

PROFESSOR JOHN ROBIN BRADLEY: A MAN OF GRACE, HUMOR, AND INTEGRITY

*I. Richard Gershon**

I met Professor Bradley when I was serving as the Founding Dean at the Charleston School of Law. In 2005, that law school was going through the accreditation process with the American Bar Association (ABA), in the hopes of becoming an approved school. As one of the steps in approval of law schools, the ABA sends seven-member site teams to review every aspect of the law school.

In 2005, Professor John Robin Bradley was on the initial site team visiting the Charleston School of Law. I was impressed with him from the first time I met him. In his assessment of the school, he was firm, but gentle. That is a rare quality. His intelligence and sense of humor were easily apparent. He was a pleasure to work with, even in that tense time in Charleston.

One incident from that visit will always stick out to me. New schools (truly any schools) are far from perfect, and Charleston was no exception. I reported directly to a board, composed of the five founders of the law school. They were prominent lawyers and judges, who really wanted to do things the right way. In one case, however, they simply got it wrong. Our faculty had approved giving credit to students who served as teaching assistants for the legal writing program. This was not unusual, and was a practice in place at several approved law schools. About a week before classes started, the board became concerned about giving this credit instead of pay for the teaching assistants and overruled the faculty and me. They decided to pay the students, instead. The students and faculty were not happy about this, even though the board's decision was well intentioned. I was concerned, because faculty governance is an important consideration in the ABA accreditation process, and the board had clearly disregarded the faculty's wishes on this issue.

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When the site team heard about this incident, all seven of them appeared in my office. They asked what happened, and I admitted that it was not our finest moment, but assured them that the board now understood its role in the governance structure and that this would never happen again. Professor Bradley looked at me and said, "That was unseemly."

Now, in 2013, having had the opportunity to work with this wonderful man for three years, my main goal has been to never do anything that John Robin Bradley would find unseemly!

John Robin, it has been an honor and a pleasure, and I know that you will be a part of this law school for many years to come.