The Real Thing

By Lisa Ohrin ’94

At the end of the 2011-2012 academic year, Diane Hoffmann stepped down from her position as Associate Dean for Academic Programs. She served in that position for an unprecedented 15 years, during which she also oversaw the Law & Health Care Program’s rise to national prominence. She will be returning to the faculty to teach and focus on her scholarly research.

She may be tiny, but she is mighty! Diane Hoffmann is a never-ending source of energy, ideas, and enthusiasm for the work she does. She commands a room, controls a meeting, and motivates a research assistant like no other. The breadth of her expertise boggles the mind.

Diane’s vision for the Law & Health Care Program expanded on the groundwork set by Karen Rothenberg in the early 1990s and boosted the program into one of the most comprehensive and respected programs in the country. Students who earn certificates from the program enter the work force on the same level as third-year health law associates.

What a wonderful gift to give a new graduate—the ability to perform his or her job confidently and competently! There is a theme that runs through the highlight reel of Diane’s career and life. She is genuine in a way that you recognize instantly. She is not interested in you because of what you can do for her. She cares about your success. She motivates you to achieve so that you will know the feeling of accomplishment. She shines a spotlight on all that is special about you—whether you write a brilliant paper, design an innovative course as an adjunct professor, or are a thoughtful friend. Diane does all this by really getting to know you, which is rare these days, where the pressure to perform, get a job, or earn tenure are so great that we don’t waste time making deep connections.

I am privileged and grateful to have called Diane, at various points in my life, my friend, colleague, mentor, cohort in mischief, idol, adventure travel buddy, support system, and the best audience (ever!) for my jokes (I told you–she really gets people). And that Diane—she makes a mean PowerPoint. Ask anyone.

“Through my years in both medical and legal training, Dean Hoffmann is the only person I have ever met who is extremely bright, yet down to earth and who can work efficiently on 10 projects at once, while keeping a welcoming open door to any student with an idea or interest. She is truly an amazing person who helped make law school one of the best experiences of my life.”

—Keith A. Shebairo, MD, Esq. ’10

“DIANE HAS GROWN with the institution—and the law school has grown because of her. She has become one of the nation’s premier authorities on the ethical and policy issues of health care law. The health care law program that Diane has built reflects those interests, as well as her high standards of excellence.”

—Dean Phoebe A. Haddon

Lisa Ohrin has practiced health law for 14 years in a variety of settings and specialties. She is currently Deputy Director of the Division of Technical Payment Policy within the Center for Medicare Management at CMS.