Steve Block: A Teacher to Us All

What are people likely to say about a colleague who has been a part of the law school for only a little more than a year before his death? They might remember him as a witty observer of people and events, as an attorney with knowledge and insight in the law, and as a teacher regarded with affection and respect. All of these things have been said about Steve Block and all of them are true. These same comments might be made of many of the bright young lawyers who have taught at this school. What distinguished Steve, and what caused him to have the impact that he did upon me, was that Steve had the courage to be open about the fact that he was gay and to challenge all of us with the implications of a fact that most of us are likely to forget: that many of the people with whom we deal in our everyday lives—students, colleagues, attorneys, clients and others—are silently living in our world without acknowledgement by others of their own perspective and the way in which the legal system of which we are a part at best denies their existence and at worst deprives them of basic human rights. I am grateful to Steve for having been a part of me and of this institution and for permitting us to embark upon a road of understanding that has many more miles ahead. I am saddened that Steve will not be here to guide us further along our way.

Laura Cooper
Professor
University of Minnesota
Law School