

**Compilation of Remarks – Eric Biel**  
**December 1, 2023**

**Steve Biel**

Before we hear about Eric’s contributions to law, business, human and workers’ rights, I’d like to say a few words about his short but shining careers as a juvenile delinquent and as a European tour guide. These two moments in his life are more continuous with what followed than you might imagine.

When our parents went out on Friday or Saturday nights, we’d meet up with our friends and neighbors Jeff and Steve Sugerman to take up the pre-caller-ID, pre-teen, sociopathic pastime of making prank calls—“phonies,” in midwestern lingo. Under Eric’s leadership, we pushed the genre to its creative heights, for example in our call to the Eugene Zywicki family. (Zywicki, if I remember right, was the second-to-last entry in the Cleveland phone book. We also called the last entry—the Zyzizlis.) “Good evening, Mr. Zywicki,” Eric said, and identified himself as a made-up DJ from a made-up radio station. He invited Mr. Zywicki to participate in a contest to paraphrase a knotty series of sentences, which Eric wrote and which were completely nonsensical. I only remember the beginning of the first line, and please forgive me for using an explicit anatomical term in this sacred space. The line went: “Heretofore rendered hapless by the onrushing scrotums.” Whatever Mr. Zywicki said in response, Eric enthusiastically declared him a winner. And here’s where Eric’s early adolescent genius really came into play. The prize was a toothpick supposedly used by President James Garfield, a fellow Ohioan. We actually mailed a gnawed-on toothpick to the Zywickis. This is what comedians call committing to the bit. It’s also called committing mail fraud. But what meticulousness, what thoroughness, what follow through! Many of you, I’m sure, experienced these in later, much more socially productive ways.

We got a wonderful note from Jeff Sugerman this week. He said: “[Eric’s] charmingly odd and quirky demeanor couldn’t help but rub off on me. [Our] interactions . . . and [his] unique brand of humor and utter silliness forever live inside of me, and my brothers too. Which explains why I felt like I lost a part of myself when I read your message yesterday morning. Mad respect for Eric’s unabashed ability to simply be himself.”

Eric spent his junior year of college in Bologna, and my parents and I joined him for a trip around Italy during winter break. Since he’d had been in the country for three months, we deferred to his expertise and to his increasingly well-worn and marked-up copy of the Blue Guide. He checked off sites in the book as we visited them in rapid order, and the trip quickly crossed the line between vacation and ordeal. His 90-day knowledge of national and local customs extended to a firm prohibition on ordering a cappuccino in the afternoon, since this just wasn’t done by Italians, who only drank espresso after 11 am. Eventually the exhaustive pace and exhausting itinerary—we were required to wake up at 6—combined with the freezing pensiones to give us all terrible colds. It may be in connection to these rigors that my mother got drunk on two glasses of wine at dinner one night—I’m pretty sure this was the only time in

her life she ever got drunk—and we had to prop her up to walk out of the restaurant. Knowing Eric’s record-keeping habits, I wouldn’t be surprised if that copy of the Blue Guide is still on a shelf or in a box. I’m grateful in retrospect. Once you’ve seen every church and museum in Florence, Rome, and Venice, you never have to do that again, and on subsequent visits you can spend your days in cafes, parks, and restaurants.

Eric’s list-making, checking-off, and record-keeping were never just for their own sake. His meticulousness and thoroughness were his way of living his passions. He wanted to see all of those sites, not just to have seen them. The depth of his commitments—to his work, to Dana, David, and Josh, to our parents, to his friends, to Cleveland sports, to everyone and everything he cared about, and to the bit—was extraordinary. We all and always could count on him.

In our last text exchange, last Saturday, I mentioned that it was the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my Bar Mitzvah, and more significantly of the famous 10-10 Ohio State-Michigan tie game that controversially propelled the Buckeyes to the Rose Bowl. A number of guests, probably a majority, would have preferred not to be at the luncheon, Eric among them. So he brought his transistor radio and considerately went to the microphone to report the score of the game, frequently, in real time. Here’s what he said in his text: “At least I didn’t interrupt the service itself.”

## David Biel

On behalf of my mom, Josh and myself, we want to express our profound gratitude to all of you for being here today. We are overwhelmed by the notes, texts, cards, and social media posts about my dad. They really mean so much to us.

Before I talk about what my dad meant to me, I want to thank several people. My dad was so fortunate to have the outstanding oncology team at Sibley Johns Hopkins Hospital with him at every step of his illness. Dr. Valerie Lee, his primary oncologist, was his quarterback and set the strategy for treatments that allowed him to function at a high level for a long time. Dr. Andrew Learner performed multiple procedures to keep his respiratory issues at bay. These doctors were not just dedicated medical professionals—they quickly became friends to my mom and dad. But it wasn't just the doctors that helped him—he got to know the oncology nurses, the medical technicians, the administrative staff, and many others. We also want to thank my dad's longtime internist, Dr. Matthew Parker, who followed it all and made sure he got the tests and treatments he needed.

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All throughout my life I've been told how much I look like my Dad. Whether it came from one of his many longtime work friends who I was meeting for the first time—or from close family members at Passover or Thanksgiving—I can't count the number of times I've been told how much I physically resemble my Dad. And while I gradually grew to better appreciate these comparisons—I'm especially lucky, for example, to have inherited his thick hair genes—I'd be lying if I said that it wasn't sometimes weird or uncomfortable to receive these comments when I was 10-years old.

However, speaking to you now, I also know that these similarities extend well beyond my physical looks. Over the course of my life, my dad has imparted on me a wealth of knowledge, principles, and wisdom that help guide me through my own life challenges and experiences. In so many ways, I try to model my life after how my dad lived his.

Like my dad, I try to live a life where I can draw upon not only my knowledge, but also my guiding morals and principles, to help others, including those from more underserved backgrounds and communities. As Meg and Bennett will speak to soon, my dad dedicated his life and career to working with and providing support to marginalized worker communities around the world. And while I may not possess the same Princeton and Yale credentials as my dad, I also strive to take on career and life opportunities where I can work with and learn from different groups of people and share knowledge and resources that they can use to learn and thrive.

My dad was principled in all different facets of life—sometimes to a fault. Somehow, my dad was always able to toe the thin line of being unwaveringly loyal to his family, friends and communities and being equitable to everyone he encountered. Sometimes, this balancing act created conflict. When I was winding down my baseball career at age 13, my dad was asked to

umpire one of our games because the usual umpire was absent. It was a close game, and I came up to the plate in a particularly crucial moment late in the game. With a full count, the pitcher threw a ball straight and low. I kept the bat on my shoulder, and as I prepared to take my base, my dad called me out on strikes. Never again did I question my dad's commitment to ethics in sports, no matter who was involved.

Whether it's in my deep vocabulary of trivial baseball names and statistics, my love of the stupidest comedy TV shows and movies imaginable, or my unyielding stubbornness to life's inconveniences, my dad has shaped my life and personal identity in too many ways to quantify. But, even more importantly, my dad has always been the kind, funny, thoughtful, and generous person that I aspire to be. I know I will continue to live my life and pursue experiences and opportunities that enable me to realize and share my dad's unwavering morals and selflessness.

Thank you.

## Josh Biel

[I told myself I wouldn't pull a Roman Roy up here today]. If you don't understand that reference, it's from the show Succession. If you watched Succession, you may be thinking that was pretty insensitive. Well, Succession was my dad's favorite show, and I can promise you he would've found that hilarious.

You may also be wondering why I'm wearing a purple tie up here today. Purple happened to be my dad's favorite color. I asked my mom the other day if she had any idea why it was his favorite color, and she had no idea. One thing we do know is that he never wavered on it being his favorite color, even when the Baltimore Ravens were "stolen" from Cleveland in the late 90s and dawned purple as their primary color. I think this describes my dad pretty well – he was a person with strong conviction; who was incredibly loyal across all facets of his life, with family, friends, and colleagues alike.

A lot of the people speaking today are going to detail how amazing of a person my dad was – he was kind, smart (some, including myself, would even say encyclopedic), empathetic, and generous just to name a few qualities. But my dad was also incredibly funny. He introduced me and my brother to so much, probably, at a younger age than most. Austin Powers, Airplane, Naked Gun, Annie Hall, Best in Show, and Borat, to name a few. Just the other night, we watched A Mighty Wind together – one of Christopher Guest's more obscure movies – for the first time in well over 10 years, and couldn't stop laughing at a few of the more childish bits in the film. To paraphrase one of my dad's oldest childhood friends, Jeff Sugarman – "the interaction that I had with him, and his unique brand of humor and utter silliness, forever lives inside of me."

My dad also loved sports, particularly baseball. We used to travel the country together, often as a family, for my travel baseball games – from Ruther Glen, Virginia, to Knoxville, Tennessee, down to Sarasota, Florida – stopping at every Golden Corral and Waffle House that laid in our path. He used to write up game summaries for my high school team and put so much – and I mean so much – enthusiasm and effort into these articles, which were posted on a website called League Lineup for tens upon tens of people to read. For example, when we beat Poolesville High School on their home field in our 2012 season opener, my dad wrote:

*A century and a half ago, Poolesville was the venue of frequent incursions by Confederate forces who crossed the nearby Potomac, and many Union troops stationed in the town – including the only U.S. Senator ever lost in battle – were killed in the Battle of Ball's Bluff (a fitting enough name) in late 1861 just across the river in Virginia. This time around, the Viking invaders [my high school was the Vikings] came from the opposite direction and, while doing nothing to disturb the town's peace and tranquility, still left an unmistakable imprint with their bats, gloves, and arms.*

My dad may not have taught me how to use a grill (thanks, mom), change a tire, or fix just about anything. But he taught me lessons much more important than any of those things. He

taught me to always look for the best in people; to show curiosity in people's lives, regardless of their background, ethnicity, or status; to be always be respectful and polite; and to treat people with kindness and compassion. These are the lessons and qualities that I'll carry on forever. Dad, we love you, and we'll all miss you very, very much.

## Howard Flack

First of all, thanks Dana for making an exception by giving me up to 30 minutes for my remarks, I do appreciate it. (only kidding)

This is my Open Letter to Eric:

Dear Eric—

It is difficult to grasp that you are no longer physically here with us. I say “physically” because we all know that you are here with us today, in spirit, in our thoughts and prayers, and in our hearts. You know, Eric, that will always be the case. Still, it’s tough to say goodbye and I know you feel the same way. You fought a good fight with determination, grace, grit and occasional humor, though it was difficult on occasion for you to laugh. I admire your strength through it all while also maintaining your commitment to work to make the world a better place. There is no doubt that you did. I don’t want to embarrass you, but there are some further things I’d like to say.

I’m sure you would agree with me that one of our most favorite things to do was to reminisce about the past. So, let’s reminisce one more time together. Oh, how lucky Debbie and I are to have known you and Dana, David and Josh for nearly 25 years. I know you will fact-check every word I say, but please give me some slack. Although your memory was sharp as a tack, I must admit that time has taken some of mine away. But I do remember attending Parents Night when Josh and our son Michael were in kindergarten. After a few weeks in school, Michael reported that he had made a good friend at school, a kid named Josh. Parents Night is where I think we first met you and Dana. Dana was a young lawyer at the FTC at the time and you Eric were hard at work flying all over the world for your job. Once we realized that you were THE parents of Josh, we too became quick friends.

I learned early on that you and I shared a passion for baseball. Of course, your interest in sports went well beyond baseball—you were a fan of Cleveland as well as all of Cleveland’s professional sports teams—the Guardians (formerly the “Indians”), the Browns and of course, the Cavaliers. I remember the excitement as you, David and Josh celebrated when the Cavaliers signed, and then re-signed, LeBron James. With one exception, I also remember how deflated you were as each of the Cleveland teams would more often than not disappoint their fans by the end of each season. You clearly had a lot of influence on David and Josh as both initially became Cleveland fans. It is not easy to become a fan of Cleveland teams, but I know how it feels being a Detroit Tigers fan myself. In later years, you could have gloated at the success of the Guardians compared to the Tigers, but you never did. Instead, you and David started following the Washington Nationals and for years, you both would attend Nationals games, where your frustrations with Cleveland teams continued but now, you found that you had similar frustrations with the Nationals. Nonetheless, you really enjoyed spending the time with David and Josh, and it was all fun in the end.

During the spring of that kindergarten year, it became clear that both Josh and Michael had an interest in baseball, so we organized the Pirates, a youth baseball team of 5-year-olds comprised of boys and girls. I know you remember that! I also remember as I'm sure you do that our center fielder carried an umbrella when it rained followed closely by her father. Our goal was to teach the kids the basic skills... hitting, catching, running, all of which would have been for naught if the kids lost interest. It was our job to make sure they didn't, and so I proposed that we initiate a baseball card award system under which we would distribute packs of baseball cards to each player after each practice. You were worried that the award system would be construed as a "bribe" which you initially opposed, but I was able to convince you that it was simply a motivational tool, an explanation that you reluctantly accepted. I explained that the kids needed to understand what all the numbers on the back of each card meant and that you were perfect for that role, as well as using your encyclopedic knowledge of the game to describe what role the players on each card had in baseball history. Despite our unique training program, sometime later we ultimately relinquished our positions as coaches as we believed that the kids who did not lose interest (including Josh and Michael) needed more (and better) coaching than we were able to provide. It was no surprise to me that, although the Pirates were no more, our friendship with you and Dana continued to thrive as we found that we had more in common than baseball.

Together with you and Dana, we watched as our sons went through middle school, and then high school. We became spectators as our sons played football, basketball and baseball. Truth be told, Debbie and Dana were not as passionate about sports as we were. But, they came to cheer on their sons. They both celebrated as die-hard fans tend to do after seeing Josh catch his first varsity touchdown pass, which happened to be thrown by his then best friend, a guy named Michael. They also both celebrated Josh who, as varsity catcher, called the only no-hitter thrown by a Whitman pitcher during their high school days. Only a few years earlier, you became the official scorer for Kevin Webb's travel team, the Cyclones, and we attended as many games as we could, including tournaments in Myrtle Beach and in Cooperstown, home to the baseball Hall of Fame. It was there that I realized you loved fine dining as much as I did. During our travels with the team, we would scour the countryside looking for our (and the team's) favorite restaurant—The Golden Corral, where we could eat as much steak, mac and cheese and banana pudding as we could handle. After high school, our boys went off to different colleges in different states, but their friendship continued to be as strong as ever while our friendship with you and Dana deepened as well. We often spent the Jewish holidays together as well as some New Years eves. Oh, how I enjoyed reminiscing with you about all of this, but now, who can I reminisce with? We had so many good times, so many exciting travels, so many excellent restaurants enjoying meals with you and Dana---I can't and won't let those memories go. I promise you this—I will never go to another baseball game, or the Golden Corral, without thinking of you.

Eric, I apologize to you and Dana (and to all of you) for going off on these tangents. But you have to understand, being with you and Dana during every stage of our boys' development is what made it all so special. And that is only one reason why today, you and Dana remain so special in our hearts.



I know you need to leave, Eric, and I should probably go on as well. But know this, in my book you were truly a man for all seasons. Smart, articulate, and genuinely nice, so much so that people from all walks of life trusted you and you trusted them. You made human rights your life's work, and you accomplished a lot. As often said—"the world is a better place because you were in it". All the while, you were a loving husband and a wonderful father. You fell in love and married Dana who became your best friend. What's that? I know, you know you couldn't have fought this dreadful disease as long as you did without Dana's counsel, love and support and trust me, she knows how grateful you are. I know that you wanted more time and that you will forever love her and your boys, but trust me, they know. You were the quintessential family man and took great delight in seeing your family succeed. You were always there for them no matter what. You were there for your mom and dad, supporting them on the ground in their time of need. You supported Dana in her professional endeavors and took great pride in her successes. You gave sage advice to many, including Dana, David and Josh, and I'm sure they were better for it. You were a terrific colleague and friend to so many of us. We all love you and will miss you. Your memory is a blessing for all of us.

## Jim Wyda

Good morning. I am Jim Wyda, one of Eric's many long-time friends who are here today. And grieving.

There is a Quaker saying "Let Your Life Speak" that seems to capture well my thoughts about Eric. It means to let the highest truths and values guide everything you do. Be judged not by who you say you are. But how you live. Eric lived an extraordinary life. Guided by the highest values. Eric let his life speak.

I met Eric in 1981 when we started law school. We were in the same entryway to the law school dorm. We quickly figured out that we had much in common, and a lifelong friendship followed. We both had roots in Baltimore. It was home for me. I was born and raised there. Eric attended JHU and considered Baltimore a second home after his beloved Cleveland. We were both wildly passionate about sports. Neither one of us were particularly talented. We played pickup and intramural basketball together. And, like good friends do, told each other we were better than we really were. Mostly, we were devoted fans of our hometown teams. And never tired of discussing their successes and failures.

Everyone at YLS thinks their special. But, Eric was really special. He was very smart. But there were a lot of smart people there. He had a scary encyclopedic knowledge of sports trivia. But it was more than that. He was a compelling authentic presence at YLS because it was never about him.

Our law school classmate and friend, Alison H, sent me a note that beautifully captured Eric in law school and throughout his life. Eric was warm, generous, funny, quick to laugh, and, as Alison put it, Eric was completely engaged with everyone around him and the world. Law school is not a warm nurturing environment. But when you were Eric Biel's friend, you felt seen. And heard. And safe. Eric's . . . constancy was a source of comfort for me and I think many others as well.

After law school, life took off. There were clerkships, and law firms, and a beach house where friend groups combined. It was there that Eric met Dana. As he reminded me recently, Dana is "the best thing that ever happened to me." Together, they did great things. They married. They built extraordinary careers and, with David and Josh, an extraordinary family.

I was privileged to know Eric for 42 years. When I realized how sick he was, I tried hard to spend as much time with him as I could. I only wished we had more time.

Here are a few things I learned over our long friendship. From his very full life. And from his illness and death too.

1. Eric was so generous and kind. You could forget how passionate he was. He had a deep and abiding sense of fairness and justice. Eric could have done anything after

law school. He chose to fight for human rights and fair labor practices in the U.S. and in the world. It comforts me to think that there are workers and their families around the world who don't know Eric's name or his important work, who are living better lives because of Eric. He tried to make the world a better place. And he did. He let his life speak.

2. Eric was humble. He had an accomplished career. But I never heard him once brag about himself or his work.

3. Eric worked hard. He believed in hard work. But family came first. Nothing at work was so important that it could interfere with David or Josh's sporting events, little league baseball games, a rec league basketball game or high school football games. Eric never missed a game. I love the image of this deeply accomplished man holding the sideline marker at Josh's football games because he wanted to help. He wanted to be close.

4. As Alison put it, Eric was engaged with the world. He was the most intellectually curious person I ever met. Eric consumed news. He was totally engaged in the world, his community, life.

5. Dana could get Eric to a museum exhibition. A Broadway show. But Eric's idea of fine art was the Austin Powers' movies, which he could watch over and over and never grow tired of the same jokes.

6. Eric loved his family. He knew it was his greatest achievement. Dana was the love of his life. His abiding love for Dana, and Dana's extraordinary strength, sustained him throughout his illness. Josh and David were his sons and his best friends. In many ways, they are just like him. But Eric saw and loved the ways they were different just as much.

7. Eric was a great friend. He saw the good in all of us. And kindly overlooked our flaws. (INSERT MOSBY STORY)

8. Finally, my friend's illness and death taught me something. Character is essential. It's indelible. How Eric lived, was how he died.

Soon after I learned that Eric was seriously ill, but while I was still probably in denial about how sick he was, I brought lunch to Eric at the house. He could see I was worried. We were cleaning up when he told me he didn't think of his situation as some...tragedy. And he didn't want me to think that way. He knew he was dying. But he was grateful for the life he had. Grateful for Dana and the boys. Grateful for family. Friends. His career.

Eric, who, as long as I can remember, never in his life bragged about himself, wanted to acknowledge that he had led a good life. He was sorry that he was not going to grow old with Dana, David and Josh. But he was grateful for the extraordinary life they shared together.

Until the very end, Eric was kind and generous. Never angry or resentful that he was leaving too soon. Missing out on things he had earned. Was entitled to. He lived a life of the highest truths and values.

Eric Biel let his life speak. And it was an extraordinary life. We will miss him.

## Meg Roggensack

I want to tell you about Eric the professor. We started teaching a seminar course on business and human rights at Georgetown law school 15 years ago - with Sarah Altschuller joining us a few years in.

Imagine yourselves in a stuffy, small odd shaped classroom in McDonough Hall. Eric's briefcase is overflowing, he's emptying part of it onto the table (WHICH I DID – SYLLABUS, BOOK, SHEAF OF NOTES AND OUTLINE, DIET COKE). Class begins with everyone introducing themselves – there are a lot of us, jammed up against each other. A few eyes roll. And that's when the magic happens.

Eric didn't take any aspect of our teaching lightly. From the first minutes of our first class, he was fully invested. As each student introduced themselves, he would draw them out, and find a way to connect. By the time we'd made our way around the room, we knew how the issue of business and human rights had affected students and their communities, what experiences they'd had that informed their understanding of the subject, and what questions they wanted us to explore. He created a welcoming and friendly space, and excitement for the shared adventure ahead.

We were pioneers. Business and human rights was relatively new, and we were among the first to teach this anywhere. Today, Georgetown has multiple offerings, and this subject is taught in nearly 200 institutions in 45 countries.

Eric was incredibly accomplished. At the Department of Labor, he shaped and implemented policies to improve workers' lives. His long title had the big power words, "Special" and "Secretary."

At the Fair Labor Association, he resolved disputes between workers and factories, evening the scales in countries where workers were at risk and without other remedies.

His desktops were famously messy –heaped with sheafs of papers held together by giant binder clips – and covered in unreadable notations. LOOK AT THIS – IT'S COMPLETELY UNREADABLE, AND HIS OFFICE WAS PILED HIGH WITH THESE. When not responsible for leading class, he often texted his sons or checked baseball scores. But he was always brilliant and effective, intervening often and well to elevate and deepen any discussion.

He found humor in the absurd –

He dealt with major league bureaucracies like the ILO or fellow agencies with which he had to coordinate Labor's position – State, Commerce, USTR – but Georgetown's bureaucracy for teaching a simple course was baffling – I mean, it is not as if we were trying to get out a National Action Plan on Responsible Business Conduct – but, for those of you here charged with this assignment, now would be a good time

He had a sporty and snug MiniCooper, perfectly adequate for his 15-pound poodle, but he absolutely loved how my 80-pound dog Benji would fill up all the space between us when we drove around together.

We went to spring training to see Max Scherzer pitch. We DID end up seeing him, to our surprise and delight- not pitching but ministering to injured turtles at a sanctuary we visited - when the pandemic shut down the games.

Though Eric's loyalties were to his Cleveland teams, he earned his stripes as a Washington Nationals fan by standing in the pouring rain for nearly four hours to witness their World Series clinching win. Nats fans, at least our seat mates Jorge, Sarah, Marti, Bama, Matt, Nancy, Izzy – I know you are out there – please stand and join me in one round of the unofficial anthem for that championship team – Baby Shark. Baby shark do do do do do do...

Illness didn't dim his spirits. This past spring, I picked him up from the hospital in Baltimore. He'd been poked and prodded for days, but instead of going home, he insisted on hitting a Jewish deli for corned beef and knishes.

I was in Geneva earlier this week for the UN's annual business and human rights conference that Eric regularly attended. Reminders of his work and impact were all around me. I met up with a former student, who helped build and is now running a major company's human rights program. I heard from a law firm associate about how Eric had been a valuable sounding board. And I learned of a study of the complaint mechanism that Eric managed and its value to workers.

From classroom to conference room, Eric's legacy lives on. I take comfort in knowing that the students he trained and guided over the years are carrying forward his purpose and values, and realizing his hopes for a better, fairer world.

And one more thing – I don't know about that Cleveland team that changed its name, but I do know Eric had faith that the Nats will win many more championships in the years to come.

## **Bennett Freeman**

This week I lost my best friend in Washington. Eric and I became friends when we first met in 1991—after he had already come to know and work with my late father in the trade policy arena. We shared the same birthday—two years apart—and we shared the same values and many of the same interests. He may have been two years younger, but his character and intellect soon inspired me to look up to him as I have over the last three decades.

This week we have lost a husband to Dana, a father to David and Josh, a brother to Steve. We have lost a friend, a colleague, a mentor, a teacher, a leader. We have lost as good a man—and as a good a person—as most of us have ever known or will have the privilege ever to know. I have never known a better man or a better person—or a more loyal friend—than Eric Biel.

The outpouring of grief—of love and loss—and of respect and admiration— is palpable here at Temple Beth El today. That outpouring has already been captured in tributes online and in by now countless conversations in Washington and elsewhere.

The shock news was shared in tears and hugs at the UN Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights at the Palais des Nations in Geneva on Tuesday. At the end of that sad day, Meg and I convened nearly 20 of Eric's colleagues from our community to honor him. One person after another praised Eric's qualities that we know so well: his commitment to his issues and causes; his humility amidst his many contributions and accomplishments; his support of others in their work and roles; his grace while gravely ill in these final months.

Eric's ethical and intellectual integrity anchored his life and career. Eric built a life and a career of purpose larger than himself: to his family and community; to public service and to American democracy; to human rights and labor rights around the world. He succeeded on all these fronts—consistently, exceptionally, brilliantly.

Eric's legacy will be kept alive by all of us. His legacy will live first and foremost with his family. His legacy will be carried forward by his friends and colleagues. His legacy is already instilled in the students he instructed and inspired together with Meg and Sarah. His legacy will remain felt in corners of the U.S. Government, and in factories and fields around the world, in the lives and livelihoods of the workers he supported until the day he died.

Eric is gone too soon and too young. But I know that we will not let Eric, our friendships, or his legacy go. We are with you, Eric; Eric, you are with us.