A Tribute to Andrew Savitz (Maryland and New College) and

Clayton Christensen (Utah and Queens)

by

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**The Beginning: Acquaintance, Oxford, 1975-77**

In September of 1975, as we all recall, the excitement of an ocean trip aboard the QEII brought us together. This trip, and my return on the same ship in 1977, were the only times I have truly been at sea. When we arrived in Oxford, Andy and I were in New College with Griff Harsh, Jim Merrell and Bill Pease, while Clay repaired to Queens with Larry Sabato and the late Emile Wilson. I knew Andy better than Clay, but neither well. This tribute is from an admiring acquaintance of them both, rather than a close friend.

Clay was tall, unflappable and very kind. Andy was excitable, acerbic and very funny. They were quite different people, but shared a kind of drive: both to understand and then to change systems and peoples’ lives for the better. After taking higher degrees (Andy in law and Clay in business) they found their respective areas of influence, which they both shaped and dominated. Andy became a thought leader in the application of law and economics to environmental stewardship and sustainability in both the private and public sector. Clay made very big waves through his reinvention of Schumpeter’s “gale winds of creative destruction” reduced to a single word: Disruption.

**The Middle: Re-acquaintance, Cambridge, 2017**

The reunion of the class of 1975 in Cambridge, with both Clayton and Andy as unofficial hosts (among others including Pete Carfagna) was a great experience which I will always cherish, especially now that Andy and Clay are gone.

I enjoyed every minute of the 2017 get-together, seeing you all in Cambridge and spending the afternoon at the Head of the Charles races. In particular, both Clay and Andy left me with strong impressions: Clay for his deep understanding of contemporary technological upheaval; and Andy for his unwavering commitment to confronting the global environmental crisis. If I were to put these efforts together, it would be to say that confronting the global environmental crisis will necessitate an episode of disruption like few seen in human history. The generosity shown by Clay and Andy over that weekend and the solidarity felt by all kindled warm remembrances of things past. Yet in that Boston October I felt that despite his unfailing good cheer, Clay had suffered terribly. Like Job, his deep faith and essential goodness transported him. Andy was as I remembered him at New College – still voluble – but slightly more restrained and quietly reflective. I am so glad that we could all see one another again.

**The End: Boston and Brookline, 2020**

The end came too soon after the middle. When Clay died on January 23, his fight – Rhodes called it the “world’s fight” – and Clay’s place in it was over. The *New York Times* made clear that hewould be remembered for an intellectual legacy built on the idea of disruptive innovation. I learned of Andy’s death, on January 29, weeks afterward, just before composing this letter. Andy’s legacy of engagement with the challenges of sustainable economies is of the same importance and stature as Clay’s contributions, and was driven by Andy’s organizer’s instinct for one-to-one engagement. As long as we remain, we will remember them, and after that, others will too.

With warm wishes to you all,

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