

# A Tribute to Richard N. Gardner: My Teacher and Mentor

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The loss of Richard N. Gardner was felt deeply around the world by so many of us who have been touched by his extraordinary life. Without Professor Gardner's influence and mentorship, my career would certainly have been very different. His generosity and warmth were unparalleled, and his work in the world through his diplomacy, his insights on international law, and his inspiration and training of generations of international lawyers and policy-makers will reverberate for ages to come. As a brilliant international lawyer, diplomat, professor, and mentor, he leaves a wonderful legacy that we can all enthusiastically celebrate.

I first met Professor Gardner in my second year at Columbia when I took his legendary public international law course, co-taught that year with Lori Damrosch, who had just joined the faculty. The course was famous because Professor Gardner was well-known for blending his public service experiences in law and diplomacy with the course materials in ways that made international law vivid and meaningful. Not surprisingly, I immediately wound up in the Gardner orbit, which I think may be one of the best ways to describe his impact on me and so many others. For many years and through many moves, I kept my notes from that class, not daring to lose all the insights I had captured from his lectures. I was particularly struck that semester learning about the interrelated roles of both law and policy in shaping the world, something that has stayed with me my entire career.

During law school in the mid-1980s, I was interested in information technology and policy. While this was not an area that Professor Gardner really knew, he actively encouraged me to pursue the international dimensions that he thought would be important in the years to come. I was interested in spending some time abroad in France following Columbia and, of course, in his network of contacts, he knew policy leaders in the field in Paris. Through his

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network, I connected with the head of a Paris think tank that focused on the global information economy where I would be able to work on intellectual property issues, and he volunteered to write a recommendation for me to the Sorbonne and send letters of introduction to friends of his in Paris law firms in order to open doors for me and help make a post-grad year in Paris possible for me.

Over the years, we, of course, kept in touch—he was great about that—and when I moved back to New York to start my academic career at Fordham, I'll never forget my first invitation to one of his alumni dinners at his beautiful home. I was flattered, excited, and awed by the assemblage of his former students from different generations spanning decades. All had been mentored by Professor Gardner, and the more senior alumni there ranged from top university and foundation leaders to prominent international lawyers, including many with high-level public service experience. His probing questions made those evenings incredibly thought-provoking and memorable. I have never encountered anyone as skilled as he in posing just the right question at just the right moment to just the right person. From those experiences with him and observations of him in action over the years, I learned so much about making arguments, deepening analysis, moderating panels, and building international networks—skills that have been so helpful to me in my career over the years. Somehow, I stayed on the invite list, and I always cherished those dinner invitations.

The world has lost a wonderful global citizen, and I will miss him.