



John Ancona Robertson

September 28, 1942 - July 5, 2017

John A. Robertson, 74, passed away suddenly on July 5, 2017 in Austin, Texas, where he was a cherished teacher at the University of Texas Law School. John grew up in Maple Shade, New Jersey, where his father, also John Ancona Robinson, was a patent attorney, and his mother, Alice Rutkoski, a nurse. He came to Dartmouth from Moorestown High School and majored in Philosophy. He was a revered brother in Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity and a member of the Film Society. Following Dartmouth, John went on to earn a J.D. in 1968 at Harvard Law School. He clerked at the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court before joining the faculty at the University of Wisconsin Law School, signaling his academic career in law. From 1980 until his death, John taught at the University of Texas Law School, where he met and married Carlota Smith, a distinguished linguistics professor at UT with whom John spent ten happy years before her untimely passing.

John's was a curious mind, combining interests in science and the law. He lectured widely on issues of bioethics. Harvard Law Professor Glenn Cohen, in a memorial for Professor Robertson, noted that "John put the field of law and bioethics on the law school map."

His writings include two landmark books, *The Rights of the Critically Ill* and *Children of Choice: Freedom and the New Reproductive Technologies*. In addition, he authored well over 20 articles, book chapters, book reviews and op-ed pieces as well as articles on reproductive rights, genetics, organ transplantation, and human experimentation. He was a regular expert on National Public Radio, quoted by Texas and national newspapers, and sought by legislative and regulatory bodies. Yet he was equally at home talking basketball or poetry. His Austin home was stacked with well-thumbed books of classic and contemporary works.

John was preceded in death by his parents, his brother, William “Martin” Robertson, and his wife, Carlota, who died in 2007.

He is survived by his sister, Carolyn Robertson Schreiber, a brother, Richard A. Robertson, his step-children, Alison Smith and Joel Smith, and their families; by eight nieces and nephews, some of whom he helped put through school; and by his partner, Jane Kielty Stott.

This tribute is drawn from the several published obituaries, Dartmouth Alumni records, and John’s own essay in honor of our twenty-fifth Dartmouth reunion. mp

