

In Celebration of
David E. Cardwell



1951-2009

Remembering David...

It was my pleasure to work with David on redevelopment projects and to count him as a friend. It is heartening to know that very many people will share these experiences and feelings. David leaves a legacy notable for the breadth and depth of his expertise and involvement in and commitment to work dedicated to the public good. He engaged the world with enthusiasm, integrity, pragmatism, creativity, warmth and humor (one could see the twinkle in his eye even over the phone). David was a good man who lived a life well spent and well enjoyed. He is missed.

~Barry Abramson
Newton, Massachusetts

Back before Coors Beer was distributed in Florida, David occasionally would get his hands on a bootlegged six pack. I knew David considered me a friend the first time he offered me a can.

I never developed a taste for mint juleps but that never stopped me from attending the "world renowned" parties that David and Dag hosted in Tallahassee to celebrate the Run for the Roses. I don't know for sure, but I would bet a bundle those parties continued in Lakeland and Orlando.

When Randy Newman had his surprise hit, "Short People," all of David's Tallahassee friends suggested it was written about him. David laughed along with us.

~Ed Albanesi
St. Augustine, Florida

The Baltimore Orioles extend our deepest condolences to David's family. His tireless efforts on behalf of baseball in the state of Florida have provided a legacy that will be enjoyed by fans for countless years to come. We honor his memory with a donation to his designated charity and fondly recall the many caps he wore throughout his distinguished career.

~The Angelos family and the ownership and management of the Orioles
Baltimore, Maryland

If forced to relate only one memory, I will not discuss the way his eyes would light up when talking about his kids and their shared love of sports. Nor will I write about how weird it was for Carol, Bob, my wife Dianne and me to see David on television for the first time from a west coast airport during the election aftermath, trying to give a balanced presentation when everyone around him was seemingly so unbalanced.

Instead, I will relate my recollection of events on the evening in Denver, Colorado, many years ago, at yet another ABA meeting. I don't remember which meeting, but I do remember David convincing Carol Dinkins and me to join him once again, after the evening formal events ended, in his never ending search for the perfect bar...great drinks, great music, and a dance floor which would hold his wild antics that he passed off as dancing.

The problem in Denver was that we were in the middle of a huge snowstorm, big even by Denver's standards. Being from Florida, David didn't have a keen appreciation for the problems caused by snow and so he led Carol and me on another quest for the perfect bar...Carol and I following like lemmings. Anyway, we eventually found a great candidate about 1 mile from the hotel and spent the remainder of the evening talking, drinking, and watching David try to dance. Poor Carol!

We closed down the bar and David led us home. Only problem was that about 12 inches of snow had dropped out of the sky since we had entered the bar, and cars were literally going nowhere. Truly, no cabs could be found anywhere and we were stuck with an hours freezing trek through two or three feet of snow. Carol and I were both certain we were going to freeze on the corner, in spite of David's unbridled optimism. Then, David told us to wait a minute.

Surely, two minutes later, down the street comes a Denver County snow plow with David accompanying the driver in the front seat. The plow stops, Carol and I get in, and off we go to the hotel, plowing the streets as we proceed. Somehow, David had convinced the driver to stop, pick us up, and take us back to the safety and warmth of the hotel while he continued with his job. True story. What a night... what a hoot...what a guy!

~Jim Baird

Chicago, Illinois

I was very saddened to hear of David's untimely death. What an inspiration & dear friend David was to so many people. I shall always remember his smile, the twinkle in his eye & his willingness to help anyone in need. He was truly a gentle man in all aspects of life. I will always treasure the many memories of wonderful times spent with the Cardwell family in the late 70's & 80" and of course the Kentucky Derby parties in Lakeland. I remember how happy & proud he was when his children were born. What joy he had in his children & wife! God has surely graced Heaven with David's presence. He will be sadly missed by all of us who knew him here on earth.

~Sue DeCourcy (formerly Turnipseed)

Lakeland, Florida

David was a good friend for over 40 years. We shared a lot of conversations about our parents, our families, BG friends, our jobs, our health, the weather, baseball and the University of Florida. He sure loved baseball and his alma mater.

But his first love was his family. He loved to share what was happening in your lives. The last time we spoke, he told me about the plans for Patrick's graduation and about Reece's trip to Israel. He was a very proud husband and father.

~Pat Benn (Bowling Green High School Class of 1969)

Auora, Colorado

David was instrumental in bringing me to Holland & Knight in 1996. Even though he was located in Florida and I in NYC, we worked together on a few projects and became friends and spent time together at firmwide meetings and other occasions. David was an excellent lawyer and a good friend. Even after each of us left Holland & Knight, we stayed in touch, with our conversations focused on sports and on family. He was so proud of Reece (the coxswain) and Patrick (the hockey player).

My deep sympathy and condolence for your loss, really a loss to all of us who knew David and his warmth and passion for life, but mostly to the three of you.

~Robert Bergen

New York, New York

From the first time I heard David's clear and wise advice I knew we were in good hands. When I needed the best of the best to educate others about redevelopment laws in Florida, David did not hesitate to volunteer and drive up to Daytona Beach despite a serious cold that would keep most of us home.

I have great respect and admiration for David and all he did for Daytona Beach and the State of Florida. David's quiet leadership, immense intellect, unquestioned integrity, loyalty to his profession and Florida, and wonderful sense of humor will be missed by all of us who had the opportunity to meet him.

~Reed Berger

Daytona Beach, Florida

I have been in the redevelopment field for 20 years and most of it in South Florida knowing (David). He played such a pivotal role in what south Florida is today because most cities with CRA's (Community Redevelopment Agencies) were his clients.

He was very committed to his work and we all think the field will never be same without him, but the thing that really stands out was how he constantly talked abouthis family.....From high school to college years he just loved telling stories about his kids and just glowed when talking about (their) successes. He had favorite stories (which sometimes he told us two or three times) and he just loved talking about how Reece handled her boss's clients or Patrick talked about sports.....Just know when he wasn't there in person, he sure was thinking and talking about you.

~Kim Briesemeister

Pompano Beach, Florida

David Cardwell's legacy was noted throughout Florida after his untimely death in November, 2009. Most accounts emphasized his expertise in election law, his unrivaled knowledge of Florida development law and his passion for baseball through the Florida Grapefruit League. His relationship to Historic Lakeland, however, was personal and of vital importance.

Jean Bunch remembers vividly meeting David and Dagmar at a party welcoming them to Lakeland at Hal and Marjorie Roberts's house in 1980. Historic Lakeland was just a few months old, and Jean looked forward to spreading the message about historic preservation to Lakeland's new City Attorney. To her great amazement and delight, David had studied law under Dr. Roy Hunt (one of the Founders of the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation) at the University of Florida, and he was thoroughly prepared and eager to put his knowledge to work in Lakeland.

With input from Larry Durrence (a City Commissioner) and Jim Edwards, David authored Lakeland's Preservation Ordinances, which have become known as a model for Florida cities who are serious about historic preservation ...His support of historic preservation was expressed at the state level as well through his leadership of the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation. The rich fabric of Lakeland's downtown is due in large part to the work David Cardwell did for Lakeland in the early 1980's.

~Jean Bunch

Lakeland, Florida

David was one of my best friends from the old Holland & Knight days (even though I was (the) newcomer having started in 1993). David and I worked on the project to bring MLB to Northern Virginia on behalf of Fairfax County and spent many long hours together on that effort. We were also partnered on the ABA's Standing Committee on Election Law. He was a wonderful guy, a very helpful mentor, and a great friend.....

~William (Bill) B. Canfield III

Washington, DC

I had the opportunity to work with David on numerous redevelopment projects including the City of Ocoee, City of Casselberry, City of Palm Bay and the City of Destin to name a few. Over the past 15+ years that I have known David, he taught me so much about redevelopment; I will treasure the

advice he gave me and the memories of working with a true believer in redevelopment and renewal of life.

~Ginger Corless
Orlando, Florida

Everyone who ever worked with him knew what an exceptional lawyer David was. His attention to detail was superb, and his grasp of the subject matter was very impressive. Some guys would let all those brains go to their head, so to speak, and become one of the insufferable egomaniacs we all know and detest. Not David.

As a charter member of the FADC (Fine Arts Development Council a/k/a the Friday Afternoon Drinking Club), he was a convivial after hours guy with a quick wit and a healthy sense of humor. Those gatherings made our low pay and status somewhat more bearable. I remember when he published his primer on the elections laws. He was kind enough to give me a copy, without any fanfare or bombast. I never suspected that it would become his stepping stone to the national spotlight about 25 years later. I doubt that he did either, but the excellence of his work shone through when opportunity presented itself.

I remember sitting with him at Clyde's during his 40 day running commentary during the 2000 election, eating popcorn and quaffing a glass or two of wine, talking about spring practice and who would be there, and then see him nonchalantly run off to the cameras and become the Shell Answer Man on election laws. Amazing! Just goes to show the truth about how great things sometime come in small packages. May God rest his soul, and grant comfort to those left behind.

~Mike Davidson
Tallahassee, Florida

Uncle David was a brilliant man. He could rattle off sports statistics quicker than anyone I knew and he could tell you any detail about all the baseball fields in he county. The only thing he may have been more passionate about than baseball was his Florida Gators!

My love for the Gators will always make me think of Uncle David.

I remember watching David on CNN during the 2001 election re-count and being so proud to see my Uncle on TV- I told everyone he was the Florida election law expert... and he really was! He always had fact to back up anything he said and that was true about anything he talked about. It was kind of impossible to win an argument with him because he knew too much about EVERYTHING.

~Andrea D'Ambrosio
Longmont, Colorado

Several summers back Andy & I headed across the country in our motor home, traveling from Colorado to a family wedding in Ithaca, NewYork. The road trip home to Colorado was not scheduled with any particular stops; since we had done our touring on the way out, coming home was mostly just lots of driving. To break up the monotony, we decided to see a baseball game at a major league stadium...but how to figure out where and when?!?! We called David to see what baseball games we might see along the way.

Summertime! Baseball! David!

Everything collided to give us a unique interaction with David. Daily cell phones calls to see where we should head next so we could catch a game – what fun! Got to love all the modern tools of

communication & David did (being one of the first people I knew to truly rely on handheld communicating tools: laptop/phone/Blackberry - I think he owned every generation of them from their inception.)

But, back to our baseball story - We had a grand time stopping for games in Cleveland and then in St. Louis at their new stadium (we got to go there before he did) as David coordinated stops for us from his desk in Florida including "waving" to stadiums as we passed (Indianapolis - no game that day) and a stop for a non-existent Double A game somewhere, guess the schedule changed. It was just a great way for us to get back home.

~Andy and Karen D'Ambrosio (brother-in-law and sister-in-law)
Longmont, Colorado

I recall one day long ago as a freshman at the University of Florida when a coed I had never seen before intercepted me as I was walking into class.

"Hi. I'm Dagmar. My sister is going to marry your brother." Whoa.

Anyway, she was right, as not long after her sister, Karen, married my brother, Andy. As it turned out, that wasn't the only thing we had in common. It seems we both spent a lot of time at the Tolbert Hall dormitory. However, I was the only one who was there legitimately- I lived there. But since, at the time, girls weren't allowed to stay in the boys dorm, Dagmar had to sneak in, which she did on a regular basis to pay clandestine visits to my dorm room neighbor, David Cardwell.

I came to know them pretty well and would, at times, catch a ride with them to Ft. Lauderdale. Of course, we couldn't just have a quiet ride home. David would usually pick some silly subject to argue about, like why Neil Diamond (his favorite) produced much better songs than the Allman Brothers (my favorite). I would invariably lose these debates but it made the trip go quicker.

~Ernest D'Ambrosio
Colorado Springs, Colorado

I grew up with David - church, scouting, tennis team, band and school years (playschool to high school). I have no memory of him without a smile on his face. His wit and humor consistently elevated the spirits of everyone around him. He was just one of those guys you were always glad to see. A lot of time has passed since high school, but I still have some very fond memories of David on the tennis courts (he was my doubles partner in most matches and certainly carried more than his share of the load) and the band (he played a mean cornet, too). Even as I write this to you, more and more wonderful memories about David come back to me. He was just a great guy and friend.

~Ray & Cynda Douglas (Bowling Green High School Class of 1969)
Atlanta, Georgia

We will all miss your incredibly intelligent, talented and funny husband. His contributions to local, state and national organizations and causes will live on as part of his legacy to all of us and to me to whom he was especially supportive in my American Bar Association work.

He lived life to the fullest and his enthusiastic embrace of people, ideas and issues was contagious. He made us all better for knowing him.

Finally and most importantly, it was clear to even a casual observer how much he loved you. He loved his family with the passion he infused (in) all that he did, only more so.

~Adriane Dudley
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands

This is truly a shock for all of us involved in CRA work. I have known David since 1985. He was a "lawyer's lawyer", the go-to man when those sticky CRA law questions arose. I could always rely on his wise counsel ever since my first job as the DDA lawyer when I was in the General Counsel's

Office at the City of Jax. I just saw David 2 weeks ago at the FRA conference—and he was his usual witty, smiling self. We had fun talking about the World Series! I will miss him greatly."

~Brenna Durden
Jacksonville, Florida

(Who remembers) the first July 3rd celebration on Lake Mirror? I served as master of ceremonies (for a couple of years) and David, perhaps in addition to other jobs, selected the music that we played that evening. He played a recording of "The 1812 Overture" during the fireworks. It was perfect!

~J. Larry Durrence
Lakeland, Florida

David, whom I called "DC", and I worked together in three different roles - when he was City Attorney for Lakeland, as a fellow board member of Historic Lakeland and as a consultant and FRA General Counsel. I attended several of his annual Kentucky Derby parties, complete with fresh Mint Juleps. He also drove me to my first lecture by Andres Duany. While David's knowledge and skill were unsurpassed, it was his good nature that I will remember. They only made one DC!

~Jim Edwards
Lakeland, Florida

My deepest sympathies to David's family. I'm sure you know how special he was. We will all have that empty feeling in our hearts when we get together as part of the redevelopment family. I know I will miss his wit and wisdom, as I learned something new from him each time we spoke.

~Bob Franke
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

I simply cannot imagine redevelopment in Florida without David Cardwell. For all the 18 years I have worked throughout the state, David was always there to provide perspective, experience, and, above all, creative insight into every single challenge. Beyond that, he was also a friend. He will, indeed, be missed.

~Neil Fritz
Hollywood, Florida

It is said that people are the sum total of their life experiences. We learn and we play. We win and we lose; we work and try to find meaning and opportunity for our lives. But when a man of exemplary character and global impact dies, do we not pause and reflect upon how the world was made a better place because of this man? I knew such a man as a family friend.

David Cardwell was as notable for his clarity of thought as he was remarkable for his ability to address legal, ethical, and practical problems with keen insight. My favorite memory of David was when he was CNN's lead expert on Florida election law in the 2000 Presidential Elections. I was a high school sophomore in a Virginia military academy; a place where you were judged not only by the content of your character, but also the depth of your knowledge towards your beliefs. It was a school of adolescent factions. Naive, but opinionated, we each had our beliefs and concerns about who would be the next President. Many were destined to join the military after graduation, so it mattered with great importance whom the next President would be.

Campus was a relatively isolated society with rare opportunities for television; so I was filled with great pride when Mr. Cardwell appeared as lead expert during the highly contentious news coverage. In what would seem like an agonizing few days for my campus, and indeed for most of America, David was with us 24/7 on CNN cleverly guiding us through the canons of Florida election law.

Responding to questions either deliberately slanted or overwhelmingly ambiguous, he clarified the minutiae that left the rest of us perplexed and concerned. I tried to stand in his shadow and answer the questions of my classmates that CNN would not hear; but I, perhaps like most people, fell short. David was an inspiration to many during that election. I personally know of two classmates who now work as Congressional staffers in Washington, DC. They too remember David and that election with particular nostalgia. Occasionally we will re-discuss that election and David's insight, even of late. So it is with this level of significance and impact that I remember David. God Bless.

~Andrew Gillette
Washington, DC

David was the consummate sports fanatic who also had the world's largest collection of team hats. It was expected that David would show up to friends' houses carrying a box of wings and wearing the hat of the team he was rooting for. He had an encyclopedic memory of sports trivia and stats and was an unparalleled student of the game and he was not picky about the sports venue. He could be equally passionate about basketball as football and even attended an Indy 500 or two, but baseball had a special place in his heart.

David loved movies. All movies and especially old classic movies. When you went as a couple to the movies with David, it was patently understood that you would not be leaving until absolutely every credit had rolled. He knew who the best boy was, the gaffer, etc and CARED. He passed on this love of movies to Reece who now works in the film industry having gotten an MFA in film from Boston University.

David had an incredibly soft side with animals which he tried unsuccessfully to hide. Over the years they had a long succession of rescue kitties that somehow found their way to their door and were invited in and never left. I say "soft side" because he was allergic to cats!

~Bonnie Gillette
Dallas, Texas

Two stories – The first involves the regular Spring Training trips. It all started with the guys, then girlfriends, then wives, then kids and then later girlfriends etc. Through it all, we watched everyone grow up (both the adults and kids) and kept the bonds of lasting friendships. To this day, every time Top Gun or 48 Hrs comes on the Movie Channel I think of sitting around your living room during Spring Training.

The other one involves a trip David and I took to Denver for a national Downtown Development workshop in 1988. Through your brother-in-law, David found three tickets to a Monday night football game (at the old) Mile High Stadium. David's only God-given athletic skill was finding sports tickets. Eileen was with us and had the third ticket. She was about three months pregnant, and the seats were literally on the last row of the upper deck. We saw the sunset over the Rockies. David and I were of course worried about a mother-to-be, and I remember David leading the charge up the stairs to escort a mom-to-be.

~Mike and Eileen Goldman
Jacksonville, Florida

Those of us who knew David through our many years of work together in the ABA Section of State & Local Government Law and the Standing Committee on Election Law remember his insight, his humor, and his quick wit. David was the consummate professional, a sports addict who rubbed off on all of us, and a true friend who taught us how to implement Goal 9- have fun. We will miss him in so many ways.

~Ben and Kathy Griffith
Cleveland, Mississippi

Just a quick note for David. In 2008, we visited NY with my daughter Staci, who always wanted to go to a Yankee game. We made it to the last year of the old stadium, and I was able to show her around and all the memories I had of going to games there. David graciously (as always) kept after Brian Cashman until he called him back and confirmed that we had prime seats behind home plate.

~Lawrence (Larry) Haber
Cocoa Beach, Florida

I return your email with a heavy heart, so sad that David left us far too early. He was such a wonderful partner during our time together and always willing to respond to each and every silly little question I had about election law. And every time he had an answer.

David and I spent every waking moment together during those 37 days and during that time I grew to know him as an honest, hardworking man who only wanted goodness for others.

He was a Cincinnati Reds fan, too. He loved Pete Rose. Coming from Cincinnati, too, we always had memories and stories of the Big Red Machine floating in and out of commercial breaks.

The days were long and they turned into nights and into another crazy twist and turn that no one could predict, or have the guts to predict. Invariably we'd go to commercial break and I'd start singing a crazy, contrived song we'd make up together.

David, God bless him, at least acted like he enjoyed my singing. I was honored to know him and am convinced he is looking out for all of us from heaven. Rest forever in gentle peace, my friend.

~Bill Hemmer
New York, New York

David has been the best asset to all the redevelopment professionals in Florida, providing friendship and expertise that no one will ever match. He provided the wisdom, patience and experience needed to help make our state a true example of how redevelopment can occur. Also, a friend, his view of what was happening in baseball and the sports was always fun to listen to. I will miss seeing him at the FRA conferences and having the drink at the bar with him as we watch a game (whatever game that is) on the TV.

~Jim Hitt
Apopka, Florida

David's wry wit and deep insight into election law and policy issues will be sorely missed nationwide by those working for fair, accountable elections. I had the pleasure of working with David via the ABA. My heartfelt condolences to your entire family.

~Candice Hoke
Cleveland, OH

As you may know from David's conversations and correspondence, I'm the President of the Florida Grapefruit Association. David will be truly missed by all of us in FGLA and the baseball industry as a whole. David and I had so much fun on our travels and at meetings. In fact, my wife and I were in New York last month and I was telling her about a trip that David and I took to meet with MLB executives. It was delightful. Quite frankly, he really helped me a tremendous amount here in Polk County with the Indians and later, our efforts with the Tampa Bay Rays.....he was great!!!

~Mark A. Jackson
Bartow, Florida

I had just seen (David) at a conference a few weeks before (his untimely passing). I certainly didn't know him as well as many of the FRA "old timers" but I would like to think he felt a certain affinity for me and I was very fond of him. As a newly elected official I didn't know much about many things -

especially Community Redevelopment! - but he was always kind and I thoroughly enjoyed the time spent with him and conversations we had over the past few years. We would be at a conference and David just stood out in the crowd in his trademark ball cap and Hawaiian shirt. He was never hard to find!

~Mayor Mary Lou Hildreth
Keystone Heights, Florida

David was a wonderful, quirky, brilliant man and a great friend. He will be missed for his friendship and his intelligent counsel.

~Kristi Jacobsen

When Dagmar asked for remembrances of David, the main one that kept coming to my mind was the one that I have thought of many times over the years whenever I thought of my cousin David. Aunt Bea was my mother's oldest sister. My five sisters and I were the "county cousins" who lived on a farm with our parents about twenty minutes from Bowling Green, Kentucky where the Cardwell's lived. The time of my remembrance, several relatives were invited to their house for a Christmas get-together. Uncle Emory was always friendly, but slightly formal, as was to be expected of a small town bank president. Aunt Bea was a warm hostess and appeared to my young mind to be so sophisticated because she played bridge. Maybe I remember incorrectly, but I always think of her in heels, a la Donna Reed. David was probably in fifth or sixth grade at this time and I was a few years younger.

Santa had already come, and David's most cherished gift that year was an electric football board game. This was way before all the electronic board games available to young boys today. I believe there were magnets under the football players and each player moved their team members around the metal playing field. For some reasons, David and another cousin ended up playing this game in the hallway, making it very difficult for anyone else to pass through. Maybe there was an easily assessable electric outlet there, I don't remember. Anyway, the guys were sprawled out covering the hall and I attempted to pass through. As I tried to step over the game board, my foot slipped and I stepped onto part of the playing field, bending it in slightly. We were not able to get the metal smooth; I doubt if that game every played correctly again. What I remember most about the incident (along with my obvious embarrassment) was the fact that David was so gracious about it. Sure he was upset, as any young boy would be, but I remember being awed that he was so calm and understanding. This simple kind response has stayed in my mind for years and I've always remembered it first whenever I thought of my cousin David.

When David went to the University of Florida, this seemed so exotic and far away from Kentucky. I never dreamed at that time that eventually I would have two sons who would also graduate from UF and join David in being proud "Gators". We were all proud when David was the CNN Florida election commentator. My parents were always asking, "Did you see David on CNN"? My father loved to talk politics with David.

As everyone knows, David met his wife Dagmar at Florida. It has been way over thirty years now, but every single time my mother has mentioned Dagmar's name, she immediately remarks how much she likes Dagmar. What a testimony to Dagmar's character and David's good taste!

Although we are all shocked and saddened by David's early departure from life, we take consolation in the awareness that David's greatest legacy is the family he created with Dagmar. Reece and Patrick, be proud of the special, unique man that your father was. He will be greatly missed.

~Brenda Landrum (cousin)
Perry, Florida

There is no way to capture the collective grief of the members, individuals, and people who had the privilege of knowing David or calling him a friend. I was a lucky one, who called him my friend.

I will miss his brilliant mind (to guide me through my year as President), his wonderful wit (to laugh at ourselves), and our playing imaginary guitars and singing (very badly I might add) Led Zeppelin songs.

My LZ compatriot will be singing from the heavens. And, hopefully, watching over us as you "Ramble On" to the heavens, hear the sounds of us singing the "Thank You" song David. Be at peace.

~Rochelle Wittenberg Lawandales
Melburne, Florida

Going to a ballgame or sporting event - of any kind - with David was great! Not only was he lots of fun and knew so much about sports - I attended Chicago Bears football, Univ. of Denver ice hockey, and Colorado Rockies baseball with David, but it was an education, too! David knew what a sponsor paid for anything and EVERYTHING with a "name" on it within sight - the time clock, the big screen, the zamboni, the infield cover, as well as the cost of a beer or tee shirt to the team! It was a running tally, until one realized that the event ticket was the least important aspect of the "bidness." David was an encyclopedia of knowledge and he shared his expertise with his friends cheerfully and with humor. Having David with you at a sporting event was the best, and he will be missed.

In November 2000 I was sailing through the Panama Canal on Crystal Cruises during the Presidential election fiasco. Imagine my chagrin when I exited my shower au natural to see David's impish face coming from CNN and explaining what was happening! I immediately "told" him to close his eyes and grabbed my robe! For the remainder of the cruise, David was a near constant companion, describing election law in FL and what was really going on. Had lots of laughs trying to listen seriously to David expound upon this area of the law he knew and loved so well, especially since the local + state officials didn't know nearly as much as David did! I always wore clothing to listen to David's commentary from that first morning forward, though I was often exiting the shower when he'd appear on my screen. I never expected David to be such a frequent visitor to my bedroom!!

I miss him.

~Karen Mathis
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

OK...I must tell a story...about the greatest sports day ever!

David and I started our day at the Bay Hill golf tournament in Orlando where we spent approximately 2.5 hours...we proceeded to a Cleveland Indians spring training game in Winter Haven where we stayed for 5 plus innings. Next, we went to the Lightning Hockey game in Tampa and...finally we went to a NCAA regional Basketball tournament back in Orlando and watched parts of 2 games and frankly have no idea how we got home...other than totally exhausted.

We took pictures at each event to memorialize our endeavor which I will cherish forever.

~Paul McCormick
Jacksonville, Florida

I still cannot believe that David is gone, but will always remember him sharing with me his love of baseball and his love for Kentucky as a Kentucky Colonel and especially your derby day parties.

Cathi and I also remember your stay in our home in Sarasota when Reece and Web were just babies....David was a great friend, husband and father. He is loved and respected by so many people. David will be missed.

~Hal Melton
Orlando, Florida

My best memory of David is both of you "taking in" my daughter Ali and her cousin during Hurricane Andrew when their Grandmother had thrown them out of her house because she had been invited to seek refuge inland and there was only room for one person. You put them up for a few days after our

Coral Gables buddy said that they'd be better off heading North. They called you from the road, and joined a houseful of relatives also fleeing the Miami area!

My second memory is David's stopping in Albuquerque, after attending a baseball game in Phoenix and fitting in a Dukes game here. I had tried to get him a contract to do a study and maybe even get a future contract to build an arena here...It didn't happen, and still hasn't. I so much enjoyed David's "commitment" to baseball games wherever he happened to be, his expertise in the development of stadiums and arenas, and, of course, his good humor and devotion to having fun. We'll all miss him.

~Anita Miller

Albuquerque, New Mexico

David was a friend and a resource for me during my early days as City Attorney for Lakeland. I called on David from time to time for his depth of knowledge in all things governmental, and could rely on what he told me. Mainly because he was the foremost authority in this state on local government law.

I had lunch with David about a year ago in Orlando. We reminisced about the old Lakeland days and talked about our kids and our lives. He was very proud of his family. As I write this, I have a lump in my throat as I recall how our lives intersected and the great esteem I had for David as a lawyer, a friend and someone who advanced the quality of life in the State of Florida. David made a difference, and left you and your children a wonderful legacy!

~Mark Miller

Lakeland, Florida

I have known David since working for Lee County CRA in the late 80's, and came to rely on him when I worked for Gainesville CRA and most recently Lake Worth CRA. Whenever I had the opportunity to discuss the right way to do things with someone I always found myself referring to David and the solid advice that he always gave me. I'll sincerely miss his guidance as well as his sense of humor.

~Corey W. O'Gorman

North Palm Beach, Florida

On behalf of our entire team at RB Oppenheim Associates, I extend our heartfelt colleagues at FRA who were so enriched by this good and brilliant man. David's sudden illness and passing is a shocking and tragic loss.

~Rick Oppenheim

Tallahassee, Florida

Two things keep coming back to me about Dave. First, we were in the vaunted BGHS marching band, the best damned clique in the entire school. We were damned good and knew it so we took pride in that. And as such we got away with a lot of antics that our band director, Cecil Karrick, had the good sense to look the other way over. After all, guys like Dave and I were his first chairs and it would have been bad for morale to come down hard on us.

Then Dave and I got to know each other again when he started coming out here for Cactus League business. Taking turns treating each other to dinner and talking politics was a rare pleasure. As there are few people that can do it and not take it personal. The beauty of our conversations was that, even though we disagreed, we were both able to lay out rational and well thought out arguments. As a result we came away with an appreciation for the others position that we had not had before. Never once did he raise his voice or make any hint of a personal attack. He always kept his cool and we

always had many a good laugh. He would often end the evening by saying we agree on far more than we disagree on. I am a better man for having had his company.

~Andy Overby (Bowling Green High School Class of 1969)
Tempe, Arizona

It seems (like) only yesterday that I was taking you and Carol to the store so you could cook our dinner in college. I fondly remember the Cornish Hens you perfected. I would observe David enter with newspaper under his arm and (wearing) a t-shirt with very little thread count only to sit and read while we interfered with your culinary skills! I would then watch him leave to eat dinner at the frat house thinking what an idiot. Well, he was nice to share you with us and now I am sitting here thinking he was a lucky guy to have married you!

~Andy Peterson
Sarasota, Florida

I will always have fond memories of David who assisted me in establishing our first redevelopment agency on Gainesville, Florida. He also was instrumental in developing our first Disposition and Development Agreement for our first major redevelopment project back in 1985. He always had insightful and creative thoughts about our Projects. Without his assistance, these projects would not have been successfully negotiated and completed. His legacy will live on for many years through these downtown projects.

David also assisted the University of Florida Alumni Association that helped make the University the preeminent University in the United States.

I particularly enjoyed his Kentucky Derby party at his home in Orlando years ago. Davis and his wife held a great party with memorable Mint Juleps. I will never forget him.

~Marion Radson
Gainesville, Florida

My memories of David are summer weeks at his house playing baseball, eating hamburgers and swimming at the country club. I do remember one summer McDonalds had opened in Bowling Green which I had never heard of and he could not wait for us to get there. Not that funny but (shows he was) ahead of the time. I do remember going to Mammoth Cave and passing these Stuckey's truck stops and David kept calling them "stinky" truck stops. He was very likeable and genuine and a little spoiled.

~Barry Reed (cousin)
Auburn, Kentucky

David's passing is a loss to all who have known him and for many who will never know him...He could make the best of any situation for the benefit of all parties- that was David. Thank you David for your service and thank you for your friendship.

~Gary Rogers
Lauderdale Lakes, Florida

...We are so sorry to hear of David's passing—he was a great guy and law partner. This is a great loss for Florida, and we extend our deepest sympathy to you and your family.

~Sandy and Sam Sheets
Lakeland, Florida

... I am so saddened to learn of David's passing. I can only imagine your shock and grief. For someone so vitally alive to be gone so suddenly is difficult to process...We will continue to keep you in our thoughts and prayers

~Roger and Deb Sims

Orlando, Florida

I first met David in 1991 at my first FRA Conference and he was the one new face and name I carried home with me. He was so open and approachable. I came to appreciate him more and more through the years. FRA will soon have another General Counsel, but no one will ever be another David Cardwell.

~Richard Stauts

Most would probably think it inappropriate to use email for this type of communication, but David would think it quite normal. Mary and I remember fondly the days you guys were in Lakeland and our close knit group and fun office interactions. Seems like yesterday. David was an outstanding lawyer with a great mind. As you may know, we had the opportunity to work with David just last year on the Strand case where he convinced the League of Cities to hire Steve Grimes to assist in arguing the appeal. He was a good friend and will be sorely missed.

~Mary and Rick Stephens

Lakeland, Florida

I work for the City of Daytona Beach Redevelopment Department so have known David for years and had just been at the conference, in October, and sat in on his presentation which, of course, was great. David was such a great guy with such a wonderful sense of humor.

~Jeanne Tolley

Daytona Beach, Florida

David will always be remembered as a southern gentleman with extraordinary gifts. His contribution to his community and the State of Florida will be his legacy. He was a remarkable person in so many ways. His passing is a great loss. ~Steve and Betsy Watson Lakeland

~Steve and Betsy Watson

Lakeland, Florida

Election-law expert's true love: Baseball

November 22, 2009 Orlando Sentinel - Orlando, Fla.



David E. Cardwell was a history buff and master of trivia games. He knew answers to the strangest questions. And he could memorize any statistic. As a kid, Cardwell of Orlando read whatever he got his hands on. He breezed through an entire set of encyclopedias and absorbed everything, like a sponge.

"His knowledge of trivia was deadly. You didn't want to play Trivial Pursuit with him," said Dagmar Cardwell, 58, his wife of 36 years. Her sister would call him for answers, even though they lived hundreds of miles apart.

"I've been known to call him from afar to get answered a ridiculous question. ... Everything stuck in his mind -- he had a giant filing cabinet," said Karen D'Ambrosio, 60, of Longmont, Colo. She said he was the man you dreamed to have on your team.

David Cardwell died Wednesday from complications of swine flu. He was 57.

It was his brilliance that attracted his wife. They met on a blind date their freshman year at the University of Florida, where he received a bachelor's in history and juris doctorate. David Cardwell was the only man who could challenge her father, a political-science professor, his wife said. "I had an intelligent father. They both could argue [any point]," she said.

David Cardwell, born in Bowling Green, Ky., moved to Tallahassee in 1976 to join the secretary of state as an assistant general counsel. In 1978, he became director of state Division of Elections, where he stayed for about a year.

Lakeland hired him as a city attorney in 1979. He joined the Holland & Knight law firm three years later and stayed until he started his own Orlando firm in 2001. He focused on public law and community redevelopment, a passion since college. His wife said he wanted to be an engineer but didn't like the drawing involved.

"He wanted to bring life back to an area," said his wife.

Cardwell also served on the general counsel for the Florida Redevelopment Association. But he was better known for his expertise in elections law. He often stepped in to help election supervisors accused of wrongdoing. He also wrote a Florida elections-law book, which sold only 67 copies -- one for each county in the state.

During the turbulent 2000 presidential election, he was tossed in the limelight. He appeared on CNN nearly three dozen times to interpret Florida laws, which he did quickly and flawlessly, his wife said.

Cardwell received kudos for bringing baseball teams to the state for spring training. When Winter Haven lost the Red Sox, he helped lure the Cleveland Indians from Homestead. He also organized the Grapefruit League Association, which competed with the state of Arizona for baseball teams.

Baseball was more than a business and sport. It was a way of life. He didn't just drop by games to examine stadiums. Cardwell was a loyal observer. He attended spring-training games in Polk County and throughout the state. While on vacation, he made sure to attend a game.

"Wherever we went, we'd always do a ballgame. He would plan his trips around sporting events," his wife said.

Even during their engagement-party weekend 36 years ago, he dragged her to a pitchers' duel. Little did she know baseball games would become frequent family outings.

"It's what he loved," his wife said.

Survivors also include daughter Reece Cardwell of Los Angeles, son Patrick Cardwell of Orlando and sister Judy Cardwell of Dawson Springs, Ky. Loomis Family Funeral Home, Apopka, is in charge of arrangements.

Credit: Elosa Ruano Gonzalez, Orlando Sentinel

IRISH BLESSING

May God give you...
For every storm, a rainbow,
For every tear, a smile,
For every care, a promise,
And a blessing in each trial.
For every problem life sends,
A faithful friend to share,
For every sigh, a sweet song,
And an answer for each prayer.



Dagmar, Reece and Patrick wish to thank all who shared in David's life.
And a special thanks to the Florida Redevelopment Association for making this
celebration possible

Contact Dagmar at DagmarMom@aol.com or cell 407.947.0915