

Remarks on James E. Bond

*Donna Claxton Deming**

There are moments in my life experiences with Jim Bond that are frozen in time in my mind. Because I am limited in length, I cannot share them all. Instead, I selected four memories that I believe best illustrate and reflect the man that Jim was to me.

The first is the day that I believe was our first meeting. I flew to Tacoma from Philadelphia for my day-long interview for the newly created Dean of Students position. I was told that after the interview, I would join Jim and his wife, Georgana, at their home for dinner. Of course, this was not the Philadelphia way of concluding an interview, but I agreed to join the two of them. As we traveled down 12th Street, Jim talked non-stop about his favorite topic—his son, Garth. There was a moment in that car ride when I had a flashback to a dinner that I had attended two years prior at a restaurant in New Orleans; a dinner hosted by the Law School Admission Council. What I remembered most about that dinner was the man who dominated the conversation talking about his son, Garth. At some point during the car ride to Jim's home, I interrupted him and asked if he recalled attending a dinner in New Orleans two years prior. Of course, it was Jim. What was very clear, at both our first meeting in New Orleans and our first official meeting in Tacoma, was that Jim Bond unabashedly loved his son. It did not take long for me to figure out that Garth was not the only one in the family to be the recipient of such affection. When it came to Garth and Georgana, Jim wore his heart on his sleeve.

The second memory is the day that Jim told us that he was resigning from the deanship of the University of Puget Sound School of Law. I remember vividly that a group of us were walking down the street headed for lunch when he broke the news. It felt like a punch in the gut. I just could not understand how he could abandon the law school and a job that he so clearly loved. Frankly—and not to make this about me—I could not understand how he could abandon me. On reflection, it did not take long to understand that his resignation was a result of his principles. At the time, he did not know that UPS was preparing to sell the law school. Although he knew that the new administration was not acting in the best interest of the law school, he could not continue at the helm. Jim was a man of

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principle. Even if it meant giving up a job that he loved, he stayed true to himself.

But Jim came back, which leads me to my third memory. The story involves my daughter, Sarah. On a visit to the law school in Tacoma, Sarah was in the staff lounge doing what every ten-year-old loves to do—jumping up and down on the sofa. Much to our collective shock, when one of the cushions fell to the floor, we found a dead mouse embedded in the sofa. Sarah, who was, and continues to be, rather precocious, wrote Jim a letter letting him know in no uncertain terms that she was traumatized by her discovery of the dead mouse. A few days later, Sarah received a formal letter in the mail from Dean Bond:

Dear Ms. Deming,

Thank you for your letter about your unexpected encounter with the law school's pet mouse. I trust that your alleged reaction is not intended to lay the foundation for any legal claim, stemming from your perhaps feigned "traumatization." Indeed, we at the law school are exploring our legal options in this matter, as it appears from the evidence that you may have killed "Mickey" by trampling on the couch where he has made his home now for many months. We are presently disinclined to sue because it does not appear to us that you intended to kill our mouse.

Your suggestion that we use pest control, while doubtless well meaning, suggests that you do not understand our specific attachment to Mickey or our more general commitment here at the law school to live in peace with all God's creatures (a commitment which your gun-toting, back-to-nature father surely understands).

Sincerely,

James E. Bond, Dean

P.S. I hope your visit here was otherwise rewarding. We were all certainly pleased to have you here to see how productive your mother can be.

Sarah is now over thirty, but she kept that letter all this time—she circled all of the words that her ten-year-old mind did not comprehend. This letter is a reminder to me of Jim's wicked sense of humor and incredible sense of fun.

This leads me to my final recollection. After Jim stopped "deaning," every Friday, a group of us would gather at a small breakfast spot in Tacoma for "tea" and breakfast. The group included me, Doris Russell (a long time UPS/SU employee and former assistant in the Dean's office),

Annette Clark, Bill Oltman, and sometimes Georgana. We shared many hours of conversation covering a wide variety of topics from law school gossip to updates on our families. But, most importantly, we engaged in civil discourse about the issues of the day. It is no secret that Jim was a Libertarian and back then referred to Fox News as a fair and balanced news station—which may or may not have been true back then, but I think even Jim would agree that it is neither fair nor balanced today. It should come as no surprise that I disagreed with Jim regarding many of his political views, but one of Jim’s greatest gifts was his ability to engage respectfully with people of differing viewpoints. I am not sure Jim ever convinced me to change my mind, or that I was ever able get him to see the merits of affirmative action, but those conversations enriched us all.

I have chosen these four stories to illustrate the kind of man Jim was. He loved his family, had a great sense of humor, and was a man of great principle and great intellect who loved a rousing debate. Jim was an amazing leader who valued each of the people he worked with and valued the contribution they made to the enterprise. I loved working with him.