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A Decade of Leadership: Reflections on W&M's 27th President

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A Decade of Leadership: Reflections on W&M's 27th president

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by Patricia Roberts J.D. '92



Photo by Keith Lanpher

In the coming months, The Gale will feature a series of blog posts from distinguished alumni and friends reflecting on Taylor Reveley's leadership over the past decade. This week, William & Mary Law School Vice Dean Patricia Roberts J.D. '92, offers her own reflection on Taylor's legacy as William & Mary's 27th president.



Taylor was the dean when I was hired at William & Mary Law School in 2000, and his leadership and friendship significantly impacted me, both personally and professionally. From my early days at William & Mary, I found Taylor always available. His open door and welcoming manner meant that everyone, from students to staff to faculty, could visit and share news, ask for help, offer ideas, or enjoy his dry wit and, for lack of a more apt term, memorable and amusing Taylorisms.

I had the pleasure of serving in numerous roles during Taylor's leadership, and in each one, I found him to be a supportive mentor, one who valued new ideas and inspired all of us to do our best to propel the law school forward. Complacency was never an option with Taylor; his commitment and enthusiasm to the progress of the law school was unwavering and contagious. His efforts were indefatigable, and the law school thrived as a result. With Taylor's encouragement, and the faculty's support, I moved from the administrative team to become a member of the faculty, something impossible without a leader willing to think outside the box.

In Taylor's day-to-day leadership of the law school and efforts to achieve his vision for its increased prominence in the legal community, he impacted me as a role model and a mentor. Never was his professionalism, graciousness and commitment to William & Mary more apparent, however, than the morning he was called by the W&M Board of Visitors and asked if he would, that very

morning, report to the Brafferton to provide some urgently needed leadership for William & Mary. I do not know of any other person who could have, or would have, made that trip to the Brafferton more quickly or more effectively, than Taylor Reveley. The fact that he then stayed in that role for the next 10 years is evidence of the success of that transition.

Taylor the lawyer, leader, mentor, role model, and teacher has impacted my leadership style, my determination, my creativity, and my devotion to the ideals of a citizen lawyer, committed to the advancement of my alma mater and its students, and the clients whom we serve. But my most heartfelt memory from the 17 years I have worked with Taylor, is the moment when, after the sudden death of my late husband, Ken Roberts J.D. '90, Taylor hugged me and cried with me at the visitation. Taylor's greatest gift to William & Mary, and all of us who work and study here, is his humanity. We love him because he is as much a friend as he is a president. I will miss him.