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Passing of Sally Harding, Dean of Students, Emerita

New York Law School



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SALLY HARDING
DEAN OF STUDENTS, EMERITA
1966–2024

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Dean of Students, Emerita**

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Dear NYLS Community,

I write with profound sadness and a heavy heart to let you know that Dean of Students, Emerita, Sally Harding tragically passed away earlier today.

In December 2021, Sally was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, commonly known as ALS. Our deepest condolences go out to Sally's loving family, including her spouse Thomas FitzMaurice, and their two children Katie and William, all of whom gave her exceptional care at home since her diagnosis. Like Sally, they will always be part of the NYLS family.

As you know, for 133 years, the NYLS community has been one of groundbreakers. And, Sally will be forever remembered as one of them for her unmatched impact on countless students, and for creating the welcoming and supportive community that makes NYLS unique. Her dedication and courage must always serve as an inspiration to our community.

Sally served NYLS with distinction for 32 years, retiring in 2023 as Dean of Students. She served her entire time in the Office of Student Life, where she devoted all of her energy and efforts towards the success and well-being of the School's extraordinarily diverse student body. She held every position in the Office of Student Life, beginning as Administrative Assistant and rising all the way to lead the Office in 2016. I was proud to appoint her as Dean of Students in 2020.

Sally provided a support system to countless students, acting as a shoulder to lean on, a confidant, a mental health counselor, and an indispensable advisor on how to succeed academically and professionally. She was largely responsible for creating the warm, welcoming, and inclusive community that many students point to as their reason for attending NYLS, and what they appreciate most from their time on campus. In recognition of her dedication to the students, many student organizations honored her over the years, including the Black Law Students Association, the Latino Law Students Association, the Student Bar Association, and the Public Interest Coalition.

Throughout her tenure as an administrative leader, Sally also served as an essential sounding board, advisor, and partner to all of her colleagues, particularly me. We all relied upon Sally for her unparalleled understanding of the School's students in order to establish the most advanced, innovative, and exhaustive set of student services of any law school in the nation. After her diagnosis, she continued to tirelessly champion students during one of the most challenging times in the School's history during the COVID-19 pandemic. She was cherished friend to countless alumni, administrators, and faculty. She was kind, authentic, and a genuinely good person in every way.

In recognition of her extraordinary service, we bestowed upon her the President's Medal, the Law School's highest honor, at our 2023 Commencement last May. Sally's daughter Katie accepted the award on her mother's behalf, while Sally watched the ceremony via livestream. At that time, Sally wrote a message to her beloved NYLS Community. It read:

Message from Sally Harding, Dean of Students, Emerita

I offer my congratulations to the graduating Class of 2023. I started working at New York Law School over 30 years ago. From the beginning, I knew that New York Law School would become my second home.

My colleagues quickly became my friends, and together we supported and educated thousands of students. The students then became part of our New York Law School family as well.

The Office of Student Life has a long-standing reputation of comfort and trust. Students knew they could come to us for academic and moral support. In my position, I had the privilege of working closely with the entire student body.

In February of this year, I retired from New York Law School. However, despite my ALS diagnosis, I will remain a member of the NYLS family.

I thank you for the honor bestowed upon me today. New York Law School will always have a place in my heart.

And, indeed Sally will always have a place in our hearts!

During Commencement, we presented Sally with a **book of wonderful memories and pictures of her** and her colleagues. If you would like to send a message to Sally's family, please e-mail studentlife@nyls.edu and we will create a memory book of your messages for her family.

Peace,
Dean Crowell

Anthony W. Crowell
Dean and President
Professor of Law
New York Law School



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