

# SALUS POPULI

— THE ALUMNI MAGAZINE OF THE THOMAS R. KLINE SCHOOL OF LAW OF DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY —  
— FALL 2022 —

A portrait of Thomas R. Kline, an older man with white hair and glasses, wearing a dark suit and tie, smiling. The background is a brick wall.

## MEET THOMAS R. KLINE

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by **Ken Gormley,**  
**President of Duquesne University**

One of the most memorable days of my presidency came on Sept. 7, when I was privileged to announce—in front of a packed ballroom filled with law students, faculty, staff, alumni and VIPs—that our prominent alumnus Tom Kline, L'78, had made a transformational gift of \$50 million to the Law School—the largest gift in Duquesne University's 144-year history. The School has been renamed the Thomas R. Kline School of Law of Duquesne University.

It's a true honor for any university president to name one of the institution's flagship schools after a generous philanthropist who wishes to advance the mission and upward trajectory of that school. In this case, however, the privilege is even more profound and personal. In naming the School of Law after Tom Kline, we are honoring (at once) the past, present and future of this special institution.

Tom Kline truly embodies the Duquesne story, the mission of our School and the Spiritan ideal of service to others that first built the Law School in 1911. In more than a metaphorical sense, Tom's journey, from working-class roots in Hazleton, Pa., to high school teacher in his hometown, to stand-out at Duquesne Law School (where he earned the Distinguished Student Award), to nationally acclaimed trial lawyer in Philadelphia, recognized for working tirelessly to achieve justice for ordinary citizens and his unyielding commitment to the highest standards of ethics, is the story of our Law School itself.

In the 15 years in which I've gotten to know and deeply admire Tom, he and I have discussed at length his

desire to give back meaningfully to the Law School that made his extraordinary career possible. His vision of a worthwhile legacy is simple: to give present and future generations of law students and graduates the same opportunities that he has enjoyed in order to enrich the legal profession that he cares so deeply about.

There is no question that the transformational gift Tom has made to his alma mater will do just that. Some of the funds will be used to create new scholarships that will help talented students—including those who otherwise would have insufficient financial means—to reap the benefits of an education from this distinctive Law School. Other funds aid in the recruitment and retention of talented Law School faculty; the expansion of our prized Bar Preparation program; the re-imagining of clinics that aid the underserved; the continued emphasis on public service as a critical aspect of myriad legal careers; and to make possible a continued rise in the rankings and reputation of the Law School, which makes the degrees of all graduates more valuable.

Make no mistake about it: This gift is a game-changer. It is among the largest gifts by any individual to any law school in the United States. It speaks volumes that Tom Kline has chosen to direct the fruits of his life's work to the Law School where he got his start. It models the remarkable spirit and sense of integrity that has made our Law School—and our storied list of graduates—so great. Tom Kline and his exemplary career are products of our mission; and now, he honors that mission by advancing the Law School for a new era. No matter what area of law practice or civic engagement future classes of







our students embark on, they will bear the imprimatur of the gold standard of skill, ethical practice, high ideals and commitment to justice, as graduates of the Thomas R. Kline School of Law of Duquesne University. The Spiritan founders of the University, and the early legal pioneers who built the Law School in modest quarters near the courthouse in downtown Pittsburgh 111 years ago, would be justly proud that their vision of integrity and professional excellence has taken root so beautifully to produce this moment when their dreams will be realized on a grander scale.

Even among those who have heard of Tom Kline's stellar reputation as one of the top trial lawyers in the nation, many do not know the personal story that led him from humble roots in the hardscrabble coal country of northeastern Pennsylvania, to Duquesne Law School, to the City of Pittsburgh where he shaped his goals as a young lawyer, to the courtrooms across Pennsylvania where he brought his Duquesne training and honed his skills in the service of others. As we celebrate this historic moment in the evolution of Duquesne University and its Law School, Tom Kline's story is one worth sharing.

## Early History and Duquesne Law Training

Born in December 1947, Tom Kline grew up in the Pennsylvania anthracite coal region, the son of a dress factory manager whose grandparents emigrated to America from Lithuania. As a boy, "Tommy" worked summers slinging bundles of fabric from machine to machine at Rival Dress Co. He learned to play the accordion, playing chords in Rosebud's All Accordion Band, which performed in choice venues including Moose Clubs, Polish wedding halls and local parades. (Tom realized he was not destined to be a musician, yet he became a lifelong fan.) Having developed an interest in bowling from his mother,

Jeanne, he joined a league at the Hazleton Jewish Community Center. In school, he enjoyed a wide array of studies and was elected class vice president at Hazleton High School.

When working with his hands, his skills were more limited. Tom returned from shop class and presented his dad with a funnel he had made, and his father, Isadore, turned to him and said with a wry smile, "It's clear you're going to have to make your career with your head, rather than your hands."

Tom enrolled at nearby Albright College, in Reading, Pa., where he studied liberal arts. He also listened to albums on his portable phonograph, favoring Bob Dylan, Simon & Garfunkel, the Beatles, and his favorite, Leonard Cohen. Regularly, his parents would send him letters and postcards filled with words of encouragement. As the Vietnam War raged overseas, Tom became interested in political science and pre-law. He earned a solid score on the Law School Admission Test and graduated from Albright with honors (he would later receive the school's Distinguished Alumni award).

Although his father, "Izzy," urged him to attend law school, Tom opted to accept a job from Freeland School District—next to Hazleton—teaching sixth grade social studies and putting law school on hold for six years. His salary as a teacher in 1969 was a modest \$6,300. Still, Tom relished the opportunity to stride into his classroom wearing a wide paisley tie, thick leather belt and aviator glasses, especially on days he taught Pennsylvania History and Geography, a class that covered the founding by William Penn and the evolution of all 67 Pennsylvania counties. Still intent on advancing his own education, Tom enrolled in a graduate program at Lehigh University, traveling over the mountains to take classes on evenings and weekends, studying American history with an emphasis on 19th- and early 20th-century social and urban history. For his master's thesis in 1971, Tom wrote a biographical study of Justice Robert C. Grier, the only state court judge in Pennsylvania (specifically, from

Allegheny County) who went on to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court. He thereafter completed all of the Ph.D. course work leading up to his final dissertation. Before entering the final stage of graduate studies, however, he decided that his true calling was to attend law school.

Tom already had begun dating his future wife, Paula Wolf, who grew up in Mount Carmel, close to Hazleton. She was full of energy and equally adventurous. Paula had just graduated from Boston University and was beginning her own teaching career in the Hazleton School District when the couple married in late 1972. They both loved their work in their respective classrooms. Yet, Paula urged Tom to pursue his dream of attending law school; she was prepared to work full time as an elementary school teacher to support both of them. Paula's stepfather, Leonard, advised Tom that he should consider his ("Lenny's") own alma mater—an excellent school in Pittsburgh, he insisted, called Duquesne University.

Soon thereafter, Tom and Paula made the trek across state to check out this

Tom relished the opportunity to stride into his classroom wearing a wide paisley tie, thick leather belt and aviator glasses, especially on days he taught Pennsylvania History and Geography.

place that had received such a trusted endorsement. Tom walked into the Law School in Rockwell Hall and met with then-Associate Dean John Sciallo, a friendly figure who worked alongside Dean Ron Davenport. Sciallo quizzed the applicant; the two immediately



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clicked. Both came from working-class backgrounds. Sciullo was impressed by Kline's intellectual acumen, his easygoing nature and his laser-like focus on earning a degree—not just from any place, but embossed with the name of this particular Law School. Three days later, Kline received a letter in his mailbox back in Hazleton, accepting him into the program at Duquesne Law School. Paula and Tom taught their final classes of the year, then climbed into their 1975 red Oldsmobile and drove across the Pennsylvania Turnpike, over the mountains and through tunnels, to their new home in Pittsburgh, where Paula had landed a job as a reading specialist at Hampton School District. They found a one-bedroom apartment in the newly built Cricklewood apartments on the edge of Duquesne's campus, a stone's throw from the Law School, and settled into their new life.

Fall of 1975 was an auspicious time to be starting law school. The movie *Paper Chase* had recently made a splash in theaters and had struck fear into the hearts of entering law students across the country. As if to mimic the role of the film's terrifying protagonist, Professor Kingsfield, Tom's Legal Process instructor, Professor Cornelius Murphy, admonished students that if they received an average C grade in his class, they should consider themselves lucky. Tom's favorite class turned out to be Torts, taught by a young professor named Frank McClellan (who would go on to marry noted Duquesne Law alumna Phoebe Northcross Haddon, later Chancellor of Rutgers Camden University). Influenced by Yale Law School Dean and later federal appeals Judge Guido Calabresi, McClellan emphasized in Torts class the notion that the legal system had to achieve fairness and justice in seeking redress for plaintiffs who had suffered injury and other forms of harm through no fault of their own. The notion would stick with Tom.

One of Tom's unlikely classmates who joined his group of study partners was Donn Clendenon, age 40, who had played baseball for the Pittsburgh Pirates and the New York Mets



Phoebe Northcross Haddon L'77 and Ronald Davenport.

and was now pursuing a law degree. Clendenon would often visit Tom and Paula's Cricklewood apartment to lay on the couch with books spread across the floor, peppering Tom with questions about cases. (Clendenon admitted that even though he could stand in front of a crowd in an enormous baseball stadium and swat home runs without feeling nervous, he found law school thoroughly intimidating.) Tom, on the other hand, thrived on the work. By the end of First Year, he had excelled in every course. His final grades put him just two hundredths of a point shy of the cutoff necessary to be eligible for the Duquesne Law Review. Disappointed but not one to dwell on near misses, Kline inquired about writing for the Law School magazine, *Juris*. Even though the position of editor was usually reserved for a 3L, the *Juris* advisor was none other than Associate Dean John Sciullo, with whom Tom had bonded. Recognizing this student's natural writing talents, Sciullo swiftly appointed Tom editor, and Tom poured himself into that publication for the



next two years. He even published an article, “Robert C. Grier: The Forgotten Judge,” dusting off his old Lehigh master’s thesis and working hard to make *Juris* one of the best law school magazines in the country.

## Mentors, Practical Experiences and Career Choices

Kline’s upper-level courses included Constitutional Law, taught by Dean Ron Davenport; Estates and Trusts, taught by Associate Dean Sciuillo; U.C.C., taught by Professor Ray Sekula; and Appellate Practice, which required appellate moot court arguments (which he enjoyed). Eager to apply law to real issues and cases, Tom landed a summer job with Stephen Zappala Sr. (later Chief Justice of Pennsylvania) who had a large practice as a solicitor for many municipalities, including Allegheny County, and was a Democratic political powerhouse.

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As an outgrowth of his experience with Zappala, Tom enrolled during his 3L year in Municipal Corporations, taught by former City Solicitor and later Allegheny County Judge Francis Barry. Drawing upon on his summer work and his experience as a public school teacher, in that course Tom wrote his final paper on the Public Employee Relations Act of 1970, otherwise known as Act 195, as it applied to the bargaining rights of public school teachers



When Tom graduated in June 1978, he was chosen by the faculty to receive the Distinguished Student Award, in recognition of academic excellence and meritorious service to the Law School. It was the greatest honor imaginable for a young man from Hazleton with no background in law before he had arrived.

Thanks to a good friend from his graduating class, Ann Strickland, Tom learned of a clerkship opening with Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice Thomas J. Pomeroy Jr. During law school, Tom had a goal of clerking for the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. In his mind, it represented a blending of high-level analytical work, legal writing and practical applications at the highest level.

Pomeroy was himself a towering figure in the legal community. A founder of the Kirkpatrick, Pomeroy, Lockhart and Johnson firm (now K&L Gates), he had been initially appointed by Gov. Raymond P. Shafer and was Republican by registration. Yet Justice Pomeroy was scrupulously nonpartisan and dedicated to the highest standards of the profession. As luck would have it, the Justice was working on a major opinion involving Act 195. Tom’s earlier paper on the topic now made him the perfect choice to join the Justice’s chambers.

Located in the William Penn Hotel downtown, it was a magical opportunity. Tom shared a converted hotel room with Ann Strickland as their joint office, and joined senior clerks Fred Thieman and Robert Hoelscher, who had graduated from Pitt and Harvard Law, respectively. That year, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court decided over 400 cases. Justice Pomeroy authored nearly 50 of them, with the full engagement of his clerks. Tom found the work as an appellate law clerk to be exhausting, exciting, energizing and inspirational. It opened his eyes to the prospect of making his own mark on the legal profession in a big way.

Legal jobs were scarce in the late 1970s. For that reason, even before his clerkship, Kline had accepted a position at a small law firm in Pottsville, Pa., a half-hour away from Hazleton. Tom and Paula packed up and moved there, remaining true to Tom’s promise to the firm, even though his starting salary barely reflected a pay raise from his law clerk wages or his teaching salary. Tom endeavored to fit into this small practice. He was encouraged to join the Rotary Club and other organizations so that he could attract clients. He and Paula had their first child—a baby, girl, Hilary, in March 1979.

But it all didn’t seem right for Tom or Paula. Soon thereafter, Paula posed the question: “What, exactly, are we doing here?” In many ways, she said, they were back where they had started, living a life similar to the one they had left in Hazleton. Paula encouraged her husband to “think big.” She reminded him that he had spoken effusively about the powerhouse plaintiffs’ firm in Philadelphia led by the legendary trial lawyer James E. Beasley, whom he had known from Beasley’s Supreme Court appearances. Why not aim high and give it a shot? Tom agreed; he mailed a letter to Beasley with a copy of his resume. A week later, he sat in the office interviewing with Jim Beasley, himself, who offered the young lawyer a job on the spot. Returning home, Tom



announced to Paula: “We’re moving to Philadelphia at nearly double my salary and we’re leaving Pottsville!” Paula poured champagne at dinner that evening to celebrate.

## The ‘Babe Ruth’ of Trial Lawyers

Tom’s legal career swiftly blossomed as he gained invaluable courtroom experience and learned firsthand from the master trial lawyer, Jim Beasley. Yet there were setbacks in store for him. The year after the couple’s move to Philadelphia, Tom’s father, Izzy, died of a rare form of leukemia. It was a major blow. His mother felt lost and alone. Tom and Paula made trips to Hazleton as often as possible.

In the meantime, in October 1984, the couple had their second child, Zachary Wolf Kline, his middle name Paula’s maiden name. Raising a family and building a career was all-consuming. The work pace was breakneck, but Tom’s successes in the courtroom began mounting. In early 1995, having established his bona fides as one of the top litigators in the state, he took a chance and decided to join forces with Shanin Specter, with whom a friendship had blossomed at the Beasley firm.

On Jan. 9, 1995, Tom sent his first letter on his new law firm stationery to his mother, who was enthusiastically following her son’s career moves. He wrote: “Dear Mom—My first letter on my new firm stationery is for you. ... Our new venture is exciting, and I’m getting used to the change. Our new space is on the top floor of the building and will be dramatic when completed. ... Hope you visit the new office as soon as possible.”

To his eternal sadness, Tom’s mom died four months later of metastatic breast cancer. She was buried on Mother’s Day 1995, in a simple graveside ceremony in the plot beside her beloved husband, Izzy, on a hillside overlooking Hazleton.

Although she never got to visit her son’s office, he now dedicated his work to her memory and her abiding belief in his ability to use his skills to help others.

As founding partner of a law firm that swiftly gained a reputation of excellence, Kline established an incomparable record of courtroom victories, sometimes against impossible odds. In one front-page story, the *Philadelphia Daily News* described Kline as “the Babe Ruth of personal injury litigation.” The paper highlighted Kline’s victory in the celebrated Hall v. SEPTA case in 1999, which resulted in a \$51 million verdict for a 4-year-old boy whose foot was torn off in a subway escalator,

but more important than the money, Kline was able to get SEPTA to fix an entire escalator system in the Philadelphia subways. That dramatic victory, among others, led to Kline’s selection by The National Law Journal as among “Ten of America’s Top Litigators.”

Kline went on to represent, in 2012, Victim No. 5 in the Pennsylvania State University child sexual abuse matter, known to the world as the Sandusky case. After the case settled, he became a national spokesman for the victims, appearing in newspapers and television coverage that reached more than 100 million viewers. A few years later, he became a national advocate against fraternity hazing in the Timothy Piazza/Penn State hazing incident.

Kline was equally as committed to his family as his career. Each morning, Tom greeted Paula with a cup of piping hot Swee-Touch-Nee tea with two ample scoops of sugar, before he headed off to work. On weekends, the couple loved taking Hilary and Zac into New York City by train, to catch Broadway productions like *Bye Bye Birdie* and *Annie Get Your Gun*. Zac was developing a love for writing and theatrical productions that would lead him to study dramatic writing in college. The family would regularly gather after events at Brasserie Restaurant at 53rd and Park, munching on baguettes and hot salty fries, as they talked about the latest shows.

On Tuesdays, Paula enjoyed filling her car with flowers at a local wholesale distributor and creating beautiful arrangements throughout the house, for every occasion, or just to brighten their home. She remained a teacher at heart and generously supported her children and Tom at every turn. He was grateful

each day that he was able to pursue his career with such fervor because Paula was such a devoted mother, wife, caretaker and partner.

Yet life was not always fair or rational. In late 2002, doctors diagnosed Paula with an unusual form of breast cancer. Although it seemed to go into remission, by 2003 the situation had worsened. Refusing to allow her illness to disrupt their lives, Paula insisted on maintaining normalcy.

By the following year, however, normalcy was impossible. Soon, Tom was helping to navigate his wife in a wheelchair and to take her for chemotherapy appointments. It was a sad and difficult time.

Paula died on Veterans Day—Nov. 11, 2004. Tom was at her side, heartbroken. She was only 54. At the funeral that Sunday, at the Society Hill Synagogue, Hilary and Zac spoke

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first, sharing words about their mother's beautiful spirit and her sweet love of family and countless others.

Tom stood up last for the eulogy. He thanked Paula for 11,640 beautiful days together; for their children; for being his compass in all things. "I wouldn't be the person I am without you," he said, looking over hundreds of friends and family members. Then, choking back tears, he recited the words from their wedding song, *Something*, written by Beatles guitarist George Harrison.

With that, Tom clutched the lectern and tearfully thanked God for taking Paula quietly in her sleep.

For months, after the funeral and burial, time stood still. Tom and his children took comfort in each other during this emotionally difficult new period, sharing meals, spending increasing time together and building a new bond. Fortunately, his work in the courtroom and in representing the most vulnerable clients only gave him strength. He threw himself into an emerging national litigation against Merck & Company involving the drug Vioxx. The Wall Street Journal dubbed Kline as a "key player" and the litigation settled for \$4.8 billion.

In 2017, Kline negotiated a historic settlement for the City of Philadelphia to pay \$4.4 million to a take-out food deliveryman shot by plainclothes

officers who mistook him for a criminal suspect. This settlement was among the largest of its kind in the country and it led to meaningful new regulations and training protocols for plainclothes police to help prevent such tragedies from happening in the future. It was typical of the prototype Kline developed. His mantra: "Sometimes good can come from something bad."

Kline was also instrumental in establishing a \$265 million settlement program for passengers injured and families of those who died in a massive train accident that made national news. As lead attorney for the Plaintiffs Management Committee of the federal Amtrak 188 multidistrict litigation in 2016, Kline oversaw the largest such settlement in railway history. At the conclusion of the litigation, U.S. District Judge Legrome D. Davis, who presided, observed in his written opinion that Kline's leadership in bringing the matter to a just conclusion was "exceptional."

In October 2019, now at age 72, Kline made even bigger national news when he won an \$8 billion punitive damages jury verdict against Johnson & Johnson Corporation. Among the largest judgments in U.S. history, the Philadelphia jury agreed with Kline's powerful closing arguments that Johnson & Johnson and its subsidiary, Janssen Pharmaceuticals, should be

held accountable for producing and marketing the drug Risperdal. This anti-psychotic drug, whose off-label use the drug companies promoted for children, was linked to the abnormal growth of female breast tissue in boys, known as gynecomastia, which produced dangerous health complications.

## A Mountain of Accolades

Kline has appeared on more than 1,000 television news programs and every major national TV network, as well as CNN, ESPN and MSNBC, and on shows including *World News Tonight*, *Nightline*, the *Today* show, *Good Morning America*, *Anderson Cooper 360* and *Piers Morgan Tonight*. He has been featured or quoted in hundreds more newspapers and magazines, including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Newsweek* and *People*.

A frequent lecturer at law schools, medical schools and continuing legal education programs, he taught classes at institutions including Temple University Beasley School of Law, the National Judicial College in Reno, Nev., the University of Pennsylvania Law School and Jefferson Medical College, and countless courses in continuing legal education.



### The late Honorable Max Baer, L'75 Chief Justice, Pennsylvania Supreme Court

*"The breadth of impact Tom Kline has had on the profession is immense. He is truly a leading light in the legal profession, not only in Pennsylvania but nationally. He is also a model of integrity and ethics in all that he undertakes. It is wonderful that law students and future generations of graduates at the Thomas R. Kline School of Law of Duquesne University will now carry with them that same commitment to the highest standards of excellence and ethics. It's a banner day in the history of this special institution."*





“I take every opportunity I can to remind myself where I came from.”

For 19 consecutive years, from 2004 until the present, Tom Kline has been honored as the No. 1 attorney in Pennsylvania by the independent rating service Super Lawyers. His accolades are numerous, and he has been chosen by Best Lawyers as one of the nation’s top lawyers every year since 1995. He’s been named to the *National Law Journal*’s “Winning Hall of Fame,” one of fewer than 100 lawyers in that elite group, for achieving “significant bench or jury trial verdicts and who has a record of success over many years.” Lawdragon, an influential legal media publisher, listed Kline as one of the top 500 lawyers in the United States. More impressive than the accolades were the deeds: Kline achieved seven- and eight-figure jury verdicts in each of five decades, going back to the early 1980s and extending into the 2020s.

Kline’s professional affiliations are equally impressive. He is a member and past president of the Inner Circle of Advocates, described by *The Washington Post* as “100 of the nation’s most celebrated lawyers.” He’s a member of the American College of Trial Lawyers and the International Academy of Trial Lawyers, which limits its membership to an elite group of attorneys in the United States recommended by their peers and trial judges for outstanding skills and abilities, combined with character and integrity. Kline has also been elected to the prestigious American Law Institute, considered the leading independent organization working to clarify, modernize and improve the law in the United States.

One of the honors that is most meaningful to him, however, was being the recipient of the Michael A. Musmanno Award, the highest honor conferred by the Philadelphia Trial Lawyers Association. It is bestowed upon the person who best exemplifies “the same high integrity, scholarship, imagination, courage and concern for human rights” as the legendary, late Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice (whose papers are housed at Duquesne University’s Gumberg Library).

A natural teacher, Kline even harnessed the dramatics of his courtroom performances to produce and perform in a one-man seminar, *Trial As Theatre*, which is presented to professional audiences for continuing legal education credits.

“I think some of the most important skills that I learned were in a classroom teaching sixth-graders,” Kline remarked to one interviewer. “A lawyer in a courtroom is a teacher if he or she is doing the job correctly.”



From left to right: Thomas R. Kline, President Ken Gormley, Chief Justice Emeritus Thomas G. Saylor, Honorable Maureen Lally-Green.

A consummate professional, Kline is licensed to practice in Pennsylvania and New York. He is also admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court, the Third Circuit Court of Appeals and other federal courts.

In 2014, Kline donated \$50 million to Drexel University in Philadelphia, the town where he made his home and pursued his storied legal career, to rename its new law school. Several years later, in 2017, wishing to make an impact at his own alma mater, Kline made a \$7.5 million gift to Duquesne Law School to create the Thomas R. Kline Center for Judicial Education, then the largest individual gift in our Law School’s history. Pathbreaking in scope and concept, the Kline Center at Duquesne works with the Administrative Office of the Pennsylvania Courts—under the auspices of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court—to help judges across the state receive a first-class judicial education, to make them better jurists and public servants. The Kline Center delivers continuing judicial education courses and seminars to more than 600 trial and appellate judges throughout the commonwealth, in partnership with the eight other law schools in Pennsylvania, creating a national model of collaboration in judicial education.



## A Gifted Life and Legacy

The legal profession has been good to Kline, as he freely admits. His office on the top floor of a 19-story building near Rittenhouse Square offers a spectacular view of the city below. In that office, Kline has kept his well-worn baseball mitt from childhood years, along with a ball signed by Red Sox slugger Ted Williams that his dad caught in Yankee Stadium. On the wall hangs a typed letter his dad sent in 1969 that reads, in part, “I don’t want to get mushie or anything but what more can I say than I know you are good and I know Mother and I will always be proud of you.”

Kline later reflected: “I take every opportunity I can to remind myself where I came from.”

During trials, Kline still immerses himself in the case, preparing day and night. He keeps a notebook next to his bed so he can scribble down notes as his mind grinds through all of the evidence he plans to present to the judge and jury. In these intense times, he allows himself to indulge in two of his favorite snacks: soft pretzels and Necco Wafers.

“Every time I stand up to give an opening speech I know someone’s future is riding on what I do,” he told one reporter. “Those are big stakes.”

However, he remains a down-to-earth person who enjoys relaxing with friends and family. Kline is widely recognized as an avid Philadelphia sports fan who has been seen next to the visitors’ bench at nearly every Philadelphia 76ers game for decades. He has continued to bowl since his teenage years as a league bowler, but more importantly, he has become a relentless 10-miles-per-day walker.

When he visits Pittsburgh, he likes to enjoy a few slices of pizza at Milano’s, down the hill from Duquesne. He also enjoys sneaking off with his son, Zac, for as many Bob Dylan concerts as they can squeeze into impromptu road trips.

His family continues to take center stage. His daughter, Hilary, a preschool teacher for 17 years with a master’s in early childhood education, now raises her own young kids—Parker, Cole and Dylan. Tom’s son, Zac, is a playwright living in New York City. Having earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the Tisch School at NYU, and a law degree at Drexel Kline Law School, Zac is pursuing the dream that he first imagined during

those train trips to catch Broadway shows and plays with his mom, dad and sister.

And, Tom still has daily contact with his sister, Lois, who lives in San Francisco. They go back and forth nightly, sharing not only memories but also their joint love of NBA hoops. As Tom likes to say, “I will never forget that she is the one who taught me how to ride a bicycle the day she let the bicycle go without the training wheels on. She is the one who set me on my way.”

Tom cherishes memories of the past; yet he, too, has moved forward. In loving memory of Paula, he dedicated the Paula Kline Learning Center at the Society Hill Synagogue in Philadelphia, where she was a teacher. While Tom still lives in downtown Philadelphia, not far from his office, he’s added an apartment in New York City and a place to relax on Long Beach Island, N.J., so he can be close to his children and three grandchildren.

So, Tom acknowledges, he feels grateful every day for his blessings. And he puts his family and those he loves at the top of that list.

He also keeps a yellowed piece of paper under the glass on his desk, as a reminder of a line that his partner, Shanin Specter,



### Honorable Christine Donohue, L’ 80 Justice, Pennsylvania Supreme Court

*“As the daughter of a coal miner and as someone raised in Carbon County, Pa.—not far from Hazleton where Tom Kline grew up—I have a special appreciation for Tom’s remarkable life story. Not only did he emerge from humble origins to become one of the great trial lawyers in the nation, but he did so while exhibiting compassion and an unyielding commitment to achieving justice for all individuals, regardless of their station in life. For that reason, he stands as a wonderful model for the students and graduates of this storied law school who will now follow in his footsteps.”*



shared with him from a Yom Kippur sermon when they first opened their law firm. The single sentence reads: "It's better to be kind than to be right." Tom reflects on those words each morning as he begins a new day.

Perhaps more than any other mementos of his past work as a lawyer, he treasures the letters of thanks he has received from families seeking to lead a decent life and achieve a measure of justice. One of these clients was Linda McAlister, the mother of a baby who was catastrophically injured due to a hospital medication error in 1991. More than 20 years later she wrote:

Tom, please always remember that, because of you we were able to spend every day with Johnathan. We were able to take him to any doctor anywhere. Had the money to take the very best of care of him. We are forever grateful. When having a bad day, know that and feel proud.

Love, Linda

This letter hangs on the wall in Kline's office and reminds him of the reasons he committed himself to his profession in the first place.

## A Magnificent New Chapter in Our Law School's History

When the School was founded in 1911, it sprang into existence only as a result of bold leadership. Father Martin Hehir—the third president of our institution—wanted to transform what was then Pittsburgh Catholic College into a fully accredited university. He would need to add a law school and other graduate and professional programs to do so. Yet the Pennsylvania Legislature, at the time, would not have permitted the word "Catholic" to appear in the name of an approved institution of higher education. So, the Spiritan priests leading the institution chose to change the name to Duquesne University—after the Marquis Duquesne, a Canadian governor who

brought Catholicism to the Pittsburgh region during the French and Indian War.

Making this change was both brilliant and forward-thinking. It led to a dramatic new future, not just for the newly formed School, but for the entire University of which it became a flagship. Likewise, 111 years later, this once-in-a-lifetime gift by alumnus Tom Kline is changing the trajectory of the School. It will allow more resources to be deployed to enhance the faculty, assist students and provide new curricular and clinical opportunities in the School. It will allow the School's star to continue to rise in the national constellation, both immediately and for generations into the future.

Over the past decade, Tom and I had many dinners at an all-you-can-eat Brazilian steakhouse in Philadelphia—

Tom, please always remember that, because of you we were able to spend every day with Johnathan. We were able to take him to any doctor anywhere. Had the money to take the very best of care of him. We are forever grateful. When having a bad day, know that and feel proud.

Love, Linda

Fogo De Chao—brainstorming about ways he might contribute something of lasting value to his alma mater. Tom insisted that whatever it was, he wanted to make it meaningful for the legal profession, and advance Duquesne's mission of ethics and public service. Initially, Tom carried out that goal by creating the Kline Center for Judicial Education, in 2017. More recently, I returned to the idea of Tom naming the School, a topic that we had discussed at length over 10 years ago, when I served as Dean. This time, he became more serious about the idea. Tom reiterated his deeply felt desire to do something transformational for the School and provide students with tools and inspiration to achieve successes like those he has achieved in the practice of law.





Ronald R. Davenport, past Duquesne Kline Dean and the first Black dean of a major American law school, is pictured with Tom Kline on the day of the announcement of Kline's gift.

When Tom came to speak last year, in 2021, addressing a packed hall in the Power Center ballroom, he told our students: "I cherish that card in my wallet that allows me to practice law. I belong to a profession that is necessary. We are the guardians of democracy, the backbone of our nation, and we are all in this together."

Thereafter, we spoke again, and he soon made up his mind. As Tom conceived of it, his dream in leaving behind a true legacy, on this earth, was to produce succeeding generations of

Pennsylvania lawyers who were trained with the highest level of skill, integrity and ethical grounding. Naming the law school where he got his start was the ultimate way to make that happen. With this transformational gift, he will have accomplished his goal both in the eastern part of the state (with his initial gift at Drexel Kline Law School) and now in the western part of the state (at Duquesne Kline Law School, where he began his professional journey).

Although both of these law schools will maintain their total independence

and carry on with wholly different identities and traditions, there will be opportunities for both to collaborate. Already, Dean April Barton has engaged in extremely fruitful conversation with Dean Daniel Filler at Drexel Kline Law School to plan positive collaborations on initiatives that will further serve our profession and promote ethics, leadership, character, and justice – qualities that Thomas R. Kline exemplifies. Thus, like other inter-university collaborations that we have fostered around the globe, this unique relationship will only broaden the reach of our School's influence and further enhance our prominence.

## Salus Populi Suprema Lex

From the moment I first encountered Tom Kline, I recognized he was an extraordinary person—one of the most impressive lawyers and human beings I'd ever met. From humble roots, he's gone on to become one of the most successful and highly respected lawyers in the United States. More impressively, he has built his career by representing ordinary citizens and a wide range of clients in the most difficult, complex cases that most



### Dean April Barton Thomas R. Kline School of Law of Duquesne University

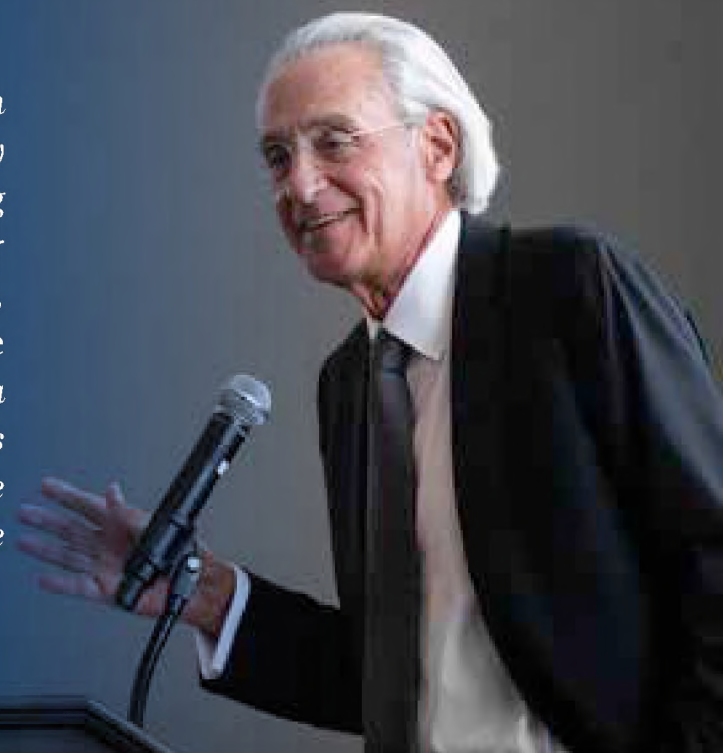
*"Working with Tom Kline has been an inspiration and absolute joy. He is an exemplary embodiment of our distinct mission. He understands the history and value of Duquesne's commitment to educational access and our focus on the law as a tool to ensure the welfare of all people. This is an extraordinary moment for Duquesne, certainly, as well as for the entire legal community. Linking Tom Kline and Duquesne permanently in the name of the Law School will empower future lawyers for generations to come."*



—□—

*...knowing Tom is a huge Bob Dylan fan, I told him that I wanted to play what I believed was Dylan's best song ever. It wasn't Mr. Tambourine Man or Blowin' in the Wind, I insisted. Rather, it was a ditty called ... the Duquesne Whistle. It's a contagious tune about a train bearing that name that blows its whistle, right on time, as it takes the narrator back to his home, the place where he belongs.*

—□—



would shy away from—because he cares so deeply about using his considerable talents to accomplish justice. His groundbreaking cases have helped to shape the law in trial and appellate courts across the country. They have helped to produce corporate, institutional and governmental change for the good of his clients, the legal profession, and our system of laws and justice.

At the dedication of the Kline Center in 2017, knowing Tom is a huge Bob Dylan fan, I told him that I wanted to play what I believed was Dylan's best song ever. It wasn't *Mr. Tambourine Man* or *Blowin' in the Wind*, I insisted. Rather, it was a ditty called ... the *Duquesne Whistle*. It's a contagious tune about a train bearing that name that blows its whistle, right on time, as it takes the narrator back to his home, the place where he belongs. As we made this historic new announcement, I told Tom that the Duquesne whistle was calling his name, now in a bigger way than he could have ever imagined

when he sat in Torts and Municipal Corporations classes in Rockwell Hall as a law student.

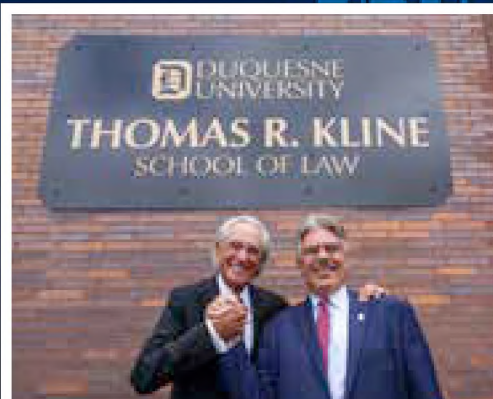
We're incredibly grateful that the Duquesne whistle has summoned him back to his alma mater, where he got his start—this time in the most significant way possible, to create the Thomas R. Kline School of Law of Duquesne University. It's hard to imagine a more appropriate name to affix to this storied Law School. Tom Kline has devoted his entire career and all of the talents at his command to the service of others, particularly those needing the most basic guarantees of justice and fairness. That is the essence of what Duquesne University has always stood for. Now, he has given an incomparable gift to future generations of Law School graduates, who will forever carry his shining imprint of integrity and excellence with them.

When Tom Kline was inducted in 2019 into the Century Club of Distinguished

Duquesne Alumni at Duquesne—the highest honor the University bestows on graduates—I told the assembled alums and dignitaries that he is the true embodiment of the Duquesne story. The motto of the Duquesne Kline School of Law, affixed to the wall just inside the building's entranceway, is *Salus Populi Suprema Lex*. Loosely translated from Latin, that means: "The Welfare of the People is the Highest Law." That is what the School has stood for, for the past 111 years. It is also precisely what Tom Kline has stood for, during 44 years of legal practice, using his Duquesne degree to advance the cause of others and society more broadly.

The Spiritan founders would smile down on this transformational development. Now, they would agree, the best is yet to come. ■









S E P T E M B E R 7 T H

2022

