Raymond G. Feldman, ’45:
1922–2016

Last fall, Ray Feldman, ’45, sat down with Susan J. Curry, Director of Public Interest Law and Policy, to talk about establishing new public interest programs in his hometown of Tulsa, Oklahoma. “Anyone can volunteer . . . students probably already tutor, coach, or babysit,” Feldman said. “But Law School students have a unique set of skills and knowledge that can be used to help people and communities in need.”

Raymond Guy Feldman died January 30, 2016, at the age of 94. A well-respected Tulsa attorney, Ray and his wife, Nancy, AB ’44, JD ’46, were lifelong volunteers and philanthropists, dedicated to the Law School and its public interest program.

When Ray and Nancy, who passed away in 2014, created the Raymond and Nancy Goodman Feldman Fund in 1975, it initially supported faculty research. Several years ago they altered the purpose to support students and graduates pursuing public interest work, after realizing how quickly and profoundly student culture, and the general student attitude toward public service, was changing.

From that original gift, to the establishment of the Feldman Pro Bono Directors Fund in 2013, which provides annual support for the manager of the Pro Bono Services Initiative, the public service program at the Law School has grown by leaps and bounds. The number of participants pledging pro bono legal service, and the hours of service rendered annually, continues to increase each year. Students have since created new signature pro bono projects, which serve a wide range of worthy causes, from low-income tax filers and Syrian refugees to veterans in need of wills and powers of attorney.

“Ray recognized one very critical guiding principle of the profession: that law students are privileged to have the educational opportunity to acquire legal training, skills, and abilities, and with that privilege comes great responsibility,” said Curry.

“By keeping in touch, Ray saw the Law School continue to respond to a changing world. He was impressed with how it evolved to meet the needs of students who wished to serve others and needed financial assistance in securing their own education,” said Ray’s niece, Barbara Geffen.

Geffen continued, “Ray and Nancy hoped to establish a legacy that would continue to give, so that the next generation of students would perpetuate Ray and Nancy’s generosity in their own individual way of giving to society.”

Ray, the son of Latvian immigrants, was born in Tulsa. He attended the University of Tulsa and the University of Oklahoma before serving in World War II. He came to Chicago, where he met Chicago native Nancy Goodman, also a Law School student. They married in 1946 and made their home in Tulsa.

The Feldmans, who were inducted into the Tulsa Hall of Fame for their contributions to the city in 1997, were true philanthropists. Ray used his legal training to serve the many causes in which he believed, including the Tulsa chapter of the American Red Cross, the Oklahoma Civil Liberties Union, the Oklahoma Human Rights Commission, and the United Jewish Federation of Tulsa, as well as other arts and humanities causes.

“Ray lived a long and amazing life! His many achievements and contributions are truly remarkable and will live on as his legacy. I am grateful to him for having made the Law School a better place. He will be missed,” said Thomas J. Miles, Dean and Clifton R. Musser Professor of Law and Economics.

Ray is survived by his two sons, Richard Feldman and John Feldman, five grandchildren, and one step-grandchild.