

I first met Robert Wone when we served on the APABA Educational Fund's board together for one year before I went on to join the board of the Asian Pacific American Bar Association. A short while after that, Robert came to me seeking APABA's support for his candidacy for a position in the American Bar Association. Robert was largely an unknown quantity to most people on the APABA Board at that time. This was, of course, before Robert joined the APABA board himself, and years before he was elected as APABA's President-Elect. But I promised to raise the matter with the board and that I would try to do what I could to ensure that he received our endorsement.

When I did, the board asked me who Robert was, what I knew of his background, and what I thought of his qualifications for the position he was seeking. I tried to think of a way to convey to them the high esteem I held for Robert, keeping in mind that I had known him less than a year at this point in time. I really liked Robert at that point in time, but my feelings for Robert aren't adequately expressed by that word alone. I respected him and I admired him. He was fundamentally decent. Anyone who had ever interacted with him for longer than an hour could tell you that. He was a person that made you aspire to do better things with your life. He had a great capacity to do good.

I tried to think of the highest praise I could in order to convey to the APABA board exactly the type of person Robert Wone was. I told them, "Robert Wone is the type of person who will make you proud to know him

someday.” It was a spontaneous statement and I surprised myself a little when I said it, but I realized then that I meant every word. Today, those words are even more true.

I was honored and privileged to have worked with Robert over the past few years. Robert and I had a little bit of a strange relationship. When he decided to run for President-Elect of APABA, he asked me out to dinner and announced his plans to me, asking me if I thought it would be a good idea. It was almost as if he were asking for my permission. Of course, I thought it was a fantastic idea and told him so.

But if Robert deferred to me – at least at that time – on APABA matters, I looked up to Robert in many other ways. I never had a chance to tell him this, but in many ways, he was the type of leader I wish I could have been. He was so widely respected and so very unselfish. He gave so much of himself, but he did it so quietly and so modestly. No one questioned what Robert did because there was an unspoken understanding that anything he did, he did with the purest and most noble of intentions.

Over the past few days, I’ve been thinking of another way I could articulate the type of person Robert Wone was in one sentence, the way I did all those years ago with the APABA Board. I have a 5 year old son who’s the pride and joy of my life. My entire purpose in life right now is to ensure that he grows up to be the best possible human being he can be, someone with a

great capacity to do good in this world. As a parent, you want the entire world and more for your child. You want your child to be everything you could be, but aren't. You want your child to be better than you. And I realized, thinking about Robert, and his parents, and my son, I realized that I want my son to grow up to be just like Robert.

When we lost Robert Wone, we lost our dear friend, our brother, our leader, we lost so much. Today, I selfishly grieve for myself, for his wonderful wife Kathy, and for Robert's family. But I also grieve for our community. The world is a poorer place without Robert Wone in it, and most acutely, the Washington, DC area is a worse place to live today than it was just one week ago. Some of the good that was in our world just one week ago is now gone forever.

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