

PREFACE TO WEYERS

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Bob Wilson was the best possible advisor for me. Not only is he a great scholar with a great mind but today I wish to honor him for something he has, which is even less common: a thoughtful and generous attitude, one that is respectful of individual differences. My experience demonstrates this abundantly.

When I was a prospective Ph.D. student, in the spring of 1990, I had come to visit the Stanford GSB, where I had met Bob and other faculty. I had then moved on to visit other schools. At one school, I received repeated messages that this school was the only possible reasonable choice. By the time I left, I felt like I had been brainwashed. That night I called Bob and asked him to tell me again what was good about the GSB program. What I remember today is not in the details of what made each program special. It is the simplicity with which Bob responded to my request that has remained with me all these years. He was genuinely and humbly telling me what he thought was good about his program, rather than trying to convince me that his program was better. The difference was very important to me on that particular day, and I have much appreciated that side of Bob over the years.

I followed a somewhat unusual path in the Ph.D. program at Stanford in that I left after four years, ABD (all but dissertation). I mean really ABD! I had a six-week-old baby and was moving to France, with no idea as to what topic I would focus on in my dissertation. Moreover, I wasn't even sure I would ever go back to it. Understandably, most of the faculty very much doubted that I would ever earn my Ph.D.. I had formed a dissertation committee before leaving, to make sure someone would answer my calls. Bob was my principal advisor. It is only quite a bit later that it became clear what a good choice that was.

Two years after leaving, I came back for my orals, six months pregnant with my second child. Bob was there, supportive as usual. We had communicated about my progress at long, but regular, intervals. Another two years later, I called Bob and told him I wanted to make a push to finish soon.

This is when I realized how fortunate I was, having Bob as my advisor. I found tremendous support from an advisor I had chosen four years prior, as I was leaving the country. Bob told me something about which I had no idea: every year, at the student evaluation meeting, when others asked what I was doing, with some skepticism, Bob stood up for me and said I would come through when I was ready. It was simply amazing to me, to find out that Bob believed in me

when most, including myself, doubted me. This kind of faith in people, even when appearances seem unfavorable, is a rare gift. Bob has it.

For the few months that followed, Bob really came through for me. He conscientiously and promptly read everything I sent him, giving me precise and constructive feedback that allowed me to reach closure on what had been a long and fairly gruelling process.

It is with great pleasure that I contribute the paper that follows, to a volume in the honor of Bob Wilson. He is a great scholar and a generous man, who has proved to be readily available for intellectual guidance and emotional support alike.

Thank you, Bob!