

**Eulogy
for
Shlomo
Stephan Gerald Rubinstein**

**Beth Israel Synagogue
Worcester, Massachusetts
8 July 2016**

Joan, my long-time friend, thank you for inviting me to say a few words about Stephan. (I will come to Shlomo in a moment.)

It is a sad occasion of course. But he was not a sad or dispirited person at all. Far from it. He really relished the life he had carved out for himself. So, sad as we, who are here now, feel at one level, let us celebrate the life that its owner, its choreographer, its entrepreneur seemed to like quite well. Indeed, I spoke with him sometime last week, and he was nothing if not in good spirits and very much himself.

Stephan is the name by which I, and those here who remember him from a long time ago, knew him. But some years ago--and it is now quite a few years ago--he decided that Shlomo was the name with which he felt more comfortable. It was his Jewish, his Hebrew name--Solomon as we would now say it in English, and for him it was a very fitting link to his devotion to Judaism. To him it felt just right. He felt that it suited him, and it did, and it does. So why not? Shlomo it is.

Sixty years is a long time. In almost exactly two months, he and I would have known each other that long. We met on the steps going into Harvard's Memorial Hall in mid-September 1956, during our freshman orientation. If you arrived there early you improved your chance of getting into the courses and sections you preferred. If you didn't you might have started out college with the ultimate unpalatability--an early Saturday morning section. We had both planned well.

As freshmen we were very much interested in the young women (I have been well tutored to refrain from saying "girls") from Radcliffe, our quasi-classmates. Shlomo turned learning about them into a high art form. The Radcliffe freshman register was a popular item, and Shlomo turned its content into a research project. When he was introduced to a 'Cliffie by first and last name--"this is Sarah Kincaid"--he would invariably chime in with "Oh, Sarah CATHERINE Kincaid" and then would add: "from Chattanooga."

Needless to say, she realized very quickly that he was paying attention. What she didn't realize right then and there was that he could replicate the performance with a very large fraction of the Radcliffe freshman class. Even if we were merely walking across the Yard and passed a freshman 'Cliffie, he would quietly inform us: "that's Susan Brock--Susan ELIZABETH Brock--from Minneapolis."

We lived together for three years during college. During junior and senior years we lived in a triple in Claverly with Dain Oliver. But during sophomore year, Shlomo and I were together in the Kirkland House Annex in what had once been been a single but was by then a double, and we slept in a double-decker bed. I slept in the top bunk which gave rise to the only time over nearly 60 years when I clearly and consistently got the better of him. I routinely had earlier classes, and so I set the alarm. But when, come morning, it would go off, I would shout: "RUBE, THE ALARM." Before he was aware, he had bolted out of bed--and was not very happy as the slapstick played out day after day, and I got the few extra minutes of sleep.

Something else happened in those early mornings. It was when I first became so keenly aware of his devotion to Jewish traditions. Every morning he would daven. It was just a part of his daily routine.

Over the intervening years since college, we have been in close touch most of the time. I learned a lot about him, and I can only summarize it a bit. So

here are a few further snippets from my thoughts and memory.

He has always had a deep love for the members of his original nuclear family--his father, his mother, and his sister. And here is an irony related to the timing of his death. The recorded date is July 5th. That's the exact anniversary--the forty-second anniversary--of the day on which his father Max died in 1974.

Especially in the area of how things go in the work-a-day world, Shlomo had a deep affection and admiration for his father's outlook and wisdom. How often, while we talked over the difficulties so many experience in the job market, he would return to quote his father. Rather than having even a fancy job but at the cost of being someone else's employee, "it's better" his father would counsel, "to own your own peanut stand." How often I heard him tell me that. "It's better to own your own peanut stand."

His devotion to Judaism and his pride in being a part of it was with him from early on right up until the end. He deeply admired his rabbis. He always emphasized to me he went to them and in particular to their frequent evening meetings to learn. And how deeply he appreciated his many devoted friends here in this community--friends from across the broad spectrum of Judaism--who have been supportive and welcoming. He always encouraged me to become more observant, and I'm sure I disappointed him in not following his path in this arena more closely.

He was always quite good-natured about our fairly substantial differences in political outlook and chided me for being "a big lefty." And I acknowledged that I was, and pretty much we left it at that.

He did teach me a great deal about Judaism as well as about finance. I think his three favorite publications were the Torah, the Talmud, and the Wall Street Journal--in that order.

Like Mr. Chips in James Hilton's classic, Shlomo had been married once,

but just as that fact was not especially well known to those at Chips's school, in the same way it may not be well known about Shlomo among those in his recent circle of friends and acquaintances.

Dain and I were at his wedding in Chicago in June of 1970. At the rehearsal dinner the night before the ceremony, Shlomo took over as the evening's MC. He was in high spirits. He went around the table, calling on people to speak, and everyone had nice things to say about the bride--also named Joan--and the happy couple.

Jim Urdan, this Joan's husband and the father of Jennifer, Jonathan, and Jeffrey, made a witty speech in which he told us Shlomo was being somewhat heroic, righting the huge transgression he--Jim--had committed by denying the world its Joan Rubinstein when he married her and she became Joan Urdan. Now in marrying his Joan, Shlomo was correcting it all, restoring rightfully to the world a new Joan Rubinstein.

Then Shlomo came to his mischievous pinnacle. He put Dain on the spot. Privately and quietly, Dain had been skeptical about the wisdom of the marriage. But he wasn't planning to make a speech about it. However, now enter Shlomo who introduced him this way: "And now for another opinion." And Dain had to stumble through a here's-what-I-really-meant speech much to his own great discomfort and Shlomo's enormous merriment.

Well, ultimately, Dain turned out to be right. The marriage didn't work out, and while over the years Shlomo often mulled over trying again, he never did. In the end, he concluded that the bachelor life on a long-term basis was what suited him best, and I don't think too many who have known him well would disagree. What he finally chose worked out very well for him.

Let me close with one amusing recollection and one final, more serious thought.

Rewind to what I recall is the academic year 1958-59. It is exam period. Shlomo had enrolled in a course taught by the then-provost, Paul Buck. It was entitled History of the South. Shlomo had been busy that term with a host of other activities. He had gone faithfully to the lectures but not exercised himself over a lot of the reading. But now the exam is the next day, and he is sitting down in Claverly 17, and he starts carefully reading through, poring over his class notes. Suddenly he looks up and reports to us this monumental discovery: "Hey, this is a GREAT course!"

Good humor and light-hearted memories aside, I'm very sad at this turn of events. I was lucky in the time I chose to show up on the steps of Memorial Hall all those many years ago. It gave me access to a good friend for a long time. I loved him. I still do. He made a very memorable contribution to my life. I hope I brought something comparable to his.

Kenneth M. Deitch