

## IN MEMORY OF PROFESSOR HAROLD BERMAN

*Michael Perry\**

I first met Hal Berman in the spring of 1979. I was teaching at Yale Law School that academic year, and I drove up to Cambridge to attend a meeting of the Council on Law and Religion, which Hal and a few others had founded a few years earlier. As it happened, our paths would not cross again for almost a quarter of a century. In January 2003, while I was at Emory to meet the law faculty, John Witte ushered me into Hal's office. Hal greeted me with an affectionate warmth and generous spirit I will never forget. An hour later, I had experienced for myself what John Witte, Frank Alexander, and many others already knew: Hal Berman—one of the greatest legal scholars of the twentieth century—was above all a magnificent human being. Six months later, I was privileged to become Hal's colleague at Emory. Soon Hal and Ruth and Sarah and I became friends, occasionally dining at one another's homes, where Hal and Ruth would charm us with endlessly fascinating stories from their long life together. In the end, Hal and I would be colleagues for only a little more than four years—but what a wonderful four years it was. Every time I walked into Hal's office, down the long corridor from mine, Hal's face broke into a large smile; the affection and generosity I remembered from that day in January 2003 were always immediate and abundant.

There was, of course, much sadness among Hal's family and friends when, after over six months of deteriorating health, Hal's heart finally gave out in November 2007. But we celebrate Hal's life much more than we mourn Hal's passing. There is much to celebrate—and to envy: Hal would have been ninety years old in February 2008; he and his beloved wife Ruth were healthy and lived together, independently, almost to the very end; and, almost to the very end, Hal was vigorously doing the work he so loved.

The Robert W. Woodruff Chairs were established at Emory University in the early 1980s. Because Hal Berman had come to Emory from Harvard in 1985, to accept a Woodruff Chair, the stars were aligned in such a way that I was able, eighteen years later, to come to Emory. Because of Hal Berman—because of my friendship with him, and because of his inspiring example as a

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pathbreaking legal scholar—the Woodruff Chair I have held since 2003 means so much to me. Thank you, Hal. You have been a blessing to me, as you have been to countless others. May you now enjoy the peace that surpasses our understanding. “The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seem to have died, and their departure was thought to be an affliction, and their going from us their destruction, but they are at peace. For though in the sight of men they were punished, their hope is full of immortality.” The Book of Wisdom 3:1–4.