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## A Better Spirit

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## A BETTER SPIRIT

TALBOT "SANDY" D'ALEMBERTE\*

Steven M. Goldstein was a truly good friend, an incomparable colleague, and one of those rare individuals who exert a major influence on the better spirits of their time.

On the Sunday evening prior to his death, Steve had dinner at our home. The dinner was for Mrs. Rosa Parks,<sup>1</sup> and Steve had worked diligently in preparing for the next day when we would confer an honorary degree on Mrs. Parks. Throughout the evening, as the conversation took various turns, it was evident that Steve Goldstein had all the right values. His integrity, humility, compassion, and love of justice were as apparent as if they had been written on his forehead. Later, when Patsy and I were reviewing the evening, Patsy asked, "Do you have other faculty as fine as Steve?" I played for time and said, "Do you mean law faculty?" She answered, "No. Any faculty." I could think of none.

When Don Weidner, Steve's Dean, friend, and frequent dinner companion, began to talk about the memorial service for Steve, we took some time to reflect on the many communities in which he held full citizenship. We were not surprised to discover that he was an incomparable colleague to many somewhat diverse groups.

He was a remarkable force in the community of scholars, regarded nationwide for his scholarly work in criminal procedure and post-conviction relief.

He was a true colleague to the faculty of the law school and the campus. He led the movement to establish community service as a goal for both the law school and the university.

He was a mentor and a determined advocate for those people across the country who believe that the death penalty is administered in an unjust and discriminatory way.

He was a funny and lively luncheon companion to lawyers and judges who gather at Mike's Cafe each noon.

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\* President, Florida State University, 1994-. President of the American Bar Association, 1991-92. The author served as the fourth dean of the FSU College of Law from 1984 to 1989 and has continued as a member on the law school faculty. B.A., 1955, University of the South; J.D., 1961, University of Florida.

1. See A. Leon Higginbotham, *Rosa Parks: Foremother & Heroine Teaching Civility and Offering a Vision for a Better Tomorrow*, 22 FLA. ST. U. L. REV. 899 (1995).

He was a leader in the field of legal services, one of the principal authors of the Florida plan for comprehensive legal services and a recognized leader of the Florida Bar Foundation, tenacious in his determination that the organization not lose its commitment to providing legal services to the poor.

It is hard to think of anyone who will be missed by more communities. How many people will it take to wear the hats he wore, to serve as the Associate Dean of the law school, to provide the ideal of public service to the next generation of lawyers, to keep the Florida Bar Foundation on its intended tasks, to share his seats at FSU basketball games, to lead the Volunteer Lawyers Resource Center, to call us and urge us to remember that our oath ends with words that pledge us never to reject the cause of the defenseless or the oppressed, to join us at our dinner table and bring us so much friendship, to inspire us by his example, and to remind us of our true profession.

Much is wrong with civilization at the end of the twentieth century, but there are some good spirits at work in our affairs. Justice for all is not yet a reality, but it is more than a dream. We are re-discovering that caring and compassion are often their own rewards. We are beginning to understand that violence and cruelty and abuse or neglect of the weak create a world that is not safe for any. Steve Goldstein was a familiar of these better spirits.

A few years from now the FSU Law Class of 1994 will hold a reunion and remember together their golden years on campus. Eventually they will recall their teachers and discuss their merits, laugh at their foibles, and finally examine the effect these professors had on their lives. When they list those who taught them law and justice as well, those who taught by example and not by precept only, those who cared for them and taught them to care, those who helped them form the values that have sustained, the name of Steve Goldstein will be near the top of every list.

Perhaps they will remember Peter Finlay Dunne's great character, Mr. Dooley, who told us that "The favorite past time of man was cruelty to other men." If they do, they will surely note that Steve Goldstein was incapable of cruelty to other men and women and abhorred the cruelty of others.

Someday when this nation is more just and more humane, scholars will gather and ask how did this better nation come to be? Who were the early heroes that provided legal service to the indigent and inspired their peers to do the same? Who molded our social conscience so that justice withheld because of poverty became a social disgrace? Who were the advocates of the condemned and the weak that pointed us to a better world?

If their memories are good, Steve Goldstein will be celebrated as one who had a major influence on the better spirits of his age.

In all of this, Steve was faithful until the end. When I learned of Steve's death, I left the office and drove home because I could not get my mind on other matters. The next morning, when I returned to the office, I had three "E-Mail" messages from Steve — messages written a few hours before his death. The first dealt with a clemency case we were working on, the second with another death penalty case where he was seeking volunteer counsel, and the third was advocating community service for university students.

Steven M. Goldstein walked with us for not quite fifty years. He made our world better. He made our lives richer. He made our hearts glad.

