

Remembrance of Prof. Richard N. Gardner

SUYASH PALIWAL*

I first met Professor Gardner at the start of my 1L year, when I joined him for a lunch he was hosting with student leaders from the Columbia Society of International Law. As I would later learn he frequently did in settings like this, he began with a *tour de table*, allowing each student to introduce themselves, and share some observation or question about the state of the world. At a Gardner event, you were presumed to have a meaningful view, admittedly also the ability to defend it, but your very presence meant that your thoughts were worth everyone's hearing. With ease, he made everyone around him feel that they were valued, important, accessible to one another—and if you were up for it, a future leader.

This manner in which he treated those around him was at the core of how he taught his seminar, Legal Aspects of U.S. Foreign Economic Policy, which I had the good fortune to take during my last semester of law school. Taking this seminar—sitting on the “Gardner Commission,” as it was called—required choosing a topic and, ultimately, a recommended course of action through role playing as a member of a bipartisan presidential advisory commission. To arrive at the topics, Professor Gardner reached out to friends and former students, who, of course, happened to frequently be senior government officials at the forefront of the most timely policy issues. Naturally, the topics were frequently questions that did not yet have answers, making anyone's informed view worthwhile.

My topic was financial regulatory reform post-financial crisis, and the seeds planted through studying and thinking about that topic led to my current policymaking role at the Federal Reserve Board. Beyond his tutelage—gold standard in its own right—Professor Gardner's encouragement gave me the added assurance, and even some validation, that my thoughts on the topic were worth pursuing. At the conclusion of the seminar, he had forwarded my work to a couple of friends of his, one of whom happened to be Paul Volcker. This prompted some feedback from Mr. Volcker, whose letter I have with me to this day. This was just Professor Gardner's way, unhesitatingly encouraging his students and unabashedly thrusting them into the limelight.

* Columbia Law School, J.D. 2010.

Professor, ambassador, mentor, enlightener—Richard N. Gardner will be remembered as one who inspired over half a century of students and countless others in the fields of international law and diplomacy. We miss him, and I hope to do my part in maintaining his legacy.