

For Dr. Samuel Kotz

August 2, 2010

When Mrs. Kotz called me in late April and informed me of our great loss of Dr. Samuel Kotz, I was speechless. The feeling was akin to the sense of emptiness I felt when my father passed away. Less than a year before, at what would be my final visit with Dr. Kotz, I could not have imagined it would be the last time I would spend with this remarkable man, one of the most humane scholar-teachers I have encountered in my life.

Having been a student both in my native Taiwan and in the United States, and having taught over the last 20 some years at Columbia, Penn/Wharton, and the University of Virginia, I believe I have a unique appreciation of Dr. Kotz's gift and commitment as a scholar-teacher. I began to study with Dr. Kotz in the mid-1980s as a doctoral student in management at the University of Maryland. Despite the fact that I was never going to be a statistician (or indeed even to distinguish myself as a student of statistics!), Dr. Kotz devoted to me—from Day 1 of our class—the kind of attention that is usually reserved only for one's own doctoral students. As our mentor-student relationship grew, I began to perceive Dr. Kotz as the rare embodiment of the Confucian teaching ideal. In China, Confucius is considered to be the “father” of the teaching profession. One of his teachings holds that a student is to be taught regardless of background, ability, race, or any other consideration. Dr. Kotz embraced this belief fully, and joyfully, during his long career as distinguished and beloved teacher, and cherished mentor.

Confucius also held that once he had taught a person, that person continued to be a student for life. Dr. Kotz was a dedicated follower of this admirable teaching philosophy. He never gave up his role as teacher and continued to hold himself responsible for the ongoing education of his former students. To Dr. Kotz, the notion of being “off-duty” was completely foreign. Many of our discussions after I began my own teaching career took place late in the evenings or on weekends, reflecting the tremendous sacrifice, and unwavering commitment that characterized Dr. Kotz's dedication to the profession throughout the course of his career. I can speak for many of my colleagues who were students of Dr. Kotz during the 80s that his devotion was unflagging throughout his life: I know that Dr. Kotz offered this kind of help and support to many of my contemporaries, who now teach or work at a variety of research institutions, universities and colleges.

In the Chinese context, students are often motivated to study and perform well not just for their own satisfaction and personal achievement but also for their families and their teachers. Because of the great respect we have for our teachers, we wish to do well in order to reciprocate the dedication and commitment they have shown us. I attribute my academic and career success to Dr. Kotz's mentorship and role modeling. In fact, when I was honored by being elected president of the Academy of Management, my first thought was that the credit belongs rightly to Dr. Kotz, my beloved teacher whose light shone the way for me so many years ago and through

the years that followed. Dr. Kotz indeed set a high bar, and I am committed to living up to his standard and expectations.

I want to take this opportunity also to express my heartfelt appreciation to Mrs. Kotz. Her loving and unselfish support of Dr. Kotz allowed him to fulfill his profound and enduring commitment to scholarship and teaching throughout his life.

It is with the deepest gratitude and respect that I offer this testimonial to Dr. Kotz: To Sir, with love.

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