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Jim Flynn called friend, confidant

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With the passing of my friend Jim Flynn last week, the world lost one of the “good” ones.

I first met Jim in the late 1980s when I was the assistant director of housing at WKU. Most mornings, my coworkers and I would make a pilgrimage to the Faculty House where we would attempt to solve the world’s problems over coffee and perhaps an occasional donut.

Jim was not a regular at these get-togethers, but the quality of the conversation always seemed to be heightened whenever he was in attendance. He instinctively knew how to provide the appropriate perspective on virtually any issue or situation.

Over the years we worked together on a number of assignments. Although gifted as a faculty member, Jim’s natural leadership ability made him invaluable as an administrator. His knack for generating consensus was legendary; resolving conflict was his specialty.

He could also be very persuasive. Once, when he grew tired of chairing a particular committee, he suggested I take it over. And although initially I had no desire to follow in his footsteps, somehow I found myself agreeing to do it after a ten minute conversation with Jim.

More than once I suggested he run for political office. Heaven knows Washington could have benefited from his innate talent for finding common ground when everyone seems stricken with tunnel vision.

I had lunch with Jim shortly after his diagnosis. He was characteristically matter-of-fact about his prospects without being cynical or nihilistic. When my time comes, I only hope I can face the inevitable with the same dignity and grace that characterized his entire life.

Yes, Jim Flynn was a friend of mine. But he was also a mentor, confidant, role model and trusted advisor. He was always there for me and I already miss him immensely.

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