

OBITUARY



Gordon Goldberg, LLB, MA, Barrister, (1938-2015) former Reader in Law and Master of Moots at the University of Buckingham died on 13 June 2015, the feast day of Saint Anthony of Padua. The University received many tributes from Alumni and former academic colleagues. We cannot print them all but we are sure our readers would wish to share in some of them.

“In these days of Powerpoint presentations, virtual learning environments, research excellence frameworks, student surveys, peer review, personal developments plans, and all the bureaucratic paraphernalia surrounding teaching in higher education, one can despair that no room is left for inspirational teachers. Perhaps Gordon Goldberg and his like are a dying breed, but it could never be said of Gordon that he went quietly. In his time at the University of Buckingham, he left an indelible mark on a whole generation of law students. He will also long be remembered in the town if only for riding his bicycle everywhere with his academic gown flying in the wind behind him. Central to understanding Gordon’s power and influence were two loves, his love of the common law (he never really reconciled himself to Britain’s membership of the European Union) and his love of and respect for students (for whom he could have infinite time and care). From both he expected a beauty and precision

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of language. All of this was seen, not just in the formal teaching environment, but also in his conduct as Master of Moots. I doubt we will see his like again.”

(Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alistair Alcock)

“Out of my law lecturers at Buckingham, he stood out as kind, engaging, non-judgemental, thoroughly decent and knowledgeable. I have never forgotten the genuine kindness and respect I received from Mr Gordon Goldberg”

(Donna I. Achara, Alumna)

“Like Lord Denning, Gordon respected the power of language. His unique use of English both ancient and modern was developed into a unique, distinct and memorable prose. Gordon was passionate about law, its impartiality and its justice. Unsurprisingly, the case of *Prohibitions del Roy* [1607] EWHC J23 (KB), in which Sir Edward Coke in challenging the power of King James asserted that cases were to be decided ‘but by the artificial reason and judgment of Law’ was central to Gordons quest that law was above no man.

He had a reputation far and wide and when the Honourable Justice Debbie Mortimer was appointed to the Federal Court of Australia in 2013 it was mentioned in the speech given in her honour that in 1987, she was articled to Gordon Goldberg of Goldberg and Window Solicitors, Richmond. In her address when she was sworn in she said of Gordon Goldberg ‘He is a formidable lawyer and I learned a great deal from him. He deplored the use of pro forma documents and precedents, instead advising me, "Dear, go and read the relevant legislation and any court rules and then read the cases and work it out". Reading the relevant legislation and any court rules, then reading the cases and working it out, is, I have found, rather a sound general approach to the practice of the law’. Gordon was not only a man of reason he was also a man of passion for teaching and will also be remembered for his generosity of spirit and love for his students”

(Dean of Law, Professor Susan Edwards)

“He took the ‘Academic Stage’ of legal education seriously and would never compromise on its demands. It meant – and does mean – that students studying law understand those key principles that give it its very strength and purpose. This is not always an easy task to undertake. One can make the distinction between the obscurity of expression and the expression of obscurity. Gordon was never guilty of the former, but viewed the latter as pardonable. He was, after all,

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endeavouring to explain difficult concepts. Difficult though they were, they were still well worthy of the effort. I am sure that many a law student – just as I did – finally understood, finally realised the wisdom of Gordon’s words long after they were spoken. I am sure that he did know – or at least suspect – what a colossal impact he had had on generations of lawyers who graduated from all the institutions which he adorned”.

“He was a man, take him all in all, I shall not look upon his like again.” Hamlet, Act 1 sc 2, 1, 187.
(Owain Blackwell, former academic colleague)