

## Joshua Dressler Tribute

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There is so much to say about Joshua Dressler, whose work has ranged so widely and has had such massive impact. Some great legal scholars tend their own scholarly gardens, burnishing their scholarship for publication in law reviews and books. Others seek influence largely through the production of reference works and casebooks. Yet others invest most of their energy in teaching and institutional service, while still others turn their attention to law reform projects in the world. Joshua Dressler is the rare creature in the legal academy who has had major influence in every single one of these domains. I am exhausted just *thinking* about all that he has done, and I hope that the collected tributes manage to do justice to the breadth and depth of his accomplishments.

For my part, I want to speak about my personal interactions with Joshua, which I think may shed light on part of the secret to his success. I got to know Joshua when I worked with him on the second edition of the four-volume *Encyclopedia of Crime and Justice* for which he served as Editor-in-Chief (Sandy Kadish had played that role for the first edition of this influential reference work). I served as one of six “field” editors under Joshua, covering the field of criminal procedure. The overarching project was gargantuan in its attempt to achieve encyclopedic scope and scholarly depth at the same time. Over the several years in which I worked under Joshua’s direction to complete the *Encyclopedia*, which was published in 2002, my respect for the man grew by leaps and bounds. His erudition, high standards, organization, and attention to detail made this project an intellectual achievement to celebrate.

But it was what are sometimes called the “soft” skills that Joshua brought to the project that made the biggest impression on me. Despite the many big egos, late submissions, and other snafus familiar to anyone who has ever worked on an

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edited volume, Joshua remained ever calm and even cheerful. The man had seemingly endless patience. He never raised his voice or even expressed the mildest exasperation. As the mother of young children at the time, I remember secretly coveting his imperturbability in the face of a constant stream of irritations. I'd like to say that the experience made me a better parent, teacher, and manager, but I'm afraid it only highlighted to me how far I would have to travel to reach Joshua's enlightened state. In the years that followed my work with Joshua on the *Encyclopedia* project, I heard from many others who encountered Joshua that he brought these same seemingly simple qualities to everything he did (scholarship, teaching, law reform, etc.). Joshua's patience, instinctive kindness, generosity, humor, and utter lack of pomposity and self-importance (despite his actual real-world importance) were legendary and made it a joy to work with him.

And that, I think, is part of the secret of Joshua's success. Because it is a joy to work with him, everyone wants to work with him. This simple fact facilitated not only the publication of the *Encyclopedia*, but also the creation of the *Ohio State Journal of Criminal Law* and the success of Joshua's many co-authored ventures, including his enormously successful casebook. And the same qualities that facilitated these intellectual collaborations also no doubt contributed to Joshua's legendary success in the classroom. Students learn best not through intimidation, but rather through intellectual rigor mixed with kindness and encouragement. Surely, it is this powerful elixir that led to Joshua's teaching awards at five different law schools—which is to say, at every school in which he has taught.

In the academic world, we tend to celebrate most the most cerebral. And Joshua certainly deserves to be celebrated for his extraordinary intellectual achievements. But the personal qualities that Joshua has brought to our corner of the academic world are far rarer and, I dare to say, more precious. In the years since I worked closely with Joshua, my children have grown and left the nest, and I have yet to reach what I think of as Joshua's zen. But I still aspire, and I know that I speak for multitudes when I express gratitude for the model of warmth and humaneness that Joshua has given us.