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## Remembering Rex Perschbacher

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Who was Rex Perschbacher?

He was an ethics, rules and procedure man; an administrator; a fund raiser; a builder; a family man; a giver and a donor. He was kind and gentle. He was the soul of decency. He was our Mr. Chips.<sup>1</sup> With us he found his true north. He also loved sports, especially baseball, and especially the San Francisco Giants.

Rex's ethics comrades-in-arms were Debbie Bassett and Dick Wydick (which is another way of saying Rex was an ethical man). He was also happily married to Debbie.

Rex was a swell teacher and researcher, but his true *métier*<sup>2</sup> was administration. He seemed to like doing it more than he liked doing anything else, and he was good at it.

Every administrator has a chip of ice in his heart. Rex's chip surely was tiny, for Rex was one of the kindest people I have ever known. He surely was one of the kindest law deans in recorded history.

Perhaps the best way of saying that is to say that Rex held the Dan Dykstra endowed chair. Old timers know that Dan Dykstra was among the most amiable and gentle of members of this faculty. I would like to think it was no accident that Rex held Dan's chair. It was fitting —

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<sup>1</sup> The fictional main character from the novella *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*, about a beloved schoolteacher. See JAMES HILTON, *GOODBYE, MR. CHIPS: A NOVEL* (1976).

<sup>2</sup> A "trade, profession, or occupation." *Métier*, [DICTIONARY.COM](https://www.dictionary.com/browse/metier?s=t), <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/metier?s=t> (last accessed Aug. 6, 2018).

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two kind and gentle Midwestern deans who found their way to our school.

For quite a while now, we've had a tradition of learned and intellectually lively deans. It's not all budgets and donors. Rex was an important part of that tradition.

Rex had the special gift of giving himself to a cause and to an institution larger than himself; and in giving of himself he grew mightily.

Rex lived a life of public service, of rectitude and high integrity, a life dedicated to the law. A life of love and family.

He believed in change, improvement, betterment and public legal education.

Although we were prepared to lose Rex, it's hard to accept.

Rex and Debbie learned that destiny is not an honest game of cards.

One way to talk about Rex is to talk about baseball, the great American game. Rex loved sports and he loved baseball. He watched a lot of Giants games in his last months. Believe me, it hurts to root for a losing team. This will go to the editors before I know the fate of the Giants this year, but I fear I know. Let me be wrong!

Indeed, what do you talk about with a dying friend. Rex and I talked about the games.

In his last months with us Rex demonstrated a purity and a goodness that did not surprise me, but deeply impressed me.

A scene in Philip Roth's novel *Sabbath's Theater*, set in a cemetery, ends with the line "Here I am."<sup>3</sup> Perhaps the best I can say is that Rex was here.

Good bye Mr. Chips.

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<sup>3</sup> PHILIP ROTH, *SABBATH'S THEATER* 465 (1st ed. 1995).