

Robert Wone

By Janet Shih Hajek

Through APABA-DC, I have made many wonderful friends. But, one of the most remarkable, generous, kind, intelligent and humble among everyone that I know is Robert Wone. I mention the word “humble” because that word truly defines Robert. Always self-effacing, he never boasted about his achievements or his many community service commitments. He quietly and generously gave to the Asian American community without seeking any praise or recognition.

Here are two examples of his humble generosity. This past Spring, APABA-DC hosted the NAPABA Southeast Regional Conference and Robert garnered the financial support of his then law firm, Covington & Burling, to donate to the conference. However, because he passionately believed in the cause of the APABA Educational Fund, he also personally donated separately to the AEF Dinner, purchasing a table for his friends to sit together. But, Robert didn't tell me he had done that – I learned about the sponsorship from an AEF board member.

Another example of Robert's generosity is that we as an APABA-DC board meet every month for our board meetings. Often, Robert hosted the

meetings at Covington & Burling. What he never told the board was that he footed the bill personally to pay for our dinners – he wanted to make sure we were all fed and well accommodated for during our meetings.

These quiet acts were typical of Robert: a quiet behind the scenes generosity.

Robert's kind and gentle character also came through as he was easily likeable and had so many friends. I was constantly in awe of the number of contacts he had – leaders of various organizations, politicians and even among the judiciary, where he strongly supported and worked for the appointment of an Asian American judge in this region. One way he hoped to achieve the goal of a more diverse judiciary was through his organization and leadership of a Minority Judicial Clerkship Program where he brought in judges, law clerks and students for a conference for students to learn about the benefits of and how to attain a judicial clerkship. I have not researched this, but I would love to find out how many students that have gone through this program over the past few years have actually become law clerks. I am sure there are quite a few who have benefited from his hard work and I'm sure – in years to come – there may actually be several judges appointed to the bench who can look back and say that they attended the APABA Judicial Clerkship Panel that Robert Wone organized.

I actually have always believed that Robert himself would someday become a judge. I know that he was eager to begin his work as President of APABA-DC to continue working with the Judicial Nominations Committee and many other programs of APABA. He had already begun assuming some of the duties of President – planning the annual summer associates and interns panel discussion, which he creatively dubbed “Law Students, Know Thy Career Options.”

Robert’s generosity was not just apparent through his community service and activities. It also came through in his friendships. Robert and Kathy have been extremely generous to me and my family, coming to my baby shower and celebrating my son, Ryan’s, first birthday just last month. I’m so glad he was able to come and play with Ryan. Eugene and I both agree that we hope that our sons will grow up to be like Robert. We would be so proud. Robert, we will miss you, but we will continue to strive for all that you believe in and we will work tirelessly in your honor.

Janet Shih Hajek, Esq.

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Former APABA-DC President