

Remembering Richard N. Gardner

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I had the distinct pleasure of knowing Professor Gardner later in his life. He bestowed upon me the extraordinary honor of accepting me into his final seminar at Columbia Law School in “Legal Aspects of U.S. Foreign Economic Policy” in 2012. Without doubt, it was the most exceptional class I have ever attended. He brought together an incredible cohort and ensured that each one of us learned *from one another* as much as we learned *from him*. I am acutely aware that I have only experienced one short chapter in his long and illustrious career and life. Therefore, I relished hearing anecdotes from his fascinating experiences spanning ambassadorial appointments, advising of Democratic Presidential candidates, legal private practice, and a distinguished career as a Columbia Law School professor and scholar.

We, in the field of international law and foreign policy, have lost one of our brightest and most extraordinary lights. Professor Gardner was an outstanding teacher: possessing a ferocious intellect, unceasing idealism, and a passion for the issues of legal and foreign economic policy. He was also a man who taught by example. He created a unique dynamic in our class, a level of collegiate interaction like no other. Despite having moved back to Australia, I am still in touch with many of my colleagues from that class because there was something magical about it. He fostered an environment in which we were a panel of equals, each bringing our background and skills to the table, to discuss foreign economic policy and the legal implications of our time. It was an unparalleled climate of learning for me. I will cherish those classes, and the thinker and problem-solver Professor Gardner encouraged me to be.

He was the most inspiring mentor, both professionally and personally, I have ever had. I admired every aspect of his character and as well as his approach to work and life. He faithfully lived his values and fulfilled every obligation he undertook by dedicating himself to his students long after they had left the classroom. My area of expertise in our seminar was international institutions, primarily the World Bank. I have never worked harder and longer to

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produce an assignment in my entire life. I valued his opinion above all others. Accordingly, he could not have been more proud and delighted when I was offered a position as Counselor for the Special Representative of the World Bank to the United Nations after I completed my LL.M. It was a “dream job” for me, and I invited him for lunch in the United Nations Delegates Dining Room to celebrate. I will always remember what he said to me that day, amongst a fascinating discussion of foreign policy reform, diplomatic relations, and the role of the United Nations—“with great privilege comes great responsibility, Clare . . .”

He has left an indelible mark on the aspirations I have for my career and exemplified how to live a life founded on the utmost service to others, dignity, and an insatiable exuberance for learning. I will treasure my precious time with Professor Gardner for the rest of my life. It was a privilege to observe his tireless work ethic, unshakable integrity, steadfast humility, and unwavering commitment to the field of international law and foreign economic policy. He influenced me in a way no other teacher, mentor, or friend had before. He saw more talent and ability within me than I saw in myself, and during the course of our friendship, he helped nurture and encourage me to reach for the stars.

I have always been afforded the most incredible warmth from all those who fiercely loved Professor Gardner and admired him as I did—his children, Nina and Anthony, my fellow students, Carmen and Dorothy . . . to name only a few. I feel privileged to be part of this special group of people. Our friendship continued long after I left New York in 2016 to return to Australia, and with sincere thanks to Dorothy in particular, I managed to speak with him on the phone from Australia shortly before his passing. I had just given birth to our second child, and he shared in the excitement with us, just as he did all my achievements. His daughter, Nina, has also been a great role model for me, as a CLS alumna who has been incredibly successful in business and pursuing her diverse career, whilst simultaneously juggling the joys and demands of motherhood.

He would have been the first to say that his life’s work was not about him. He was truly a man for others. This is why he was such an exemplary teacher, lawyer, adviser, and diplomat. Only the inimitable Professor Richard N. Gardner would have opted to celebrate his retirement by convening a conference of “thought leaders” in 2012. The remarkable attendance by a distinguished array of colleagues, friends, and family was testament to the extraordinary respect he garnered from all those he encountered. His passion for and dedication to the law, as well as foreign policy and international affairs, was an inspiration to us all. The legacy he leaves behind in each of us will never be extinguished. He shall

forever be the voice in my head extolling the virtues of reason, idealism, humanity, and integrity.