

STEPHEN J. HARMELIN MEMORIAL
JOSEPH H. JACOVINI REMARKS
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Permit me first to extend my warmest thanks to the Harmelin family for inviting me to speak of Steve, a kind, decent, and honorable person who was my friend and partner for over 50 years. The time and experiences we shared over that period created a singular close bond which can never be severed by mortality. Steve's exploits as a lawyer and citizen, and his humanity, were extraordinary and luminous, and his legacy will carry on long into the future. Steve's life and deeds easily fit the stirring words of the famed soldier and jurist, Oliver Wendell Holmes:

“Through our great good fortune, in our youth our hearts were touched with fire. It was given us to learn at the outset that life is a profound and passionate thing. While we are permitted to scorn nothing but indifference, and do not pretend to undervalue the worldly rewards of ambition, we have seen with our own eyes, beyond and above the gold fields, the snowy heights of honor, and it is for us to bear the report to those who come after us.”

Steve was touched with that fire and lived life to the fullest. By his virtuous and noble feats, he has shown us those snowy heights of honor, and we are privileged to bear the report of this worthy and charismatic man. Allow me to share a few of my vital memories of Steve.

A few days before Steve's passing, I visited with him. It was a moving experience, and it permitted me to say things which men of our generation find hard to express. My first words to Steve were: “I miss you, brother. It is not the same without you. We had a great ride together and it was always top shelf.” I closed my eyes, and I saw Steve not as in his last illness, but as I

first knew him. Stylish, vigorous, good-looking guy in life's full bloom and energy, charming and brilliant of wit and quip. He was elegant and eloquent. You could not help but like him.

We first met when I joined the Dilworth firm in 1965. Steve had joined the firm earlier that year. He was a year ahead of me at Harvard Law School and while I was goofing off in my third year, Steve was writing speeches for President Johnson in the White House. We shared a small office on the 15th floor of the Fidelity Building (the firm's main office was on the 26th floor), and we shared a desk, and we shared a part-time secretary who was more interested in reading divorce case transcripts than doing our work. That was the start of a special relationship which lasted for over five decades. As different as our backgrounds were, my being this Italian-Catholic guy from southeast Philadelphia and Steve being this Jewish guy from northwest Philadelphia, we soon realized how much we had in common. We shared a passion not just to learn the letter of the law, but the highest traditions of the profession and public service. Thus began a lifetime of learning and sharing together. From early on, Steve always had these clippings from newspapers, magazines and publications of news events and trends affecting law, commerce, and politics which interested him and he wanted to discuss. I generally had available the latest sports scores. I assure you that I learned so much more from Steve, than he ever did from me.

We were fortunate to join the firm, then named Dilworth Paxson Kalish Kohn and Dilks, during its golden age. It was led by Richardson Dilworth, the former Mayor and leading public figure; Harold Kohn, arguably the greatest trial attorney in Pennsylvania in the last half of the 20th Century; Harry Kalish, who understood business and the working of politics and government like very few did, and William T. Coleman, ascending as a renowned civil rights and super lawyer at the highest levels of government and business. They were our great mentors. There was no better

way of learning the best of the profession then to spend time with the best. They instilled in us, in the words of Rosco Pound:

“... a sensitivity that lawyers were part of something larger and more important than the lawyer himself or herself, a shared trust of unique skills imbued with a public spirit which created an unwavering, abiding, loyalty to clients, to courts, to the public and to the profession”

Steve’s life and career is a testament that he learned his lessons very well.

It wasn’t always legal work that we shared with them. Richardson Dilworth would often invite us to his house for beers where he said he learned more about what was going on at the firm then from his partners; experiencing the Gatsbyesque summer parties at Doug Paxson’s Holicong estate where the music and champagne flowed freely; lunch with Harry Kalish where we received a tutorial on how things really worked; and in off moments with Kohn and Coleman, hearing their personal views on life and the law. During this time, I could not help but realize what a special talent Steve was and that he was a kind and generous person to boot. Above all, he was committed to fairness and equity. I was in awe of his command of the English language. Later, we would kid each other that Steve should write my speeches, but that I should write his contracts. Yes, we were competitive in the early days as is human nature, but we soon realized that our talents complemented each other. And this forged an easy and comfortable personal and professional respect and affection which lasts to this day.

During these growing years, we shared the joys and heartaches and ups and downs of fashioning careers, and we shared the special moments of marriage, children, and family life. It was always a mutual support system. We never planned it, we simply did it instinctively. And,

in some of these heartache moments, Steve always knew the right words to say to make you feel better. And, he knew how to celebrate those momentous family events. There is an art piece in my house which Steve urged me to buy to commemorate a very joyous occasion, and I think of him every time I view it.

Now I must confess, we did get into a little bit of trouble together. All innocent and part of the learning process. During the early years, Steve and I were the reigning bachelors in the firm. As such, we went to every dinner sponsored by the firm, which meant free meals, drinks, meeting interesting people of every walk of life, and fun. Please realize when we started, our salary was the exorbitant sum of \$5,800 per year. Of course, we shared many Christmas parties together, when they were really rip-roaring parties. I remember one party, in particular, where Steve saved me from making a fool of myself for which I am forever indebted to him. And, how could I forget all the silly deals Steve got us into - with Chubby Checker promoting something called African chess and an interest in worthless New Jersey real estate with Harry Kalish. But, we learned from those experiences, and we shared.

Once, when Mr. Dilworth was President of the School Board, he defended regionalism stating that the problem with the suburbanites was that they had never been mugged – quite a news splash! Well, Steve and I are at one of those firm dinners, where the drinks flowed freely, and we developed a hair brained scheme to have printed hundreds of these big purple and yellow buttons reading: “I Am a Mugger” to be handed out at the Easter Parade in Rittenhouse Square. We thought it would be hilarious. Steve deserves credit for the slogan. Well, a few days before Easter, Mr. Dilworth found out about it and asked to meet with us and so we did. Mr. Dilworth had a great sense of humor and told us that he thought it was a splendid idea, but since half of his family who lived outside of Philadelphia, were not speaking to him because of his remarks, he

said he would appreciate it if we did not follow through with our plans. He never demanded, he simply requested. We agreed and as we were leaving, Mr. Dilworth said he would appreciate it if we could give him a couple dozen of the “I am a Mugger” buttons. It caused quite a stir in the firm.

There are so many stories of youthful indiscretions in and out of the office we got into which, I would like to tell, but I won't, for fear they will get Steve and me into trouble. If judgment is the sum of all of your mistakes and unique experiences, Steve and I were developing a keen sense of judgment. And so in the early years, we learned and shared and always had fun along the way.

While visiting with Steve, I told him that, no one could have a more loyal partner and friend than him and that I never doubted his trust. He always had my back as I his. I would trust him with everyone dear to me and everything I owned. I had faith Steve would always do the right thing. And, he did.

Our bond of loyalty grew stronger when tested. With the passing and departures of our great mentors during the late 70's, the management of the firm changed. It did not have the enlightened vision and inclusiveness of the prior leadership. It had become top heavy. Steve and I were then emerging with growing reputations in the legal and business communities, and yet there was an effort to hold back from us the recognition in the firm which we deserved. There was also an effort to separate us. But we were comrades in arms and refused to buckle, and we were the only partners who refused to sign the new Partnership Agreement, notwithstanding great pressure to do so. Steve felt strongly, as did I, that the proposed compensation and governance structure was not fair to all the attorneys in the Firm, not just us. Our futures in the Firm were in

doubt, and for awhile, I believe we were more out of the firm, then in it. But, Steve and I determined that we would not leave, it was our firm, our patrimony, and worth fighting for. It was a particularly anxiety-laden time in our careers with growing families and other obligations. Relying on the strength and loyalty of each other, we persevered in our efforts to initiate change. When you are under fire, as we were – just the two of us – you develop a lasting brotherhood. The true character of a person reveals itself in such moments. Steve never wavered, and he demonstrated absolute loyalty to making the Firm better for all of our attorneys.

Together, we faced another great challenge starting in 1991. A senior member of the firm made ill-advised comments regarding his leaving and about a possible merger, which destabilized the firm. The legal news and legal community believed we would not survive. As it unfolded, in short order we went from 175 attorneys to about 50 attorneys with debt over \$17million and with vacant offices and huge lease obligations in Florida, California and Philadelphia. When this broke, Steve and I immediately met and agreed that we would continue to practice under the Dilworth banner and announced it to the other attorneys. Steve called a meeting of the remaining partners around a conference table and we each pledged to remain and practice with the Firm and satisfy its substantial obligations. Perhaps the only firm ever to do so. Steve met with all of our Associates too. Many of those attorneys are here today, and I can assure them that Steve was always as proud of them as they are of him. Steve had plenty of offers from other firms during this time, but his loyalty was to me and to Dilworth. It was a dark and risky time which required real sacrifice on the part of Steve and other leaders. He and others deferred compensation and other benefits so we could make payroll and rent. For years, it was life in the trenches with a crisis almost daily until finally the barrage lifted and the legal and business world accepted that we were here to stay. Because of Steve's magnificent efforts, the firm never defaulted and paid

off every obligation to the penny, and our Firm and reputation became even stronger. Naturally, Steve orchestrated a “burn the mortgage” party when we paid off our last obligation. Steve demonstrated flawless leadership and instilled confidence in our lawyers, clients and banks. They believed in him, and he never let them down. There was real grit underneath his calm veneer. He found a solution to every problem, and his puckish humor often broke the tension so we could carry the day. I’ll never forget when we were negotiating with the landlord’s counsel to restructure the lease, it became very, very testy. The landlord’s counsel angrily demanded to know what was the object in front of Steve, which Steve brought to each meeting. Steve coolly retorted: “Sir, it is the key to our offices which we will hand over to you if we cannot make a deal.” It broke the tension, and we settled. Facing predicted disaster, I guess we were both too stubborn to admit defeat. Years later, we would look back with pride and joy on those terrifying moments we shared with each other. I believe it was our finest hour. Through all of the good and difficult times, we never had a disagreement, never a harsh word, we simply worked it out. Afterwards, Steve would say: “money holds you together in good times, culture holds you together in tough times.”

Finally, in my visit with Steve, I told him that very, very few lawyers ever had or would ever have the experiences and adventures that he amassed in his career.

We spoke often of new adventures. I believe what separated Steve from the rest, was his boundless curiosity and creativity in finding answers to problems and adapting to new experiences. He was spurred on by his love of a challenge which was only matched by his zealous commitment to his family, friends and clients, and his sense of fairness. The radius of his adventures was boundless, and his interests and causes were brilliant, for example, to name a few:

- Orchestrating the Magna Carta event for the Constitution’s Bicentennial;

- Saving the Barnes Foundation;
- Creating the National Constitution Center;
- Building the Pennsylvania Convention Center;
- Serving on the last reapportionment commission in the Commonwealth;
- Serving as trusted advisor to Senator Arlen Specter, his dear friend, and other government and political figures;
- Travel around the world for clients, governments and institutions;
- Assisting the FBI in recovering an original copy of the Bill of Rights; and
- He even had time to get Willie Sutton out of jail.

To put into perspective the enormous significant and transformative events in which Steve led or participated, Oscar Wilde once said:

“We can have in life but one great experience at best, and the secret of life is to reproduce that experience as often as possible.”

Well, my friend Steve had the secret of life.

The big events in Steve’s career are well known and rightfully burnish his legacy for public service. But, there are two events which are not so known, which I believe speak to Steve’s innate love of Philadelphia and its history and his good heart.

In 2007, the newspapers reported that a local institution, in a secret deal, agreed to sell off the famous Thomas Eakins “Gross Clinic” painting to the Crystal Bridges Museum in Arkansas, at a price of \$68 million, subject to the City’s matching right. The City had no interest in doing so and closing was to occur in a few days. Steve said we can’t let that happen – this is part of

Philadelphia's history and belongs here. With his herculean efforts we assembled in our office, in short order, the leading philanthropists and institutions in the city, and after round-the-clock negotiations with the city, they agreed to provide the funds to buy this art treasure and keep it in Philadelphia. To this day, this unique masterpiece is displayed at the Museum of Art and at The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art. There was no public recognition of Steve's efforts, but all involved knew that without him the "Gross Clinic" masterpiece would not have been saved for Philadelphia.

There was another event which meant a great deal to us but which nobody else really knows about. Years ago, we had an assistant librarian, Ruth Solomon, who after a long illness was hospitalized and died. She had no family, but the Firm, and we always took care of Ruth. After her burial, Steve, with his usual thoughtfulness, said we had to have a proper service for Ruth. So he arranged for all of our attorneys and staff to attend a memorial for Ruth in our Firm conference room, presided over by a Protestant minister who happened to work in our mailroom, with Jewish and Catholic prayers for Ruth, and with the Quaker meeting approach where all in attendance would stand up and say a few words about Ruth. What a spectacular sendoff Steve arranged for Ruth, and perhaps the first ecumenical service of its kind. To me, this little-known episode will forever serve as a monument to his basic compassion and goodness.

Well, my visit was up, and I told Steve that it was time for me to leave, and holding his hand, I said: "Love you, brother".

And so each of us is left with our vital memories and love of this remarkable man. He was one-of-a-kind; they broke the mold when he died. Our lives and our community will forever be enriched by his verve, his genius, and, above all, his impeccable moral principles. We are all lucky to have known him. To borrow words Steve once wrote about Richardson Dilworth: "when you went with Steve, you went first class."