

WISDOM, HUMOR, AND THE LAW: IN APPRECIATION OF PROFESSOR DAVID STEWART

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The ingredients of a great scholar are rare: a depth of knowledge and a steadfast respect for the truth. A great teacher, however, not only embodies these qualities but also adds essential elements of humility and generosity. The legal practitioner, in contrast, is a realist who understands the system's limitations and knows how to achieve goals without unnecessary embellishments. Professor David Stewart—paradoxically—embodies all of these qualities at once.

When I first met Professor Stewart, I had just three days of law school under my belt and was not equipped to recognize these attributes. He struck me as modest and unassuming, with a whimsical sense of humor. He was consistently willing to assist his students—whether helping to secure summer internships, connecting us with scholars at other institutions for legal research, providing career advice, or simply checking in to ensure we were happy at Georgetown. Professor Stewart was instrumental in helping me navigate the inevitable ups and downs of law school, always providing guidance and reassurance during challenging times.

One of the most invaluable pieces of advice he offered—though I needed to hear it several times—was, “If you want to be an international lawyer, first learn how to be a good lawyer.” He mentioned receiving the same advice from his mentor in law school—characteristically disclaiming any credit for the wisdom. As Professor Stewart was the co-director of the Global Law Scholars program, I was surprised to hear this from him. Yet, upon reflection, I realized this wisdom became one of the cornerstones of my law school experience. It encouraged me to take foundational black letter law courses I had previously avoided and to consider U.S. clerkships. It also deepened my interest in, and

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understanding of, Professor Stewart's own area of expertise—the intersection of U.S. and international law.

Though I came to appreciate Professor Stewart's remarkable abilities as a scholar, teacher, and practitioner, my initial impression of his whimsical sense of humor remained accurate. In moments of crisis, I often found myself recalling his sage advice: "Above all, don't drive the bus off the cliff."

My gratitude for Professor Stewart is beyond what words can convey. His advocacy for his students is truly selfless. He goes above and beyond what is required of any professor, consistently deflecting credit to his students and downplaying his impact on our success.

Georgetown has been fortunate to have him, and I am equally fortunate to have been his student.