



A TRIBUTE TO NORMAN O. SANDERS

by Walter R. Simpson

I lost a loyal partner and mentor and the UMKC School of Law lost a devoted graduate and friend with the passing of Norman Sanders on August 11, 2008. Norman graduated from the UMKC School of Law in 1957 and had a successful practice for over fifty years. I became associated with Norman when I graduated from UMKC School of Law in 1967. We were together 41 years; partners for 38 years. Over that entire time, we never had a disagreement that was not quickly resolved over a cup of coffee or a beer.

When I joined the firm in 1967, Norman had already acquired a reputation as a skilled and effective trial lawyer. He received the Lon O. Hocker Trial Lawyer Award in 1965 and continued to successfully litigate both plaintiff and defense cases. He was recognized for outstanding skills as a litigator by the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association and received the Dean of the Trial Bar Award in 1993.

Upon joining the firm, I soon became aware of Norman's loyalty to the law school and his belief that the alumni have a duty to give back to the institution. Living his beliefs, he served as President of the Law Alumni Association in 1971 and President of the UMKC Law Foundation for two years, 1975-1977. He was president of the Foundation during the fund drive for the new law school building and was instrumental in raising the necessary funds. In 1983, he was elected as the Outstanding Alumnus of UMKC in the field of law. Over the years, he participated in seminars and other programs at the law school

No tribute to Norman would be complete without mention of his tireless efforts on behalf of the De La Salle Education Center. Today it is a model for alternative education. Years ago, I witnessed Norman and co-founder Godfrey Kobets struggling to keep the school open just one more week. Norman served on the Board of Directors of De La Salle from 1971 until his death.

Much more could be said about Norman Sanders' achievements in the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association, his activity in politics, his support of Christ the King Church and his life with his wife of 55 years, Shirley, and their family. A lawyer summed it up nicely when he said to me recently, "Norman always tried to do the right thing."

We will all miss him.