

## A Few Reflections on Jim Bond

*David Skover\**

Jim Bond was the greatest Libertarian I have ever known. In one respect, that is not saying much, since he is really the only Libertarian I have personally known—at least a true Libertarian. Other acquaintances who tag themselves as such are rather tainted or seriously compromised. They are willing to embrace governmental intervention in the economy or in the bedroom when it suits their personal preferences. But not Jim. He was as pure a Libertarian as they come. When I observed that many of his friends appeared to be more conservative or more liberal than Libertarian, he would sigh and declaim, “Like you, David, they are right at least half the time.”

There was so much in Jim that I admired, but perhaps his strongest attributes as Dean were his inherent integrity and unmitigated fairness. To my knowledge, he never evaluated others according to his own ideological commitments. He transcended his own philosophical faith system in evaluating their abilities or in rewarding their performances. If that is not a criterion for great leadership, I do not know what might be.

Jim did his best to bring me into his political fold. He invited me as his guest to one of Heritage Foundation’s constitutional law conferences. Fortunately for both of us, the topic was one on which our legal analyses were substantially in sync. I am sure that he was relieved that I was not an embarrassment—to myself or to him. Though he never succeeded in recruiting me to his cause, I was delighted to have that opportunity to know him better.

For Jim, merit mattered. In these times when political predilections too often govern, his example stands as a salutary reminder of the importance of a genuine commitment to excellence in all its manifestations. He was Libertarian, I am liberal—and yet he always judged me on the merits of my teaching, scholarship, and commitment to our law school community.

In the end, I am grateful to have had Jim as my colleague and Dean and honored to have been called his friend. Though you are much missed, Jim, may your memory continue to live on.

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