

In Memoriam:
David F. Hardwick

LESLIE MARSH

“The technical term for this is horseshit” were the first words I heard uttered by Dave Hardwick. It wasn’t a slight against anyone in the room but merely a reaction to some proposition or other in the assigned readings. What character could possibly have the gumption to say this within an intimate and yet rather formal conference setting?¹ Not one for mincing my words either, like a moth to a flame, I was compelled to seek Dave out in the hospitality suite. That evening we chatted for hours about his work with the International Academy of Pathology, the United States & Canadian Academy of Pathology and its vast open access project The Knowledge Hub for Pathology,² his involvement (along with his brother Walter)³ in Vancouver municipal politics and urban planning, the development of The University of British Columbia’s medical school, the establishment of the Medical Students Alumni Centre (MSAC),⁴ and the founding of Women and Children’s Hospital. For most people, any *one* of these achievements could be deemed a full life’s civic service, *in addition* to a full professional life. By the end of the evening, Dave (uncharacteristically as I was later told) had also disclosed the trials and tribulations of his personal life too. Dave said that if ever I was in Vancouver, I should look him up. Little did I know then that a year later I was to become a Vancouver resident.

Upon my arrival and true to his word, Dave summoned me into his office, an office that he shared with his friend, confidante, and aide-de-camp, Charles Ramey. Dave, chomping at the bit, found in me a willing mischief-maker in taking on ideologues and zealots of all stripes and hues. This began the most productive and fun writing partnership of both our lives, one that was interpenetrated with the parallel practical world that Dave and Charlie had long-been engrossed in. The three-cog mechanism that was forged between Dave and Charlie and I was a wonderful admixture of intrigue, with lashings of scepticism, Machiavellianism, stoicism, pragmatism and, of course, much tactical diversionary silliness.

Dave and I hit it off immediately because we both revelled in playing the Shakespearean fool, especially in environments where the self-conscious sophisticates roamed, the social type whom Nassim Nicholas Taleb has scathingly termed IYIs (intellectual yet idiots). Privately, Dave delighted in getting up the noses of these self-important “pooh-bahs” of the- political, medical, corporate, and theological establishment:⁵ all “heavy on the poo” as Dave would characteristically say. His “Irish iPhone” (his little black book in its many iterations) was replete with a who’s who in Canada and well beyond.

Shoehorned into a small office in prime university real estate, Dave, Charlie and I were whirring away on any number of seemingly unrelated projects and problem anticipation, or “cow pat” avoidance. The office was a puddle of joy in an otherwise dour milieu with high turnover. We were fart machine and whoopee cushions aficionados, garnering many a pearl-clutching glance, only serving to further fuel our puerility.⁶ The silliness was a stratagem that served Dave exceedingly well: IYIs were lulled into a false sense of security in that they thought that an old self-deprecating bowtie-wearing⁷ duffer constantly generating (and repeating) groan-inducing jokes, would be a push-over.

Much of Dave and Charlie’s time was engaged in outwitting of the crass rationalistic tendencies of, what Dave termed the “bureaucraps”, be they of a governmental, university or corporate variety. As a tag team, Dave and Charlie, operated fluidly and effectively on a most rarified social plane, attentive to both the needs and desires of the proverbial man on the Clapham omnibus while giving the IYIs the “kumbaya group hug feeling” that they so craved. Being in Charlie and Dave’s company was a masterclass in organizational design and behaviour. Dave was thus equipped to be a diplomatic operator of the highest calibre. One of the many posts up on the office wall read: “Diplomacy: The ability to tell a man to go to hell in such a way that he actually looks forward to the trip”.

Philosophically speaking, all that Dave accomplished rested on the bedrock of his being an astute observer of human nature; his outlook, thoroughly Humean. Dave knew people’s foibles and subtly exploited them, though never with malicious intent. The IYI rationalists were quite unaware that they had already been outmaneuvered.

Dave’s Dadaist-like humour went over the heads of most, an example, being his official UBC business cards carrying the acronym SAP:⁸

David F. Hardwick
SAP

The vast aforementioned civic and philanthropic achievements came to fruition (at least when they did) because of Dave’s masterful ability to outwit the obstructionist-rationalistic impulses of self-serving “bureaucraps”. Dave, however, knew full-well that he needed the support of any talent that might be languishing on the “dark side”. These underappreciated souls were attracted to Dave through his recognizing their predicament: talent adrift in a sea of waste, misplaced pomposity, and mediocrity. Dave reassured them with a characteristic swipe at the milieu in which they found themselves, invoking the *Blazing Saddles* line: “These are people of the land. The common clay of the new West. You know ... morons.” Those who had the misfortune of finding themselves on the “dark side” became spiritual and practical allies and through Dave’s sage advice, were able to survive their respective environments; *and* in complicity with Dave, subversively do civic good.

The twofold philosophical insights of the Scottish-Austrian traditions—dispersed/distributed nature of knowledge and spontaneous order/complexity—informed Dave’s deep commitment to the civil condition as expressed in the slogan “peace, order and good government”,⁹ a profoundly Smithian ideal.¹⁰ He’d take every opportunity to bend the ear of some UBC University pooh-bah or other, in seconds, revealing their *punctum caecum* by explaining the practical (and moral virtues) of spontaneous order and distributed knowledge thinking.

Dave was very much a *situated* liberal: his liberalism issuing forth from *practice*. While not overly encumbered by theory, Dave was well versed in the Scottish-Austrian tradition: it was at Dave’s behest that we coedited a book on Adam Smith¹¹ and more recently, that we coedit a book on classical liberalism.¹² Dave’s influences, however, were far more eclectic than just those traditions: his intellectual pallet included Confucius, Sun Tzu, Smith, Hume, Mill, Hayek, Maslow, Sorokin, Jacobs, Crozier and latterly, “Oak-kes-shott”.

Dave’s voracious reading was quite remarkable and current. He could assimilate a doorstep of a book, be it by Taleb or Pinker or Diamond or Murray or Tawhidi and many more besides, and within a couple of

days, he'd transcribed his marginalia into an executive summary. Dave, in his characteristically brusque way of putting things, could give the crispest socio-psychological assessment and associated rug-pull philosophical argument for or against some issue or other, generated by his reading of the moment. This ability became critical to our cowriting and publishing *modus operandi*. He read through *each and every* paper that was under consideration for C+T and each and every MS submitted for our book series,¹³ his eagle-eye also catching typos and grammatical infelicities. Regardless of how far out of our wheelhouse a topic might have been, he and I appreciated a given writer's quality of mind. We delighted in "collecting" these people and, wherever possible, tried to afford such talent a platform via some project or other.

Beyond the goofy persona that he cultivated, the waters ran very deep. The better part of a life working with dead people ("my patients never complain"), gave him the sharpest of encounters with an indifferent reality that few of us would ever experience, at least on a daily basis. One summer's evening, taking wing from a tour of Vancouver General Hospital's morgue and the eponymously¹⁴ named pathology museum at the Diamond Centre¹⁵ we ended up at Dave's house. Sitting in Dave's antique opium chairs (Port in hand), with a magnificent view of the city's skyline, we chatted of lives "nasty, brutish and short" and of classical liberalism's impressive amelioration of much of this condition. This day has stayed with me as one of the sweetest and most unusual moments that I have ever experienced.

Dave's usually unflappable and stoical comportment was noticeably rattled by the *Charlie Hebdo* jihadist attack. His commitment to free-speech and academic freedom was something that exercised his mind to the day he died.¹⁶ He was very much aware of the cold chill of Orwellian censorship and doublespeak that was blowing through all Canadian institutions with the ultimate regressive social policy, blasphemy law, back on the table albeit under the fig-leaf of "hate speech".

Academic Freedom

The members of the University enjoy certain rights and privileges essential to the fulfillment of its primary functions: instruction and the pursuit of knowledge. Central among these rights is the freedom, within the law, to pursue what seem to them fruitful avenues of inquiry, to teach and to learn unhindered by external or non-academic constraints, to engage in full and unrestricted consideration of any opinion. This freedom extends not only to the regular members of the University but to all who are invited to participate in its forum. Suppression of this freedom, whether by institutions of the state, the officers of the University or the actions of private individuals, would prevent the University carrying out its primary functions. All members of the University must recognize this fundamental principle and must share responsibility for supporting, safeguarding and preserving this central freedom. Behaviour which obstructs free and full discussion, not only of ideas which as safe and accepted but of those which may be unpopular or even abhorrent, vitally threatens the integrity of the University's forum. Such behaviour cannot be tolerated.

The opening statement from UBC's Academic Regulations that Dave was instrumental in formulating.

Dave also despised that other major corrosive force upon higher education and knowledge generation, what he perceived as a misplaced Taylorism and “return on investment” mentality—unsurprisingly driven by a bloated self-serving “bureaucracy”. While Dave was all for the intrinsic value of a liberal arts education, he found the activist-ideologue (academic and student) to be a subspecies of the authoritarian mindset.

Dave, by his own admission, was a man of means. But he led a very frugal and unostentatious life, the exception being his appreciation of Grand Cru French wines and classic Ports. While one might share a glass or two with him from his “secret” island stash, there were several occasions when a bottle was foisted onto me at the last moment at the ferry terminal. “Here, take this. I know that you’ll need it”. For those in attendance at the 2019 Vancouver conference, one may recall Dave generously sharing some of his sixty-year-old Port.

There are many untold counts of Dave’s (personal and professional) generosity to individuals and groups. He was especially receptive to heterodox strays such as myself over many years. Dave could have been a vastly richer man: he had the opportunity to buy in at the founding of a certain high street testing clinic, now ubiquitous across Canada. I asked him about that. I said, surely [Dave: “don’t call me Shirley”]¹⁷ you would have been able to do even more civic good with those additional resources at your disposal. His answer, without the slightest hint of feigned modesty, was that being in that league would have rendered him too remote to affect a meaningful contribution. He didn’t really want to be on boards: he loathed having to sit through unduly long committee meetings, comprising well-meaning pooh-bahs who “loved the sound of their own voice and who’d nothing better to do”.

Not one for sitting at home twiddling his thumbs or “picking his nose”, long after his official retirement, Dave kept working for no remuneration, doing anything to keep the grey matter ticking over. Indeed, his post-retirement “career” achievements alone would outshine a conventionally long and distinguished career. Dave needed the routine of going into the office daily, zipping down West 16th Avenue to and from UBC hospital twice daily, often giving me a lift to and from the very suburb he lived in as a child, always pointing out the first location of his beloved go-to restaurant chain, “White Snot”.¹⁸ Being a Vancouverite through and through, he’d point out some of the fancy houses on SW Marine Drive, explaining how these families came about their wealth, giving me the unsanitized version that the public at large wouldn’t be privy to.

Speaking of driving, Dave was a most aggressive driver: he “drove to win” never missing a beat to curse other road users, the “pedestrians” and “cyclops”. He was the supreme example of a backseat driver, except that he was literally in the front passenger seat barking out precise instructions. Dave was equally aggressive (he’d say competent) on water, the full tilt run in a small motorboat between Langdale and Keats Island being invigorating, if rather hair-raising.

Charlie and I were repeatedly issued precise instructions on how to do the most banal of things, such as how to open Dave’s house front door, how to moor/cast off the boat, lower the dock stairs, buy a certain brand of orange juice in the supermarket; where to wait at the hospital, and innumerable other tasks that Dave felt compelled to overly elucidate. As irritating as this could be to those nearest and dearest to him, it was something that we lived with. This scalpel-like proclivity for detail was in stark contrast to Charlie and I’s more relaxed broad-brush approach to things.

Dave’s handywork extended well beyond the dissecting of corpses. Indeed, one might say that there was a cross-pollination of skills between his professional calling and his handiness about the house, the construction of boats, and the tinkering with cars.

On a trip to a conference in Indianapolis run by Lenore Ealy of The Philanthropic Enterprise, it was Dave with whom the youngsters were enchanted. They were tickled pink by him, both he and I a bit red wine tipsy, mucking about doing mock bull fights with napkins in the hospitality suite. Ever the raconteur, Dave regaled them with compelling tales of a high-profile forensic murder inquiry that he was involved with; and while being a valet to earn some extra dosh during his residency at UCLA, telling of Sinatra slipping him \$20 per car door opened.

On a road trip down to Seattle with Dave for a large pathology meeting, he issued me with strict instructions à la the premise of the film *Weekend at Bernie's* or perhaps even a plot of a Tom Sharpe novel, whose writing he adored. Health-wise Dave was already “riding his clutch” and that were Dave to have “crossed the finishing line” while in the US, I was to prop him up in the passenger seat of the car and get him back across the border, not wanting to spend (even in death) a dime on the American health system.

Dave was very musical, typically bashing out traditional Irish ditties on a piano or banjo, often with a bawdy lyrical aspect. Dave’s love of wordplay meant that Gilbert and Sullivan were his favourite composers. He was a great supporter of Bard on the Beach and Vancouver theatre and opera in general, me being the beneficiary of shows that he couldn’t attend or because he had surplus tickets. Our musical taste overlapped with Dixieland and early jazz, appealing to our spontaneous order sensibility.¹⁹ We discovered this mutual interest when, in casual conversation about the night before, and unbeknownst to each other, we’d attended the very same show – Preservation Hall Band and Trombone Shorty sharing the bill.

Speaking of jazz, once while in New Orleans, I got into a spot of bother. A Good Samaritan very kindly assisted me and upon discovering that I knew Dave, dedicated his evening to my welfare. Dave’s crumpled UBC business card stuffed into my wallet was, for all intents and purposes, my “get out of gaol” card. Dave’s insistence that I carry the card was profoundly prescient: against the odds, it validated my *bona fides*. For it turned out that he, a Maple Ridge GP, was a student of Dave’s, one of hundreds if not thousands, who passed through his pathology course at UBC. His regard for Dave was palpable: “Dave would never have forgiven me had I not interceded”.

Given my “fly by the seat of my pants” way of being, Dave made me feel protected, respected, and perhaps even loved. And that is *the* thing!

NOTES

- 1 It was thanks to Gus diZerega that I was a last-minute addition to this Atlas conference. It was here that I met the future first editor of C+T, David Emanuel Andersson, the future deputy editor of C+T, Bill Butos, the late Steve Horwitz, Lenore Ealy, Richard Gunderman, Laurent Dobuzinskis and several others who were to become firm supporters of C+T and other publishing projects that Dave and I initiated.
- 2 <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21316077/>
- 3 <https://vancouver.sunandprovince.remembering.ca/obituary/walter-hardwick-1065334269/>
- 4 <https://alumni.med.ubc.ca/msac/>
- 5 Visitors to the *Cosmos + Taxis* website will have come across a painting prominently displayed. It was Dave who found it: the idea of the various epistemic vanities and hubris, tickled him pink, so much so, that he secured the permissions to use it for C+T. The painting spoke to Dave’s scepticism and repulsion to anything that smacked of monomania.
- 6 For example, an “out of order” sign in the men’s toilets was amended to read “out of odor”.
- 7 Dave had a bowtie for every occasion. For example, the one with the shark print, was donned when he met with lawyers (or “liars” as he’d say in a thick southern drawl).
- 8 Special Advisor on Planning.
- 9 <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/british-north-america-act-1867-document>
- 10 *Wealth of Nations*, Book III, Chapter 3.
- 11 <https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9781137320681>
- 12 <https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9783030287597>. The frontispiece we used in this volume is reproduced as the cover of this issue of C+T.
- 13 <https://www.springer.com/series/15722>
- 14 Some might say that having several intuitions named in his honour during his lifetime was overly egocentric. This was hardly the case: these decisions were driven by those whom he tirelessly served. His advocacy was want-

ed, never imposed. The affection for Dave was palpable, symbolized by the bronze bust of him in classic hand-shake pose, commissioned by students past and present. Dave only agreed to it because the cast was jocular in pose and always adorned in silly attire, something which Dave thoroughly appreciated. Dave characteristically had suggested that of all the awards that were bestowed upon him, he'd have preferred a plaque in the men's urinal at Women's and Children's Hospital. The powers that be were having none of that.

- 15 <https://pathology.ubc.ca/dhplc/>. I could randomly point to some disgusting looking specimen in formaldehyde and in a blink of an eye, he'd able to tell a compelling medical story behind it. Like an avuncular teacher, he'd give me "the look" and say something like "this is the result of a dissolute life . . ."
- 16 Look out for a volume within the series that Dave and I started. Entitled *International Comparative Approaches to Free Speech and Open Inquiry* it comprises a most distinguished lineup from around the world.
- 17 The *Naked Gun-Airplane* series of films were amongst his absolute favourites.
- 18 White Spot. This chain reflected Dave's purely utilitarian approach to food, especially their low salt options. It's not that he didn't appreciate tasty or "exotic" food; it's just that he didn't want to expend unnecessary time and energy thinking about these things: his indulgence was world class wine.
- 19 https://cosmosandtaxi.files.wordpress.com/2017/11/ct_5_1_hardwick_marsh_r.pdf and https://cosmosandtaxi.files.wordpress.com/2017/05/marsh_ct4_2_3.pdf