
Tributes

In Memoriam: Abraham Dash

THE WISE AND GENTLE BOMBER PILOT: IN MEMORY OF PROFESSOR ABE DASH

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On May 12, 2014, Professor Mark Graber, former Dean Phoebe Haddon, and I had the privilege of joining the family of Professor Abe Dash for the internment of his body at the Arlington National Cemetery. Obviously, burials are inherently sad events. Yet, as my eyes scanned the limitless rows of white markers, I realized that at this particular event, there was much to celebrate. So many of those markers represented men and women who tragically lost their lives at such young ages. For Lieutenant Colonel Abraham Dash, however, his heroism as an Air Force pilot was just the beginning.

Abe was not one of those veterans who spent the rest of his life telling others about the glories of his war experiences. Indeed, he defied the stereotypical image of the war hero. Abe was gentle and self-effacing, more closely resembling Yoda than Han Solo.¹ You had to know Abe well, be patient, and keep asking questions before he would tell you the story of how the bomber he flew over Korea was shot down and he miraculously avoided either death or capture by the North Koreans. The last dozen years or so, my office on the faculty hallway was near Abe's. As he and I became closer friends, I started calling him "Colonel," because I came to realize that although he took great pride in being addressed as "Professor," his pride in his military service was even greater.

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1. Han Solo, a character portrayed by Harrison Ford in *Star Wars*, chartered his spaceship to transport Luke Skywalker and other members of the Rebel Alliance, and eventually joined them in fighting the Evil Empire. *STAR WARS* (20th Century Fox 1977). Yoda was the Grand Jedi Master who trained Luke Skywalker and is consistently portrayed as gentle and infinitely wise. Yoda first appeared in the *Star War* sequel, *The Empire Strikes Back*. *THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK* (20th Century Fox 1980).

Abe's service to his country did not end with his time in the Air Force. Many students and faculty colleagues will recall that as you entered Abe's office and looked at him seated at his desk, you would see a proudly displayed autographed photograph of former Attorney General Robert Kennedy in the background. Abe joined the Department of Justice as a young attorney at about the same time that RFK became Attorney General. After playing a key role in winning an important case, Abe was startled to find Attorney General Kennedy at his office door to personally congratulate him. The Attorney General asked Abe if there was anything he could do for him, probably expecting an answer such as "a bigger desk," "a better administrative assistant," or a promotion. Instead, Abe sheepishly asked for an autographed photo.

Abe served not only his country but also the rule of law. On matters of legal ethics in the state of Maryland, when Professor Dash spoke—often as an expert witness—for all intents and purposes, the issue was decided. However, Abe would have been the last person to acknowledge the decisive impact of his expertise and wisdom. He often asked a faculty colleague, "Do you have a minute? I am working on this case, and I want to run something by you." In this and so many other contexts, Abe was the rare law school professor who realized that a wise person listens more than he talks.

In most law schools, Professional Responsibility, one of the courses Abe continued to teach even years after he "retired," is a dreaded required course. Abe's students, however, simply *loved* him. Love is not a word often associated with bomber pilots and law schools professors, perhaps especially those of Abe's generation, but there was much to love about Abe. The students loved his commitment to teaching, the respect with which he treated each and every one of them, and most importantly, his deep respect for the profession they were entering.

Abraham Dash was a man of his country and a man of the law—for him, I think, they were the same thing. But more than anything, he was a man of family. Abe once remarked to me that he had been the most fortunate man alive to have been married to two exceptional women. Abe's first wife, Barbara, died of cancer, and her tragic loss devastated Abe. However, he found happiness again when he married Mary Catherine. I don't know that I have ever seen the eyes of a husband and those of a wife simultaneously sparkle when each looked at the other—even in a casual social setting, after many years of marriage, and when each was of advanced years.

When I attended the internment of Lieutenant Colonel Abraham Dash's body at Arlington, I thought back to one of the last scenes in the movie *Saving Private Ryan* when the now elderly Private Ryan, accompanied by his family, visits the military cemetery at Omaha Beach in Normandy fifty years after the war. Private Ryan asks his wife, "Tell me I've lived a good life."² Upon the passing of Lt. Col. Dash, we can unequivocally say, "You lived an exceptional life, and all your family, friends, and members of the law school community are so much richer for it." We honor Colonel Dash's heroism in Korea. Perhaps even more, we celebrate the service of Professor Dash to his country, the law, his colleagues, his students, and his family in the six decades since then.

TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR ABRAHAM DASH

KAREN H. ROTHENBERG*

Abe Dash was a member of our School of Law community for over forty years. For many of those years, we had offices next door to one another. He was a constant support to me and I was a constant nag to him. I was determined to get Abe to quit smoking. I never did succeed. What an incredible life Abe led! Abe Dash is a true triple threat—a man with three careers. The first began when he joined the armed services at the end of World War II. He trained as a pilot, shifting from the Naval Academy to the Air Force when they discontinued the pilot training program. He flew transport planes and was a bomber pilot during the Korean War. After the war he continued to fly for the Air Force until he left active duty in 1955. He then finished college in 1957 and received his J.D. from Georgetown in 1959, switching into the JAG program in the reserves. He remained a JAG officer in the Air Force until retiring in 1987 as a Lieutenant Colonel—a forty-two-year career in the armed services. I never knew I was to salute him every morning when I passed by his office.

Before he joined the law school faculty, he had a second career as an attorney in the federal government. He worked for the Senate Judiciary Committee, then as an appellate lawyer with the National Labor Relations Board, as a trial lawyer with the Department of Justice, becoming Director of Litigation in the Criminal Division, and fi-

2. *SAVING PRIVATE RYAN* (DreamWorks Pictures 1998).

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nally as Deputy Chief Counsel to the Comptroller of the Currency—serving more than a decade in high-level federal government positions.

During his four decades at the law school, Abe routinely taught more than three hundred students in a given year in large upper-level courses in Administrative Law, Professional Responsibility, and Criminal Procedure. Even after he officially “retired” a number of years ago, he continued to teach large courses. He loved his students and they loved him! When he passed away last January he was in the midst of grading many bluebooks for the fall semester. Abe also had provided extraordinary service to the school as a longstanding member of the Administrative Committee, advisor to the Moot Court Board and PAD Legal Fraternity, and founder of our National Trial Team.

Outside of the classroom, one of Abe’s legacies is the *Maryland Trial Judges’ Benchbook: Criminal Procedure* and the ten-year project on Criminal Jury Instructions. Abe was one of the school’s most widely recognized professors in the community at large, known for his frequent contributions to debates over, and commentary on, popular legal issues of the day. He had testified on legal ethics in a number of cases including such well-known cases as the dispute between Peter Angelos and the State of Maryland over the size of Angelos’s fee in the national tobacco litigation. While Dean, I was asked to nominate a member of the faculty to the Professionalism Commission chaired by Judge Lynne Battaglia. There was no doubt that Abe was the perfect choice and Judge Battaglia could not have agreed more!

Professor Abe Dash left a lasting imprint on the character of thousands of Maryland lawyers and on all of us. We are forever grateful—and will miss him so very much.

REMEMBERING MY COLLEAGUE, ABE DASH

JANA B. SINGER*

Abe Dash and I were law school next-door neighbors. I occupied the office next to his for the ten years that we taught together in this new building. Almost every day—if I was at my desk when Abe arrived at school—he would stop by my office with a quip, a funny story, or a wry comment on the day’s headlines. He would always walk in with a

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smile on his face and by the time our conversation ended, I would be smiling, too. Abe's good humor was contagious!

I would visit Abe's office whenever I had a question about criminal procedure or, more often, about a legal ethics or professional responsibility issue that had come up in one of my Family Law cases—and yes, there were a lot of those. No matter what he was doing, Abe would always take the time to answer my question thoughtfully and thoroughly—often using an anecdote to illustrate his point. If my query related to a Maryland case, then Abe would often know one (or both) of the attorneys involved and could provide a behind-the-scenes glimpse into the situation. It was easy for me to see from these conversations why Abe was such a popular and successful teacher and why enrollment in his courses often topped 100 students.

Being Abe's neighbor also gave me an appreciation for Abe's dedication to his students. Particularly at exam time, students would flock to his office—sometimes individually, sometimes in small groups—to ask questions and pose hypotheticals about the material that they had studied during the semester. At the beginning of the next semester, the students would appear again—this time, to go over their recently completed exams. Abe would meet patiently with each of them and would carefully review their exam answers. I often heard laughter coming from Abe's office during those conversations, and I thought that whatever techniques Abe was using with his students were techniques that I needed to learn.

On occasion, I was able to make myself useful to Abe—most often by answering his questions about our law school technology, especially e-mail. I know that this may seem far-fetched to some of you, since I am by no means the most technologically savvy member of the faculty. But Abe had confidence in my abilities and sometimes I *was* able to unravel the mystery of how to do things like attach a file to an email or post a message to a listserv. If Abe and I together could not figure out how to solve the problem, then we would walk down the hall as a team to seek the real expertise of our IT department.

While Abe loved interacting with his students and his colleagues, he was happiest when Mitzi, his dear wife, would come to visit him at the Law School. Occasionally, Abe would be in class when Mitzi arrived, and I would have the pleasure of spending time with her until Abe arrived back at his office—casebook and class notes in hand. Sometimes, Mitzi would sit in on one of Abe's classes and they would come back to his office together—laughing and talking—and then regale me with conflicting stories of what had happened in the class.

While Abe's versions were often the more colorful, I suspect that Mitzi's might have been more accurate.

As former Dean Rothenberg emphasized, Abe never retired from law teaching, even after he became an emeritus. He continued to carry a full teaching load and to participate actively in the intellectual life of the Law School. He also continued to contribute his expertise and experience to the profession and the practicing bar. Like his students and so many of his other colleagues, I am much richer for his dedication, wisdom and generosity of spirit.