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## A Tribute to Lara D. Gass

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## A Tribute to Lara D. Gass

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Kevin Remington, Washington and Lee University Photographer

Lara D. Gass

## A Tribute to Lara D. Gass

Patrick and Anna Bolling\*

My wife, Anna, and I first met Lara when she crashed our Christmas party during 2L year. She offered to share her bourbon with Anna, and they became fast friends. She was the first person at the law school to make Anna feel welcome in Lexington. Being a law school wife is not easy, so Lara's friendship meant the world to Anna. In spring of 2L year, we watched Lara and Chris fall in love. It was obvious to us that it was a special kind of love and that Lara had a lot of it to give. I feel lucky to have seen it. Through Lara, Chris and I became best friends. In 3L year, Lara and I shared a lot of classes, and, for some reason, she wanted to work with me on our assignments. We loved working together (my grades went up), and we grew much closer. We started planning the Third Year Pledge Project and looked forward to serving together as Class Agents. By the time of Lara's death, she, Anna, Chris, and I did practically everything together.

Everyone knows by now what a brilliant, compassionate, beautiful, and magnetic person Lara was. So I will save that and try to explain what kind of a friend Lara was. She was always what Anna and I needed in our lives, no matter the specific circumstances. When I needed confidence and direction, she reassured me and pointed the way. When Anna needed a friend during tough times, Lara brought wine and open arms. When a party was in order, she brought bourbon and a strawberry cake with strawberry icing, which is Anna's favorite (she asked first). Lara was our best friend. She was a shooting star that lit up our lives for too short of a time. But, man, what a light. My wish is to be more like her.

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David I. Bruck\*\*

Lara took the course that I teach on the death penalty and the Supreme Court in the fall of her second year of law school. Just as the course was getting underway, she asked if I had a suggestion for a topic for her Law Review Note. As it happened, the Supreme Court of

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\*\* Clinical Professor of Law and Director of the Virginia Capital Case Clearinghouse, Washington and Lee University School of Law.

Virginia was about to hear arguments on an important issue of death penalty law, so I suggested that she pick that case and write her Note on however the court decided it. That's what she did, and for the next year (while the prisoner lost the appeal that Lara had picked to write about), she worked to clear away an almost impenetrable tangle of legal procedure and uncover beneath it a story of unfairness and human tragedy.

By the time she was done, Lara had effectively revealed how Virginia law has systematically exaggerated the ostensible "future dangerousness" of prisoners who will never be released from prison and in this way has pushed juries to authorize more executions than any other state but Texas. Understanding the problem was a challenge, and explaining it clearly enough for others to understand was harder still. But Laura persevered, draft after draft. And while she laid out the legal complexities of the issue, she also figured out how to weave into her legal analysis the human story of the man whose life was at stake.

Lara's Note<sup>1</sup> is the latest and best discussion of the most serious single defect in Virginia's system of capital punishment. Washington and Lee's death penalty capital defense clinic, the Virginia Capital Case Clearinghouse, has posted her Note on its website to make it readily available to every lawyer trying to protect a client from the unfairness that Lara documented.

As a lawyer—and she had what it takes to be a good one—Lara would have spotted many more things that were wrong. And she would have worked hard to change them. Sending me one of her drafts last September, she explained that "like a good lawyer, I've procrastinated immensely over the summer." But "like a good lawyer," she got it done. And so, in this small way at least, her voice can still be heard.

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Samuel Calhoun\*

As the deep and widespread grief makes clear, Lara's death is an immeasurable loss. People, of course, experience the loss differently. Family, loved ones, and good friends suffer the most. But the loss is also profound for those of us who were not as close to Lara.

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1. Lara D. Gass, *Virginia's Redefinition of the "Future Dangerousness" Aggravating Factor: Unprecedented, Unfounded, and Unconstitutional*, 70 WASH. & LEE L. REV. 1887 (2013).

\* Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Professor of Law, Washington and Lee University School of Law.

Institutions have also been hurt. The Washington and Lee School of Law is greatly diminished by her death. I have no doubt that she would have brought great honor to our school in the years ahead. And the legal profession itself has been damaged. There are never enough lawyers with Lara's attributes—hard-working, dedicated, skilled in legal analysis, an excellent writer, articulate, ethical, and with off-the-charts charm and interpersonal abilities.

I first met Lara as a student in my Sales class last year. Lara wrote the best exam by far, which in itself would've earned my favorable opinion. But she went further still. I tell my UCC students, only half-jokingly, that my main goal is that they learn to love the Code. I think she really did reach that pinnacle of achievement, and therefore it's natural that she'd have my very high regard.

My next interaction with Lara came through her work as Symposium Editor for the *Roe* Symposium. My first email from Lara was April 2, 2013, and the last one was November 27, 2013. Between those two dates, it's no exaggeration, or at least not much of one, to say that Lara and I exchanged, say, around two thousand emails. She was unfailingly cheerful in carrying out her many responsibilities. She was also 100% reliable. It was a great comfort to know that once Lara took charge of a particular task, I could rest assured that it would be done on time and done well.

Although Lara and I almost always agreed on the various policy issues we encountered in planning the Symposium, at one point we differed on the proper way to acknowledge the different contributions of the various sponsors of the Symposium, which included both pro-choice and pro-life organizations. I was very impressed with Lara, and Spike Short [the Editor in Chief] too, who stood their ground for their view of how things should be handled against my differing opinion. We had fairly extended negotiations—amicable, but hard-nosed—that led ultimately to a mutually acceptable solution.

Once the Symposium participants arrived, Lara's extraordinary interpersonal skills came to the forefront. Keep in mind that the Symposium was basically evenly split between pro-choice and pro-life scholars. This wasn't a gathering of people who disagreed on an issue like, say, the validity of recess appointments. Instead, they differed on abortion, for over forty years one of our most hotly contested public policy disputes. Thus, the group is one you'd generally be wiser to keep apart, not bring together to talk about the very issue that divides them.

Lara charmed them all. She was the epitome of graciousness and helpfulness. She blew them away with her hospitality. They all commented on it at the time, and many repeated their praise in the

emails Spike quoted at the candlelight vigil last week. Lara's personal touch contributed significantly to the event's success.

In regard to Lara's talents as a young legal professional, the best tribute I can make is to say that as a student in my class and as a colleague in putting on the *Roe* Symposium, she never gave me a single reason to complain. In regard to her attributes as a human being, we all know how special Lara was. Her enthusiasm for life and positive spirit were uplifting to all who were fortunate enough to know her. We were blessed to have her in our lives for a time that was far too short. She will be sorely missed.

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Katherine Coleman\*

Forever in our hearts, we will be spreading your light everywhere we go.

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine  
 This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine  
 This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine  
 Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

I'm gonna take this light around the world and I'm gonna  
 Let it shine  
 I'm gonna take this light around the world and I'm gonna  
 Let it shine  
 I'm gonna take this light around the world and I'm gonna  
 Let it shine  
 Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine  
 This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine  
 This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine  
 Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

I won't let anyone blow it out, I'm gonna let it shine  
 I won't let anyone blow it out, I'm gonna let it shine  
 I won't let anyone blow it out, I'm gonna let it shine  
 Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine  
 This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine  
 This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine  
 Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

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\* Candidate for J.D., May 2014, Washington and Lee University School of Law.

Every day, every day, I'm going to let my little light  
Shine<sup>1</sup>

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Nora V. Demleitner\*

*Remarkable Individuals Make for a Special Community:  
A Tribute to Lara Gass*

Lara Gass is unique—in life and in death. She brought out the best in all of those around her during her—much too short—life and upon her death. Only a few people can claim such achievement, and only a few have the privilege of getting to know and working with such special individuals. We are all fortunate to have known Lara. She exemplifies the best of W&L and has made us better during her time here and beyond.

Lara's formal accomplishments are numerous. She graduated with honors from the University of Washington. She was a member of the *Washington and Lee Law Review* on which she served as Symposium Editor; she had been a Kirgis fellow, instrumental in mentoring first-year law students; and she was the 3L class gift officer. She had recently been inducted into Omicron Delta Kappa (ODK), an honors society that recognizes leadership, academic achievements, service, and character—a most fitting honor for Lara. As many of us searched our e-mail in-boxes for messages from Lara the days after the accident, we realized—again—in how many projects she had been involved, how well she executed all of them, and what a pleasure it was to work with her.

None of these résumé items, however, captures the Lara Gass we had the honor of knowing. The student who would come with her electronic notebook to make sure that she captured all the important details; the Symposium Editor who elegantly and skillfully managed the details of a potentially explosive conference on the 40th anniversary of *Roe*; the young woman who devoted her little spare time to putting together a Women Law Student Organization event showcasing women attorneys and judges. The statement I heard most frequently upon the announcement of her tragic death was that Lara was a young person “who would go places.” She impressed everyone she met with her presence, her great sense of humor, and her

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1. HARRY DIXON LOES, THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE (1920).

\* Dean and Roy L. Steinheimer, Jr. Professor of Law, Washington and Lee University School of Law.



enjoyment of life. She truly lived her life to the fullest—filled with work and projects she enjoyed, devoted to her family and friends.

Lara exemplified the best to which Washington and Lee's Law School aspires. She was a first-rate student *and* person. She was a perfect fit, and we can only hope that the institution and its people gave her as much as she gave to all of us. Lara's family, her friends, her many teachers preceding us, have helped shape the person we had at W&L. Whether we managed to help her grow—as a professional and a person—may never be known, but we must acknowledge that she shaped us.

During her life she influenced so many of her classmates. She inspired them to study and to enjoy life, and she supported them in their ventures inside and outside the classroom. She eased the anxieties of our 1Ls as a Kirgis fellow, and worked with them—and her classmates—later on the *Law Review*. She was a class act.

Even in her death she served as an inspiration. In a fast-paced world with too many pressures upon all of us, she focused us on what really counts. She forced us to turn to our loved ones and make sure they knew how important they are to each of us.

Nobody who is at our Law School this spring will ever forget the impact Lara's death has had on our community: tissue boxes emptied but also laughter under tears when remembering some of Lara's favorite sayings. Compassion and love for her closest friends and family but a tightening of affection for everyone. None of us will ever know what Lara would have said to the candlelight vigil, the community dinner, or the *Law Review* Tribute. We hope she would be pleased to have made the footprint she left in this world.

When Lara's mother said, "Lara made me a better person," she spoke for us all. Not only are we better people, W&L Law is a better place because of her. Her memory will live on and inspire those who knew her. For future generations, I wish for her spirit to animate the halls of the Law School.

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Ellen Marks\*

*A Few Minutes With Lara*

Bobbing her head  
Up and down, chewing gum,  
Laughing.  
Ray Bans falling down her nose,

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\* Candidate for J.D. May 2014, Washington and Lee University School of Law.

Hands jiving to a poppy song,  
In a teal maxi dress.  
Loving every minute.

Sauntering through the carrels,  
Oatmeal sweater, brown leather boots.  
“Ummmm Hi, what’s up! Haha.”  
Happy.  
Uninhibited, warm, open.  
My confidante.

Squinting toward  
Virginia judges  
Mind sparking, turning.  
Taking notes with a skeptical gaze,  
She dissects their arguments,  
Notices their contradictions.  
Perceptive, bright.

Jogging around Lexington  
Jingle-belled shoelaces,  
Giant red hair ribbon.  
Less than 5K and an 8-year-old sprints past us  
“You go girl! Get it!”  
Encouraging, animated.

The pepperoni pizza from her hand  
Is now in mine.  
The mushroom pizza in my hand  
Automatically becomes hers.  
Hungry, Pizza-sharer.  
Hungry for life.

So, for Lara,  
Take a swig of that IPA  
Take a Pickleback.  
For Optimism. For Realism.  
“You do you!”  
For Beauty. For Joy.  
Love every minute.

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John A. Parkins, Jr., '72L\*

I first met Lara in December 2011 when my wife and I had dinner with a few first year law students while we were visiting

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\* Judge of the Superior Court of the State of Delaware.

Lexington. Lara was among them. The conversation flowed easily that evening, and as the night wore on it became increasingly obvious that not only was Lara extremely personable but also she possessed considerable intellectual ability. Near the end of the evening, I offered Lara the opportunity to work as my unpaid intern the following summer. I had little hope that Lara would accept because she had no ties to Delaware, but to my surprise and delight, she accepted.

Lara arrived in Wilmington in May 2012. It soon became evident that she would fulfill all the promise she had shown at that dinner. Even though she had then completed only her first year of law school, her analytical ability and writing skills already exceeded those of many lawyers who appeared before the court. That summer, Lara enthusiastically threw herself into all of her assignments. It did not seem to matter to her whether her assignment related to something as exciting as a murder case or as drab as a memorandum about an insurance coverage dispute. She seemed to relish them all. I was impressed that someone as inexperienced as Lara never lost sight of the fact that not only were we resolving the dispute before us, but that manner in which we did so might affect cases yet to come.

Seldom have I been as confident about a young lawyer's future as I was about Lara's. In baseball parlance she was a "five tool player"—she had all of the qualities necessary to leave a lasting mark. Sadly we will never know the many successes destined to come her way. Instead we must content ourselves with memories of a tragically short, but well-lived, life. Some memories often fade as we get older, but I know that in the years to come I will still think of Lara. When I do I will smile at the memory of our briefly intersecting lives, of her vibrant personality and immense talent. I will think of the immeasurable pain her untimely death caused her family and friends. But mostly I will mourn the loss of what might have been.

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Doug Pittman\*

I was extremely fortunate to become a friend of Lara's early on in my first year of law school. We were in the same small section both semesters, which meant that we had almost all of our classes together. I was drawn to Lara for many of the same reasons so many were—she had a vivacious smile, an upbeat attitude, and a joy for living that was insatiable. As classmates so often do during their first

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\* Candidate for J.D., May 2014, Washington and Lee University School of Law.

days of school, Lara and I formed a bond while we attempted to navigate the foreign waters of legal education. When I had no idea what to do on my first legal writing assignment, I turned to Lara. When I was completely lost during contracts class, Lara put me on the right track. When I needed someone to go over my torts outline with the night before the exam, I packed my bag and headed to Lara's apartment. Quite simply, Lara was one of my best friends during that first year of law school. More importantly, she was one of the best friends anyone could ask for.

Lara and I remained close friends throughout our law school careers, and she was a part of so many of the amazing memories I made over the past three years. There were wine tasting trips to vineyards outside of Charlottesville, late-summer tubing excursions down the Maury River, trips to exotic places like Chincoteague Island and Wytheville, Virginia, and countless nights at Macs and Southern Inn—to name just a very few. But the memories with Lara that I will cherish the most—the memories I thank her for now—are those memories we formed during our first year of school.

Lara, we miss you more than words can possibly describe, but we thank you for filling our lives with so much joy and laughter. It is in your honor that we endeavor to do the same.

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Rebecca Reed\*\*

Some people talk about justice; others live it. Lara lived it. Lara was a leader in the Washington & Lee Innocence Project (formerly the Southwest Virginia Innocence Project), an organization that fights to exonerate innocent prisoners. In many other schools, the Innocence Project is a clinic, but at Washington & Lee it began as a student-led volunteer organization. Evaluating requests for assistance and investigating potential innocence claims is time intensive—it involves tracking down and interviewing potential witnesses, reviewing trial transcripts, visiting clients in jail, and keeping administrative records. Lara accomplished all of this and more with a smile and grace, while also juggling all of her other commitments.

Lara had compassion for the prisoners who were our clients, as well as the victims, and worked hard on their behalf. She worked hard, yet she kept her sense of humor, lightening the load of even our

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\*\* Candidate for J.D., May 2014, Washington and Lee University School of Law.

heaviest cases. Lara was animated and witty, and always, always, made everyone laugh. With Lara, pursuing justice did not exclude laughter and joy. Through her work on the Innocence Project, Lara brought that joy to dark places, to people our society often would rather forget. Lara was a light—and a light that bright always shines on.

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Krystal Brunner Swendsboe\*

Lara Gass was a charming and beloved member of the Washington and Lee University School of Law campus. She was kind, approachable, funny, smart, incredibly capable, and she made it her mission to draw people out of their shells. It is impossible to fully describe her.

I met Lara during an admitted students weekend in March 2012. The admitted students spent a Saturday touring the W&L campus and were treated to a mingle session with current students in the evening. I joined the party fairly early and met a vibrant girl by the food table. “Hi, I’m Lara. How has your day been? Is there anything else you want to know? I’ve only been here for a year, but I can tell you the good and bad.” Lara spent almost an hour chatting with me about W&L, her life before school, and her family (interspersed with introductions to friends or friendly taunts lobbed at other law student party-goers). Lara made me, and those around her, feel comfortable and like they belonged. Lara helped to convince me to attend W&L because she presented a very real and encouraging picture of the school.

I had the privilege of interacting with Lara a bit more after beginning school. Her vivacity, sense of humor, and charm reached out to anyone and everyone she came in contact with. Whether she was calming down a frazzled 1L, kindly threatening journal members to volunteer for symposium work, or just charging down the halls to another project, she exuded life and drew us into her whirlwind. She was a force to be reckoned with and an inspiration. W&L and the legal profession have suffered a great loss with her passing, and she will not be forgotten.

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\* Candidate for J.D., May 2015, Washington and Lee University School of Law.

Christopher Wagner\*

*Tribute to My Lara*

Words alone cannot capture the life of Lara, her infectious personality, or what she means to me. Alas, this tribute must fail to do her justice. Sadly, it has taken the loss of my true counterpart and best friend to fully appreciate how Lara has indelibly changed me, how she has inspired me to be a stronger lawyer, a more conscientious citizen, and a better man. How? Her unwavering authenticity. For example, Lara and I shared many of the same convictions—political, social, and spiritual—which we held with similar degrees of enthusiasm. Lara, however, relentlessly acted upon them. Her deep-seated commitment to justice compelled her to work with the Innocence Project to exonerate wrongfully convicted individuals. She channeled her contempt for capital punishment into a well-crafted Note in which she eviscerates the Supreme Court of Virginia’s *Lawlor v. Commonwealth*<sup>1</sup> decision. When issues of reproductive rights and marriage equality seeped into casual conversation, she never hesitated to engage opposing views while artfully making her case. She did not merely hold convictions; they manifested in every aspect of her life.

Although one might conclude from Lara’s résumé that she devoted her time exclusively to the pursuit of her career goals, nothing could be further from the truth. She treasured life, new experiences, and sharing those experiences with the great friends that she had made along the way. She rejected the notion that success in law school, or a legal career generally, precluded the active, social lifestyle that she so enjoyed. As our romance developed early last year, she often lamented the fact that nearly three semesters of law school had passed before we had ever spoken to each other. Because I had operated under the very notion that Lara rejected, I missed out on many of the experiences unique to law school. Lara made me appreciate the time we have here to develop new relationships, to explore all that Southwestern Virginia has to offer. Most importantly, she impressed upon me her belief that nothing we accomplish in this world means anything if we forge ahead alone and fail to appreciate the opportunities to experience new people and places along the way.

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1. 738 S.E.2d 847 (Va. 2013).

The heartbreaking void left in the wake of Lara's passing will never close. But I take some solace knowing that she has inspired me to live like her: authentically and with zeal, letting no day go to waste. In this way, I will always carry her with me.

Lara, I am so grateful for the time that we shared together. I, like so many others, am better for having known you. And I love you more than you know.

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Robin Fretwell Wilson\*

*What Lara Leaves Behind*

At moments like this, there is nothing one can say to make the premature passing of a friend and colleague less tragic. Lara stood on the cusp of a life that portended only success. Ours is a felt loss—and the world is diminished by all Lara did not get to do.

What promise she had. Law professors size up talent. We turn an appraising eye on every student—not to be distant or cold—but because our job is to help students achieve their promise.

I met Lara in my last year at Washington and Lee, when the Law Review honored her by naming her the Symposium Editor. In my position as the Law Review's faculty advisor, the single board member with whom I interacted most every year was the person in Lara's job. Later, as a Symposium participant, I saw first-hand why Lara's colleagues named her to this critical position.

From the get-go, Lara was on it. The Law Review inherited a proposal from Dean Calhoun to revisit the perennial controversy over abortion on the 40th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark decision, *Roe v. Wade*.<sup>1</sup> Lara asked all the right questions: while the topic had tremendous upside potential, how would the Law Review ensure balance in perspectives? How would the Law Review ensure civility if it provided an occasion for people deeply opposed to each other's positions to come together?

From day one, Lara worked to realize the topic's promise, while skirting risks. She arranged countless meetings with Spike Short (the Editor-in-Chief), me (the outgoing advisor), Professor Bruner (the incoming advisor), and Dean Calhoun. She solicited names of

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\* Roger and Stephany Joslin Professor of Law and Director of the Program in Family Law and Policy, University of Illinois School of Law.

1. 410 U.S. 113 (1973).

academics that could anchor the middle-ground and reached out to these rare voices, building them into the line-up.

Lara's thoughtfulness continued right up to, through, and well after, the Symposium itself.

Organizing nineteen people to do anything is no small task. The assignment is exponentially more difficult when the nineteen are law professors. Like the proverbial herder of cats, Lara provided clear guidance for those whose ability to follow rules leaves something to be desired. I was one of those cats (she might have even said "problem child"). Periodically, Lara would remind panelists:

If you have not done so already, please submit your paper as soon as possible. Again, it does not have to be a completed piece, but it should put forth the main purpose of your presentation.

All too predictably, over-extended law professors like me missed Lara's clear deadlines. When the deadline came and went, she thanked the cooperative first. To the rest, she pointed out the infraction in her no-nonsense way. And she guilted us:

Thank you to everyone who has submitted their draft. Unfortunately, we have not received all of the drafts and, because we do not think it would be fair to circulate only those drafts we have received, we will not be circulating the drafts before the Symposium.

Lara was gracious, yet firm. She masterfully navigated the strong egos amassed for the Symposium. When bickering broke out during the first panel, she refused to be provoked. Instead, she alerted moderators to "be prepared to ask the panelist to end."

No task was too small to merit Lara's full attention. Bright and early on the big day, we received parking instructions, just in case we missed the prior email.

Once the event began, when others might rest on their laurels, Lara continued to send out periodic emails to keep us on course.

With Lara's fingerprints all over the Symposium's success, she shared credit with ease, thanking even those with attenuated connections to the Symposium for "*all of your hard work!*" Five days later, Lara wrote each panelist "to say THANK YOU! The event was a huge success, and we could not have pulled it off without your contribution."

Of course, in Lara's inimitable way, she also dropped the bomb: "I also want to let you know that Kyle Dolinsky will be in charge of the Symposium book and will take over the editing process from here. Kyle will contact everyone soon."



Like every good leader I have known, Lara accomplished so much by making it almost unthinkable to disappoint her.

In his final months, Carnegie Mellon Professor Randy Pausch, facing terminal cancer, asked an Eastern spiritual leader, "What is the most appropriate thing to say to a friend who was about to die?" The mystic answered: "Tell your friend that in his death, a part of you dies and goes with him."

Now, if a little piece of those impacted goes with every person who dies, they are going to need a lot of room in heaven for Lara. In the brief interaction Lara had with Symposium participants, this is what they took away:

Lara was indeed an exceptional person. What a loss it is for the whole law school community.

*Caitlin E. Borgmann*

Lara is truly a remarkable person. I feel very fortunate to have known her.

*Thomas J. Molony*

Lara clearly made such an incredible impression on all of us in such a short amount of time. She was tremendously helpful to me both at the conference and after.

*Priscilla Smith*

A more gracious symposium host could not be imagined, and such a deep loss is almost unfathomable.

*Lynn Marie Kohm*

She was a gracious hostess.

*Teresa Collett*

Lara was an absolute delight.

*Caroline Mala Corbin*

Lara was such an impressive person.

*Katherine Greenier*

Lara was such an energetic and welcoming presence at the symposium, even meeting her briefly she left me with such a great impression.

*Maya Manian*

Lara was a remarkably efficient and gracious conference organizer.

*Randy Beck*

Lara left an indelible stamp on so many. Only the luckiest among us make such an impact outside our families and immediate friends. Lara was one of those lucky few.

Lara embodied for me everything that marks W&L students as exceptional. Everyone who met Lara recognized her civility and graciousness. Everyone sensed her intelligence and curiosity. And, trust me on this, no one could overlook her tenacity and grit.

There was not a single false, self-serving thing about Lara. My Symposium co-author, Ryan Hrobak, summed it up: “Losing Lara is sad beyond words.”

Pausch’s mystic may be right: some part of each of us may have gone with Lara. But somehow, I prefer to believe that a little piece of Lara stays behind with us, woven into that special fabric that made Lara come to Washington and Lee—that made her want to share herself and her talents with us.

Lara’s passing is a poignant reminder of the fragility of our own lives. Like the indelible imprint she left, we should strive to leave every place, and every job, and every relationship better than we found it. I am grateful to Lara for this last gift.

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Julie Cromer Young\*

It would be easy to characterize Lara by her drive to learn. Although she already had experience, she focused on looking at the law and her education with new eyes, informed by—but not dictated by—what she had already learned on her own. But even though she was academically accomplished, and her intelligence and motivation was apparent in everything that she did, what I remember most fondly is her kindness. I remember Lara as unassuming, friendly, warm, and genuine. I see her accomplishments made during law school not only as a nod to her academic ability, but also as a testament to her character.

It is difficult to make sense of Lara’s death. The comfort that I have is that the lives she was able to impact during her time on earth, she impacted positively.

I came across a poem reminding me of Lara that I found appropriate:

Remember me when I am gone away,  
Gone far away into the silent land;  
When you can no more hold me by the hand,  
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.  
Remember me when no more day by day  
You tell me of our future that you plan’d:

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Only remember me; you understand  
It will be late to counsel then or pray.  
Yet if you should forget me for a while  
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:  
For if the darkness and corruption leave  
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,  
Better by far you should forget and smile  
Than that you should remember and be sad.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Christina Rossetti, *Remember*, available at <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/174266>.