

Eulogy for RJR:

I stand before you today on behalf of the Rohner family. Ralph's loving children, Stephen and Janet, Felicia and Paul, Karl, and Theresa and Jeremy. You made your father proud with the way you live your lives. PopPop's ten beloved grandchildren are present. He took special delight in each of you, and he often shared your accomplishments with me. Even though you may miss his presence, take comfort in the fact that you brought him great joy and pride with your individual achievements. Please remember the words expressed by one of you, "Pop Pop will forever live through you. Pop Pop knew that you would never let him down." Monica, you shared more than 57 years as the most important person in Ralph's life. You were his true love. He knew he was the luckiest man because you were his devoted wife, mother to four beautiful children, Bushi to the grandchildren, partner in his professional endeavors, and his best friend.

My challenge today is to present a few short minutes of remembrance that will somehow capture a life well lived and allow our individual memories to flourish.

I am certain that most of you have thought about Ralph a great deal, with warmth in your heart and in your recollections. Just think how lucky we are that we can all say we knew Ralph, and that we spent quality time with him. It's because we knew and loved him that makes saying goodbye so hard.

As I look about this crypt, I realize that there are many of you present who could be sharing my honor of delivering these words of remembrance. There are family members, classmates, faculty colleagues, alumni, students, and friends who knew and loved the man we honor today. So many of you could deliver a great tribute. So, if you need to know why I am speaking, and you are not, please talk to Monica.

I spent over fifty years at CUA, loving everyone, well almost everyone, believing that I was contributing all that I could to make the law school a meaningful institution. I knew Dean Vernon Miller, Professor John Garvey, Arthur John Keefe, Joe

English, Al Broderick, Clinton Bamberger, Steve Frankino, and so many more who contributed greatly to the Law School. But when I think about The Catholic University of America, The Columbus School of Law, what it is and what it stands for, I start and end with Ralph Rohner. No one invested more of himself and enhanced the quality of education offered here in the history of this law school.

Ralph read everything by and about Winston Churchill and I thought it would be appropriate to use Churchill's words that convey the full meaning of Ralph's life:

“We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give.”

As a student, Ralph was Editor-in-Chief of the Law Review. He was a member of the winning Sutherland moot court team. He was the epitome of the ideal classmate. He excelled in class, and he tried so very hard in athletics. The academics came easy; however, his hands of stone were not ideal for a tight end trying to catch a pass. My time with him on a golf course was

always an adventure. There was always a lot to laugh about which did not help our scores.

Ralph started his teaching career at Stanford University. After a short stint at HEW he joined the faculty to teach Commercial Law and Banking. How did he do? Well, after just two years, at the ripe old age of 29, when the school needed an interim dean upon Vernon Miller's retirement, the older and well-established faculty chose Ralph. He accepted the responsibility with poise and composure and led with a stoic confidence that belied his experience. After Clinton Bamberger was appointed Dean, Ralph stayed on as the Associate Dean to ease Clinton's immersion into the academic world. That's when I joined the faculty and began by serving in the Dean's office. I witnessed firsthand Ralph's skill as he adroitly helped to transition a small law school into a national competitor.

Ralph was an accomplished teacher, and a prolific scholar. He may have been able to publish even more than he did had he learned how to type with more than two fingers, and had he invested in an electric typewriter. His students were charmed

by his demeanor and challenged by his intellect. His treatise on Truth-in-Lending was a seminal piece when first published and it remains a compelling source for students and lawyers practicing that field today.

While serving as faculty advisor to the law review, he guided the students to strengthen the publication to national recognition. Of course, the law review alums here would tell you that even though an invitation to serve on law review was a coveted recognition, an invitation to the annual tequila party at Powhattan Street in New Carrollton was the real reason they worked so hard to make law review. For those who couldn't handle the tequila, well, they just slept where they dropped. But even they did not share the experience of hearing Monica belt out her tortured version of the Platter's "My Prayer." Even though I was already seated on the floor, I still fell over laughing. Ralph on the other hand thought Monica sounded just right. That's true love.

During my time span with Ralph the law school building had many forms. We started with the Foster Family home on 18th

Street, near Dupont Circle. Dean Miller locked the one door into his classroom at the start of class, so Ralph taught me how to navigate the fire escape and crawl through the back window to avoid an absence. Classes were small in the 60's, about 30 white men in each class, maybe one or two females.

Then in the late 60's came Leahy Hall and Clinton Bamberger. With the expansion of enrollment in the early 70's, the building was overrun by students and new faculty. Ralph insisted, and then led in the recruitment of a blended student body. Female enrollment grew to 50% and minority enrollment went from a handful to over 28%. We hired Professor Ike Hunt as our first full-time Black faculty member, and then added Flo Roisman as our first full-time female colleague. When things got a bit overcrowded, a trailer was added to the back of Leahy. We squatted at several university buildings while we waited for Dean Frankino to build us a new building. After eight or nine unsuccessful tries Dean Frankino found that new building he craved but unfortunately for us it was in Philadelphia, and he called it Villanova. The unenviable task of funding a new

building became Ralph's. Although when he started, he didn't think he was a great fund raiser, there are many in this room who can attest to having had his hand on our money while smiling to our faces. We know the result of his untiring labor. We will meet and greet his family and each other in that amazing facility which Ralph liked to call his Camden Yards. As you move about the atrium, I want you to take a moment and look up to the fourth floor and see what his faculty thought about our dean.

Life is not to be lived forever, but our goal in life should be to create something that will. Ralph did just that with aplomb. His children, his grandchildren, and his law building all attest to his excellence.

Fifty-nine years ago, just a few blocks from here, I met a 3L who helped me move into Reardon Dorm. He was my introduction to law school, the first person I met upon my arrival from Connecticut. He gave me his foolproof plan on how to survive law school. First and foremost, he took me to Fred's Tavern on 12th Street, or as we knew it, Haps. Then every evening around

ten, after a vigorous study period, he would announce in a very loud voice that it was Hap time. A few beers, a few stories, a few laughs. I learned about his love of Baltimore, the Orioles, the Colts, and a girl named Monica. He insisted that I learn Bridge. He asked me to play on his fraternity football and softball teams. And that was just our first day together. From that day forward I made the conscious choice to try to live my life “Just like Ralph.” He was my mentor, my tutor, my colleague, my dean, and most importantly, my friend.

Ralph was a deeply religious man, a man of faith. I envied how true he was to that faith. In his own soft quiet way, he served his God.

When I say Ralph loved the law school that means he loved everyone and everything about the law school. He treated everyone with respect.

In fact, I want you all to take a moment and look at the person on your left. Now, look at the person on your right. I know what you are thinking. Why do these people truly believe that they

were Ralph's favorite when you know that you were his favorite?

There you have the essence of the man we honor today. He had the uncanny ability to make each of us feel important, respected, and loved.

Don't cry because Ralph's life is over, rather smile because his life happened, and it touched you.