



## ON THE PASSING OF EUGENE APPLEBAUM

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The city of Detroit and Wayne State University had no greater champion than Eugene Applebaum. Nor had I a greater friend. We met late in life, only 20 years ago, but during that time, I learned so much from him, both about the university that I had come to lead and about the city that was his home. Throughout his lifetime he never lost the love of his alma mater or his home city. He also made me come to understand and love them both.

During the years that I served as president of the university, we met frequently in his office or mine. We liked to go to construction sites on campus, especially the site of the Eugene Applebaum College of Pharmacy and Health Science, or just drive around the campus or city. He was particularly interested in what we planned to do next, and how the university was going to work with the institutions of the city — the DIA, the opera and symphony. Up to just a few years ago, we often met for breakfast or lunch. He particularly liked to hear about new restaurants opening and occasionally we would meet at one of them.

He wanted most of all for the university to do whatever was possible to make Detroit a great place for everyone. He loved this city. Enabling the education of young people of the university and the city will stand out among his greatest legacies. He wanted everyone to come here to the campus and enjoy its assets, many of which he created. The university's Forum On Contemporary Issues In Society (*FOCIS*) lecture series grew out of his vision that the university needed to bring people together in dialogue. He wanted influential people to come to the university so that the students and citizens of the city could be engaged with their ideas. And he loved coming to meet with them ahead of their lectures and pepper them with questions. He was always aware of where they stood: everyone from Arianna Huffington to General Wesley Clark.

He supported former heads of state lectures by Joaquim Chissano, the former president of Mozambique, and Vicente Fox, whom he brought to the university in 2008 at the height of the NAFTA labor/trade issues and again this year to talk on immigration as part of the tenth anniversary of the Eugene Applebaum Chair in Community Engagement. He supported a study abroad program for students interested in Africa. He was an enthusiastic supporter of CitizenDetroit which promoted town halls among Detroiters during and after bankruptcy.

Since his passing, I have received several notes of condolences from friends and acquaintances. I now realize how many were aware of our friendship and I am honored and humbled to be among those that he considered to be his friend. I thank Marcia and his entire family for allowing me to share him. I shall miss him dearly.