

BYU Law Review

Volume 2010 | Issue 2

Article 6

5-1-2010

A Tribute to Michael Goldsmith

David Sonenshein

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.law.byu.edu/lawreview>



Part of the [Legal Biography Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

David Sonenshein, *A Tribute to Michael Goldsmith*, 2010 BYU L. Rev. 351 (2010).

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.law.byu.edu/lawreview/vol2010/iss2/6>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Brigham Young University Law Review at BYU Law Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in BYU Law Review by an authorized editor of BYU Law Digital Commons. For more information, please contact hunterlawlibrary@byu.edu.

A Tribute to Michael Goldsmith

*David Sonenshein**

When I first met Mike Goldsmith, he was a young, up-and-coming Associate Professor at Vanderbilt Law School whom I was recruiting to join my Law Faculty at Temple Law School. Mike was well known to a number of my colleagues, particularly those who specialized in the study of organized crime, and to me from his years as a successful prosecutor in the United States Attorney's Office. Throughout the recruitment process, I got to know Mike very well and we became friends. I was disappointed when logistics prevented him from joining our faculty: our loss was BYU's gain.

A few years later, our Evidence mentor, Professor Irving Younger, died a truly untimely death and Mike asked me to "replace" Professor Younger as his co-author of the Principles of Evidence casebook. Principles of Evidence was a ground-breaking volume which for the first time joined trial and appellate decisions, rules, commentary, questions, and transcript excerpts from famous historical trials, inviting students to learn not only the law of Evidence but its practice. Knowing that my teaching methods focused as much on practice as doctrine, Mike knew that we could work harmoniously.

We proceeded through a number of editions, but the book always reflected the choices that Mike had made early on which demanded that students leave his class more prepared to be practicing lawyers than when they arrived. Mike and I shared the view that legal education is more than a graduate education, but indeed, a professional course of study, knowing that unless a student or lawyer could understand an evidence problem in the heat of the courtroom, his or her education is incomplete.

Later, when we worked together on a Teacher's Manual for the Casebook, my starting point was to read Mike's personal teaching/lecture notes. That experience, more than any other, gave me the opportunity to observe, albeit secondhand, Mike's love of teaching, his commitment to his students, his classroom sense of

* Professor of Law, Beasley School of Law, Temple University.

humor, and his relentless pursuit of making each of his students interested and proficient in the Evidence that lawyers practice. I wish I might have attended some of those classes.

A word about Mike as a father. Because Mike's children lived with their mother in my neighborhood in suburban Philadelphia, I was well aware of the heroic and successful efforts Mike made to remain their loving father, traveling East regularly despite numerous battles with his own disabling illnesses. The strain of that travel had to be significant, but I know its necessity was never in question.

I will miss Mike as a colleague, co-author, and friend. I know his colleagues at BYU will as well, and my thoughts are with Mike's family. They should all be very proud of an extraordinary, though too short, career.