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## JAMES O. FREEDMAN: A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

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I first met Dean Freedman when I was a student in his administrative law class. That formal introduction can be an obstacle to a personal relationship, but it was not for the many of us who have become the Dean's friends. That is a tribute to his talent as a teacher and his open and receptive nature.

When we first encounter a professor in a law school course, a gulf separates him from us. It is easy to gauge the intellectual distance. He has mastered the subject matter; we know little or nothing about it. The interpersonal distance between us may be less apparent, but it is far more significant. Even the physical barrier to communication is formidable. With students ranged throughout a cavernous lecture hall—some in the farthest recesses—informal discussion is difficult. Closing the distance is a delicate pedagogic task. Straightforward appeals to “move down front” are never heeded. That is not an act of defiance on our part. Easy communication simply cannot be forced. The professor who attempts to plow through course material without first establishing rapport with his students will be met with stony noninvolvement.

Jim Freedman's talent for personal communication enabled him to establish that critical link with his students. It was stimulating for me to participate in his administrative law course. With care and patience, he prompted and encouraged student involvement. By always finding and pursuing a meritorious idea in a stu-

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dent's contribution, he made the flaws in one's reasoning apparent enough, but without discouraging subsequent efforts. He skillfully guided class discussion to achieve the broadest contribution of individual views while moving us collectively toward a resolution of the principal issues at hand. His fascination and insight into the administrative process is in large part responsible for my own interest in the subject, which is the principal area of my current legal work.

The Dean's friendliness and accessibility invited students to pursue discussions with him beyond the classroom. His office door was open and he always made time in a busy schedule to talk. I was one of those who sought him out. Because of these discussions, he invited me to serve as his research assistant and help in the editing of *Crisis and Legitimacy: The Administrative Process and American Government*.<sup>1</sup> Although the job was for me to help him, he took a personal interest in improving my writing and editing skills.

The personal warmth Jim expressed was not confined to the student/teacher relationship. In the years since I left the Law School, we have kept in touch and have tried to see each other whenever our paths crossed in the same city. The rapport that was first established in the classroom has continued.

Dean Freedman is soon to leave our Law School to employ his abilities in the presidency of a major university. I hope the administrative responsibilities of that office do not preclude him from teaching law courses and sharing his enthusiasm for the law with other students. I wish to express my appreciation to Jim, from a student's perspective.

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<sup>1</sup>J. FREEDMAN, *CRISIS AND LEGITIMACY: THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS AND AMERICAN GOVERNMENT* (1978).