

DEDICATIONS

TRIBUTE TO GABRIEL WILNER

*Anne Burnett**

I am proud to have called Gabriel Wilner professor, colleague, and friend. When I first met him in Brussels in 1988, little was I to know that he would be responsible for shaping my career as an international law librarian, just as he shaped the careers of many law students who would become transnational lawyers, law professors, and leaders in international organizations.

I was fortunate to attend the University of Georgia School of Law after Gabriel established numerous programs bringing the world to Georgia Law students and sending Georgia Law students out into the world. His Brussels Seminar on the Law and Institutions of the European Union brought the EU to life for many UGA (and other) law students over the decades. Drawing upon his extensive network of connections and warm personality, Gabriel was able to amass an impressive faculty of EU officials, European Court justices, legal practitioners, and distinguished European law professors. What an amazing experience for an American law student! Gabriel also worked hard to make the Brussels Seminar affordable so that no interested Georgia Law student would be unable to attend for financial reasons, and he delighted in sharing his beloved Brussels with each new cadre of eager Americans. Fellow Brussels Seminar alum Stephanie Zervas recalls fondly Gabriel's love of good food and drink, including the fun La Maison d'Atila Mongolian barbecue where we indulged in cask wine, raspberries, and crème fraîche to our hearts' content. I also remember his generosity in buying us all "a good Belgian beer" at a bar near the Battle of the Bulge Memorial, as well as treating the group to a lovely dinner at his favorite Brussels restaurant.

Gabriel's course in international legal transactions was outside of what I considered my major areas of interest, but I took the class simply because I liked him. To my surprise, I enjoyed it thoroughly and was pleased to find it

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useful when later clerking for a state court judge. Gabriel always exhibited respect and kindness in the classroom. He confided to me years later that he could not abide the thought of embarrassing students in the classroom; instead, he strove to coax gently the answer from a floundering student.

Gabriel served for decades as the faculty advisor to the *Georgia Journal of International and Comparative Law*, working to make the students' experiences on the *Journal* useful both educationally and professionally. As Editor in Chief, I was surprised and delighted to receive phone calls from several *Journal* alumni who were urged by Gabriel to contact the new group of editors with advice and encouragement.

When I returned to Georgia Law six years after graduation, it was to take a job that would not have existed without the numerous international programs Gabriel initiated. The demand for a position dedicated to foreign and international legal research led to the creation of a new International Law Librarian position in 1996. Gabriel had not been sitting still in those years: he now also taught a course in International Legal Research, and in 1999 he invited me to co-teach this course with him. This librarian's heart was especially warmed by his appreciation of the special skills necessary to conduct international and foreign legal research. I sorely miss his warm and relaxed presence in the class. One of my most poignant memories is of our class scheduled for the evening of Wednesday, September 12, 2001. Many classes were cancelled as the horror of the events of the day before unfolded. Gabriel suggested that we make the class optional and offer up the time for our students to talk. With a full classroom, we ended up discussing what kinds of responses the United States could make under international law. Several students thanked me later for deciding to hold class that day and giving them the chance to talk. I told them that it was Professor Wilner's kindness and wisdom that led me to make that decision.

One of the features I found most attractive about Georgia Law when I applied to law schools was the presence of lawyers from all corners of the earth in the LL.M. program. Gabriel worked hard to make Georgia Law's LL.M. program for foreign-trained lawyers highly respected and diverse. Rubbing elbows with colleagues from around the globe was an enlightening and fun experience for our little group dubbed "the Internationalists" by our professor. Georgia Law LL.M. graduates now work in law firms, universities, corporations, and international organizations the world over. Their fond memories of the program, including their professor, lead them to meet somewhere in the world once a year, and I look forward eagerly to their reunions in Athens every five years.

I cannot discuss the experience of an international law student at Georgia Law without mentioning the Wilners' home. The LL.M. students and many of "the Internationalist" J.D. students enjoyed the famous hospitality

provided by Gabriel and his wonderful wife, Gisèle, over the decades. Their welcoming home, beloved pets, and warm conversation quickly put any visitor at ease. The spirited conversations about social issues, politics, and, of course, good food and drink, were always a pleasure.

I miss Gabriel's deep social conscience. I miss his good humor and the mischievous twinkle in his eye. And while I also miss witnessing his kindness toward students, I know that the programs he established here at Georgia Law will continue to benefit law students for decades to come, and that is a legacy of which he would be proud.