

WORDS OF MEMORY REGARDING BILL CONGER

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Bill Conger and Emma Rolls taught the first semester of my Civ Pro class while I was on research leave. Below is what I said at the start of my first class back, January 15, 2013.

Before we begin Civ. Pro II in all its glory, there is something I must address. As you no doubt know, over the break the University and the law school suffered a terrible loss.

Bill Conger, your professor, and my friend, died on January first. A few words about Bill.

Bill was a man with many gifts.

He was a *wise man*; he was just wise, you know. He understood how the world worked and he was a terrific guy to get advice from. Perspective. Experience. Judgment. Bill offered “counsel” as the word originally meant.

He was *principled and trusted*. Bill was the guy everyone believed would always put the University, the law school, and the right thing before his own personal interests. He was an honest broker who was greatly respected for his willingness to treat all sides fairly.

Now, once Bill decided what was right—once he had decided what the best thing for the school was—he had tremendous, *TREMENDOUS*, *powers of persuasion*. When you think of persuasion, you may think of

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animated orators behind a podium. Blowhards like me. Nope. There's a higher level of persuasion—the type of persuasion where the person being persuaded to change his mind doesn't even know it. A person would start with, let's say Position A, and Bill would start... "Congering" him, slowly working the person into believing Position B and *also getting the person to believe that he was in favor of Position B from the start!* It was amazing. Bill was a lawyer, and also apparently a Jedi.

However, those were not Bill's most important qualities, in my mind. His most important quality was simple: Bill was a *VERY good guy*. He impacted positively the lives of countless people, including Dean Valerie Couch when she was a young lawyer. If you asked someone if they knew Bill, they'd often say "Bill? Very good guy. You can count on him." In today's world, the sad fact is that very good guys are in short supply. And now there is one less. That is what makes the OCU community, including me, so very sad.

But Bill, as you may or may not know, was not all a sad fellow. He liked stiff drinks, Elvis, and wry jokes. So tonight, *AFTER* you do the Civ. Pro reading, do this: Have a few drinks, put on some Elvis, and laugh with your friends. And while you're doing that, please think good thoughts of Bill Conger. I absolutely promise you that he deserves them.
