

## WARREN ZIMMERMANN

How does one even begin to reduce to a few lines, a friendship of over 50 years. How convey the warmth of feeling; the shared humor, the depth of gratitude owed to both Warren and Teeny for taking us so fully into their lives. When we came to Washington 40 years ago, Warren and Teeny had us to dinner the very first week at their townhouse in Foxhall Village. After they moved to McLean and then to Southdown, they had us to dinner, to lunch, to parties, weekend after weekend after weekend. They had us over so many times that even when they were away, we'd start down the driveway and turn toward Virginia before realizing they were in Paris or Moscow or Madrid.

And it was at those lively weekend gatherings that we seemingly met most of Washington, and much of the rest of the world: authors and artists and ambassadors; and just friends. Interesting, fascinating people. They appeared to be in the vortex of everything going on in the world: revolutions, monetary crises, international conferences; writing newspaper columns, going on talk shows, teaching-- all drinking Warren's bloody Marys and smoking his good cigars. It is astounding how many of our closest friends today, we met through Warren and Teeny. Somehow, we had the Zimmers' blessing, and could bask in their world of friendship and excitement. How generous, kind, and thoughtful.

Yet, Warren was hardly a boy scout. His accomplishments in the career foreign service reveal a person of great strength and resolve; someone willing to employ force when that was the most necessary way forward; and a shrewd judge of human character who from experience (and literature) could size up the drama unfolding around him--whether at the negotiating table or on the playing field. A few weeks before he died, we were watching an NFL playoff game, and he said, "You know Bo, football is just like war: one must attack your opponent with massive force at his weakest point; the passing game is the air force, the runners and blockers, the troops on the ground".

He understood football, and tennis, squash, and fly-fishing as well as he knew ethnic strife, oppression, and war. He lived everyday with contradiction and ambiguity. He eschewed stereotyping. As an author, he delved into human and national complexities. In First Great Triumph, he wrote:

"There was both darkness and light in the characters and actors of the principal American protagonists. Those peculiarly American combinations of ideology and pragmatism, of power and principle, and of racism and of tolerance were as much a feature of the United States in 1898 as they are of the United States today."

But Warren was tolerance incarnate. It was bred in his bones. The editors of our Yale senior yearbook reprinted only two columns from the hundreds of Daily News offerings that year. One was Warren's, on the trial and acquittal of Emmett

Till's white Mississippi killers. How many of us had followed this trial at the time? How many had even heard of Emmett Till? After the trial, Emmett's devastated 64-year-old great uncle, returned home. Warren wrote:

“As he squints down the long rows of cotton that are the staple of the South's economy, can he see the end? Or does he see, as his father saw and as his grandfather saw, only that the rows stretch on and on until they are lost from sight in the heat of the Southern sun?”

On this foundation, Warren built an enviable record of humanitarianism throughout his entire life. He was a passionate advocate of human rights in Russia and Yugoslavia, as Ambassador to the Vienna Conference, and as the Director of the State Department's refugee programs. And he didn't just give at the office, as he and Teeny brought many refugees back to the States on their own. (Of course, it was true that the Zimmers always seemed to have an unusual number of non-English speaking housekeepers, drivers, and helpers around.)

It was not fashionable at Yale, just as it is antithetical today in certain circles, to admit to being an intellectual. Again, almost 50 years ago, in Warren's class book essay on our senior year, he wrote:

“We should all be intellectuals and proud to call ourselves such, if we mean by ‘intellectual’ a person who feels a deep concern for the vital unity of human affairs. If we have not developed this concern, or if we lose it, then we have betrayed the great cultural tradition with which we have chosen to associate ourselves.”

This is Warren at age 21. And he kept getting better and better. The remarkable thing about Warren is that he could be your good friend at the same time as you were looking up to him. Courageous and kind, moral and modest, glorious intellect, and fanatical Redskin fan. He set the bar pretty high. He taught us much about life, which he lived to the fullest; but he also taught us about death. Who did not shed a tear when he emailed his friends last summer, “I remind myself that I am a person, not a disease. I have made up my mind that the time left me will be about life, not death.”

Unfortunately, it is now about life, and death. We will miss you terribly. We loved and admired you so.

Tersh Boasberg 2.17.04