

Jake Gillespie, a Eulogy by Charlie Buffon '61

I first got to know **Jake Gillespie** in 1960 when we were both International Relations majors at Dartmouth College.

The International Relations major at Dartmouth was unique. It was limited to 15 students, and you had to have a certain grade average to be included. Because it was patently elitist, and because International Relations was not considered to be a legitimate academic discipline, the major was discontinued in the 1970s and has not been revived.

While it lasted, the major produced scores of distinguished public servants, of whom Jake was one. Out of our group of 15, I think all but one devoted most of their working lives to international relations, in the State Department, USAID, the World Bank, or, in Jake's case, USIA.

Jake's choice of USIA was an obvious one if you knew Jake. The 1960s were the height of the Cold War; the Vietnam War was already underway, and much of our major's senior seminar was devoted to discussing Herman Kahn's book, **On Thermonuclear War**. But, Jake already recognized that the Cold War had no military solution. It could only be brought to an end if one side or the other abandoned its political system, and the only way the United States could emerge the victor would be to show the rest of the world that our system worked, and their system didn't. In fact, that is what happened, and Jake and USIA were a part of that effort.

What that effort meant to Jake was much more than showing that our side was more prosperous. It was not about capitalism versus socialism. It was about democracy versus totalitarianism, and how a free and open society permitted people to flourish in the arts, in literature, in sports, in journalism, in spirit and in their everyday lives. Jake was an ambassador of what we think of as the American way of

life, both in his own life and in the cultural interchanges he arranged in the many countries where he and Sue were posted.

This was no act on Jake's part. Jake was a true believer in the American political and legal system, which, somewhat to my exasperation, extended even to the traffic laws. For many decades Jake and I went to college basketball games together, first at George Washington and then at Georgetown, and, since I live the furthest away, I usually drove. Let's just say that Jake was a much closer adherent to speed limits and other traffic laws than I am, and he was not above reminding me of that whenever I barely made a yellow light.

It was being at a basketball game with Jake that was the true delight. For Jake, a college basketball game is not just an athletic contest, but an exercise in character development. He knew everything there was to know about the players and their families and what they had gone through to make it onto a big time college basketball team like Georgetown. For Jake, the greatness of John Thompson was not so much his win/loss record but that almost all of his players graduated from college and made successes of their lives. Jake was quite aware that Georgetown has no physical education major or other gut equivalent. All the members of the team had to take the same exams in the same courses other students took. And, for Jake, that was as much of the athletic experience as anything else. Sports were for Jake a metaphor for life itself, and that is why he was so drawn to almost any kind of athletic event.

Of course, to play a sport with Jake was equally revealing of his nature. If you play tennis with someone for many decades, as I did with Jake, how they call the lines tells you a lot about their character. With Jake, any ball I hit to him really had to be out before he would call it out. He

tried to win, and wanted to win, just as much as anyone else, but he played by the rules as they were, not how he might like them to be.

Jake dealt with his several health issues in the same way. I happened to be playing tennis with Jake in the Netherlands when he had his first seizure. As you know, he had a variety of additional afflictions after that. But, rather than let those afflictions define him, Jake dealt with his illnesses as best he could and simply got on with it. Jake loved life too much to let its side effects get the better of him.

Of course, Jake's true love was Sue, and with Sue, his increasingly expanding family. He loved and took pride in all of his children and grandchildren, and you brought him delight even as his various illnesses began to gang up on him. I know he wanted more than anything to attend Jake and Cameron's wedding this coming summer, and, though his body finally failed him, I know his spirit will be there cheering all of you on, not only then, but throughout your lives.

As we used to say at Dartmouth of classmates we admired, Jake, you were and remain a model of a "good man."