled that Duquesne University School of Law has been given this extraordinary opportunity to facilitate public service of the judicial branch in our commonwealth at the very highest level. We express our deep thanks to our distinguished alum Tom Kline, and to the Pennsylvania Courts, for proposing this important position of trust in Duquesne’s Law School.”

Kline’s long time law partner and best friend, Shanin Specter, offers this assessment of his friend and the Kline Center: “Tom sees that we can’t have a great legal system without great lawyers and that’s why we need to do all we can to support American legal education. He’s done that. And Tom sees that we can’t have a great legal system without great judges and that’s why this center right here and right now serves such an important purpose.”

Tom Kline’s story reads like a carefully constructed novel with high Hollywood mini-series potential, and it’s far from over. He has maintained an upward trajectory that has taken him to heights of the sort few in the legal profession can match. Yet his feet remain firmly planted on the ground. His academic roots are one explanation for this phenomena. “Duquesne has always been near and dear to my heart. I know that I would not have been able to achieve what I have accomplished for clients

that I represented—and hopefully I have influenced significant changes in the way that government and industry and physicians and others work in the process—without my start at Duquesne. Duquesne gave me a bedrock and a solid foundation to begin a law career.”

But the primary source of grounding can be found closer to home. “Lawyers struggle with the balance between their professional life and their family life. I have two grown terrific children, my daughter Hilary Merson, a long time, committed preschool teacher, whose spouse Jordan is not only my son-in-law but also a brilliant lawyer and law partner at Kline & Specter; and Zac Kline, highly regarded and a successful playwright who is also a graduate of The Kline School of Law and a member of the bar. I have three beautiful grandchildren, Parker, Cole and Dylan. The center of our universe is our family. We tragically lost my late wife Paula to cancer in 2004. We were married 32 years and she was an exceptional spouse and mother. I currently have a beautiful and accomplished woman in my life, Brittney Schoenbeck. We have been together for seven years. She is a Kline School of Law graduate who, like Hilary, holds a master’s degree in early childhood education.

“Together we are a family who share the same ideals and values. We spend every minute we can together. Family is at the core of all of our existence. I have spent much of the past four decades representing people who have lost a lot in life, and there’s an object lesson in what I do: In your own personal life you need to always take stock and always take good measure of what is of paramount importance. And I always come back to the basic proposition that what is ultimately most important are the people you love.”

The Thomas R. Kline Center for Judicial Education is a testament to a legacy of education fueled by compassionate service—a perfect reflection of the Duquesne School of Law.

McNally named interim director of Kline Center

Attorney Joy G. McNally has been named interim director of the newly established Thomas R. Kline Center for Judicial Education of Duquesne University School of Law.

McNally has had the distinction of serving under several of Pennsylvania’s most distinguished jurists. She served as a law clerk to the late Pennsylvania Supreme Court Chief Justice Ralph Cappy, Jr., as well as to former Chief Justice Ronald D. Castille and current Justice Debra M. Todd. Additionally, she clerked for Judge Maureen E. Lally-Green (now Duquesne Law School dean) on the Superior Court of Pennsylvania and (earlier in her career) for the late Judge Carol Los Mansmann on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit.

Prior to her clerkships in state and federal court, McNally practiced law for 10 years at the firms of Cindrich & Titus, Cohen and Grigsby and Buchanan Ingersoll. She earned a Juris Doctor, *magna cum laude*, in 1983 from the University of Pittsburgh, where she was a member of the Order of the Coif and was topics editor for the *Pitt Law Review*. She earned both a Master of Arts in special education and a Bachelor of Science in psychology from the University of Pittsburgh.

Most recently, McNally taught as an adjunct professor in the Duquesne University School of Law, where she also served as a special advisor to then Law Dean Ken Gormley and assisted him in editing his latest book, *The Presidents and the Constitution: A Living History* (2016).

