

David Paget

Encomiums abound at and are a staple of services such as this. And understandably so, but, candidly, as I think we all recognize, they are often exaggerated.

I can assure you that there are no exaggerations or rhetorical flourishes when I say to you that as notable as David's widely recognized skills and accomplishments were as a lawyer, an educator, an author, a passionate and dedicated environmentalist, a founder of environmental law – even more notable was that David was a rare and wonderful person. He was unfailingly kind, fair, generous and self-effacing. He never sought to self-aggrandize. He was a rarity, particularly for someone of his deserved status and success. [The described qualities suffused his being and everything he did. David was the Bard of Park Avenue and every Christmas gathering of the firm was marked by his poetic recitals of the contributions of each and every person at the firm. They were invariably humorous, kind and appreciative, devoid of an unkind or biting word.]

In a city and in a profession which all too often exalts bellicosity and truculence and regards them as prerequisites to litigation virtuosity and success, David repeatedly proved otherwise. His slow and distinctly deliberative manner and speaking style – some might even have derisively described as unnerving – belied a laser-like focus, a steely resolve and determination, a surpassing ability to disentangle the essential from the dross and an unusual acuity. I can vividly recall a former colleague of mine and Dan's from the U.S. Attorney's Office, whose litigating style was the antithesis of David's, muttering, almost incomprehensibly, after losing a trial in which David systematically dismembered him in his unique fashion. That was not an unusual fate for David's adversaries.

Several decades ago, the epitaph for environmental law boutiques was widely declaimed. To my knowledge, SPR is the only environmental boutique in this city. It has survived, grown and flourished. It has represented a broad array of clients on every increasingly diverse and complex matters; and it has attracted highly skilled and exemplary additions to the firm, who have consistently distinguished themselves and earned prominent professional recognition and

plaudits. This is not a narcissistic indulgence on my part. But rather a testament to the enduring and inestimable legacy of David Sive. The values he imprinted in our DNA – intellectual vigor, mastery of the labyrinth, of laws and regulations confronting environmental lawyers, honesty, integrity, hard work and dedication and, perhaps above all, a firm marked by fraternity and an abiding sense of family – are the keystones of his legacy. They are why we are what we are.

Mary, Rebecca, Helen, Alfred, Walter and Ted, we share your profound loss. But, like you, we exult in the remarkable accomplishments of David: a great lawyer and an even better human being.

Let me conclude by proudly announcing that the firm, in association with Columbia School which David attended and taught at, has established an annual environmental convocation, the details of which are yet to be finalized as to the precise form, which will serve as a continuing and indelible reminder of David's singular place in the firmament of environmental law.