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There are certain people who have a special aura about them, who have a light that shines brighter, who know a lot about a lot of things, but are also humble and work for the success of others, not just their own. Peter was clearly one of those people. He was a wonderful person in all respects, with a warm spirit and endless generosity, who left his mark on everyone who had the good fortune of meeting him. While I have several great memories that I cherish deeply, I will never forget how welcome I felt when I received his letter informing me about my acceptance to the doctoral program he directed at the University of Colorado of Denver. It was so different from all the other offer letters, as it was written by someone who truly cared about my academic and professional development. But I was not alone. That's how he came across to all his students – as someone who was not only smart and accomplished, but who had a genuine interest in others' potential, growth and achievement. And that's what made him special. He was a true scholar and teacher. An educator with a passion of leading his students to their own discovery of truth.

When I made the decision after my master's studies to move from New York to Denver 20 years ago, I had doubts but also secret hopes about what I would find. It only took a few days working with Peter to dispel the former and confirm the latter – it clearly was one of the best decisions I ever made. After meeting him, I realized that not only had I gained access to an amazing scholar with a beautiful mind, but I had also finally found a mentor and a lifelong friend. Someone who looked out for me, invested in my development and progress, provided invaluable advice, pushed me to think differently, and all of this always in a selfless and genuine manner.

Although I was not very familiar with his work prior to arriving in Denver, I soon became enthralled by his ideas, his deep belief in the democratic ethos and process, his wide-ranging knowledge and unique perspective, the volume and quality of his work, his deep insights and sharp sense of humor. In class, he pushed students to examine problems through different lenses, using the dialectic method to promote critical and independent thinking. He was tough, but fair. The red markings on the returned paper often posed questions that led to new pathways of inquiry and new opportunities for investigating all aspects of the policy issue and process.

Looking back, I am most grateful for having the opportunity to learn from him and his wife Linda and to complete my thesis under his guidance and direction. For all doctoral students, the most important decision is selecting (and securing) a supportive and collaborative chair who will help you navigate the long and challenging process. Thankfully, I was among the numerous students he took under his wing during his career as a professor. At each and every step, he was there to help, to nudge, to get you to the finish line, without compromising his high standards and expectations for his students.

Moreover, as a European student in the US, I was always impressed by his knowledge of world history and deep appreciation of Western political thought, as well as his constant and close monitoring of global affairs. While I did not share his interest in baseball, America's favorite pastime, our conversations would often veer towards the latest news in other countries, which was always a refreshing and rewarding experience.

Peter was a special guy, a great human being, who will be missed dearly by everyone who knew him. He left his mark on his field, on his colleagues, on his friends and certainly on his students, in a way that few professors ever do.

Always your student and friend.