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A MAN IN FULL

*Robert B. Ahdieh**

More than a decade ago, when I shared with friends and colleagues that I was leaving Washington for a faculty position at Emory, many advised me to read Tom Wolfe's *A Man in Full*—for its insights into the character of my newly adopted home. And I dutifully did so. Looking back, though, I ended up learning far more about character (and even Atlanta) from the “man in full” I was honored to work alongside than I did from that reading.

Over the course of my all-too-short association with Professor David Bederman, I successively came to know him as a colleague, as a scholar, and as a husband and father. I count myself immeasurably lucky to have learned from each of those facets of the man who he was.

I first encountered David as one of many new colleagues at Emory. While I felt welcomed by all, David took the demands of collegiality more to heart than most. Few days passed when David would not stop by my office at some point to say hello and ask how I was doing. With sincere curiosity, he inquired what I was working on, offered relevant suggestions and pointers, and wished me well. He was genuinely warm and gracious—characteristics that never failed him, even as his health did.

That warmth and grace, however, did not obscure David's appreciation—and expectation—of excellence. His encouragement and guidance thus helped enhance both my scholarship and teaching. Minimally, David's tremendous success on each count set a high bar for one to clear. Even more than that, though, I count his counsel to have been invaluable to my development as scholar and teacher. Offered in a firm yet encouraging manner, his advice and insights will always remain with me.

As to David Bederman as scholar, it is hard to know where to begin. On its face, his record of productivity—12 books, 125 articles, and more than 80 public lectures—is quite striking. It says even more, though, that his pace was only increasing in the final years of his life—at a time when debilitating illness would have left a lesser man with more than ample excuse to rest on his laurels. Consider, thus, that during the six years following his initial

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diagnosis—and the prognosis of mere months to live—David produced more work than many scholars might produce in a lifetime.

It was from this impressive record that I took my first lesson from David as a scholar. As much as the production of scholarship *is* a discipline, it equally *requires* discipline. And I can think of no one who exemplifies the latter as did David. Leaving for the weekend, he would report his plans to complete the last chapter of his next book; en route to Florida for a short visit, he would carry a stack of exams to grade, as well as his collected research for a new article; heading home for the night, he would mention a book he planned to finish. Like most, I wish I had learned as much from David on this count as I might have. For now, his discipline will remain my polestar.

Beyond that discipline, I learned from David the capacity of a truly *interdisciplinary* scholar. At heart, David was at least as much a historian—and even political scientist—as a student of law. He thus brought to his study of international law a deeply grounded, and deeply felt, appreciation of the ways in which legal doctrine might best be understood through the lens of history, politics, and the social sciences more broadly. Given the power of that insight and the resulting commitment to interdisciplinary analysis in David's work, here too I have sought to emulate—as much as I have been able to manage—David's tremendous success.

Finally, over the course of my friendship with David—and especially in the last years of his life—I came to appreciate David's character as devoted and loving husband to Lorre, and father to Annelise. Too often, the demands of one's professional and private life are set in sharp juxtaposition, and even contradistinction, to one another. Whether implicitly or explicitly, the message is that one must choose between excellence at work or home, between service as scholar or as parent, and between one's colleagues and one's spouse.

David effectively put the lie to that claim. It would be hard to imagine a better scholar than David; yet it would be equally difficult to imagine a better husband and father. He loved and cherished his work—and it showed. But he loved and cherished his family even more—and it showed even more.

With David Bederman's untimely passing, we have lost a colleague, a scholar, a husband, and a father. On each count, he will be sorely missed. So long as his example remains with us, however, we will always have something to look up to.