

**SPECIAL MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR BENNY RAAB**

**Nachman Oron**

**Chair of ICA**

Solemn Music

**Nachman Oron, Israel: Chair of ICA.** Benny Raab, Honorary president of the Israel Analysts Bar. Benny Raab Honorary, Life Member of ICA. Benny Raab my teacher, Benny Raab my good friend. The kind of friendship I had with Benny Raab goes back for many years and for the kind of daily contact, a meeting or at least a telephone call. Benny wasn't early morning riser and every morning in between half past seven, quarter-to-eight I have a telephone call from Benny and those of you who knows Benny, knows he was a very enthusiastic person, full agenda, always some new ideas, speaking loudly shouting at me, but he always had something to say about the agenda. Benny's first love was to his wife Ettie, whom many of us knew for many years and for his family, but his second love went to the Israel System Analysts Bar and to ICA. He loved ICA and they returned his love by assigning to him the title of Honorary Life Member a few years ago. Benny passed away, three months ago on the 5<sup>th</sup> July and for me it created a big wide gap; all of a sudden I do not hear from him anymore. My memories of him anyhow are of joy and happiness, tours all over the world, interesting person, I miss him, Benny we will all miss you very much. I now call to the podium the other Honorary Life Member of ICA, Frank McDonough to say a few words.

**Frank McDonough, USA: Life Member ICA.** This is a great honour. Thank you, thank you Nachman. Benny was a citizen of the world, I'll just give you a few examples; he got his masters degree and his graduate work was done at Columbia University, New York City in the 1930s and after he graduated he learned Spanish and began to tour Mexico for an extended period of time and as that a time when not very many people did travel to Mexico as a touring individual. I first joined up with ICA in 1988 and I met Benny around that time and I would describe him as a fearsome perfectionist. It was really quite a sight at a conference before it began to have Benny in the room with the board, with the programme committee, with the host country official and his or her staff all listening to Benny, often times re-arranging everything at the last moment to get it right - to get it just perfect. He served in that role for six years and organised six ICA conferences and I asked a several people the other night at dinner for one word to describe Benny Raab and they're very nice. Number one; adventurer, number two; professional; two people said that. My sample was limited but this would establish a profile of the feelings people had about Benny. Energetic, always enthusiastic- two people said that. Direct; I think we all know him as being very direct, a good person. Two people said unique. A highlight for all of us was the conference in Jerusalem that had been postponed one year because of the tensions. I believe we had that conference in Jerusalem in '91 and Benny was like a shepherd with the power of a prime Minister. He moved us around that country in a very secure way and we saw a great deal in addition to having a good conference and we you know just saw all of the things I'd known about from religion and the bible, you know the Sea of Galilee, the Dead Sea, Jerusalem, the old quarter Jerusalem. I took a seat in the Knesset on the Sunday while my wife, Mary Alice and others went

to Bethlehem to see the site where Christ was born. Many of you will also recall the great session we had of the King David Hotel, which is the 'THE' spot in Jerusalem. So it was just a wonderful thing.

A couple years later I was in Vienna at the ICA conference hosted by Herbert Wiesboeck. Herbert organised many events for us and it was a great time, but in the few minutes we had for free I was walking past the Hapsburg Palace. There is a little park there in the official grounds and I find I'm looking at this statue of this distinguished man and it was Benjamin Raab. Later that night I said to Benny you know there's a very beautiful statue on the grounds of the Palace and he said 'That's my grandfather' and I said well what is his story. Well he was a famous man here in Vienna and when time allowed he packed it all up and went to Israel and started an orange grove. So Benny was one of the first families of Israel and he never talked very much about that.

Now for a word on Ettie, Benny's wife; many of us knew Ettie very well Hellen Caffrey, Lynn, Mary Alice and others. We always viewed her as the doyen of the ICA spouses. I can just picture her now with the travel book in her hand with the city that we're in, marching off early in the morning to come back late at night with lots of stories. She and Benny took Martha Dorris under their wing when I sent Martha alone on her first trip out of the country to Cairo, so with Eddy and Benny gone we have lots and lots of memories going back over many times, Benny would turn up in Washington so we knew him there. We met him in the ICA Conferences, he had me come to Israel to speak to his Institute of Systems Analysts and so there remain a lot of relationships, lots of good stories and lots of good memories. With both Benny and Ettie gone they truly do leave a hole in the ICA world while contributing as always to the ICA history, so thank you Nachman for this opportunity to speak..

Solemn Music

**Nachman Oron, Chair of ICA.** Honorary Life Member of ICA Peter Hearson was a good friend of Benny, I know they had a meeting almost every year in London. Benny would come and meet with Peter. Peter was not able to attend our conferences here today, but he asked Larry to say some words on his behalf. Also Larry would like to say a few words on Benny.

**Larry Caffrey, ICA.** Thank you very much. Peter Hearson has been to thirty-six conferences has said he made a bad choice of missing out on this one. At this moment he is in Namibia, which means it's rather difficult for him to get here. He has written these words, which he's asked me to say to you.

Peter Hearson, ICA Life Member. Dear Friends and ICA colleagues, it has been my privilege to know and work with Benny Raab for well over 20 years. He was a good friend and colleague - one who could always be relied upon to honour his word. As a dedicated active supporter of ICA he well deserved its highest honour of Honorary Life membership.

If, like me, you find it hard to believe he is no longer with us - will no longer be in his place at the conference table - then, like me, you may still see that smiling face, twinkle in the eye, looking down on us even now to dispute anything we might say about him!

Well Benny, old friend, for a start – you were not a saint! But you were a good man with a heart of gold. Generous with praise where it was deserved, but impatient with humbug whatever form it took. A passionate man of many parts your enthusiasm was boundless. You set a pace that few could match.

Your commitment to the well-being of your own country was never in doubt but you were always happy to share experiences and to help other people from wherever they came. You were both a patriot and an internationalist.

IT education was one of your passions; not only for professionals but also in schools and colleges, and in its effective use by the community as a whole. Then there were the scholarships for those in development areas that you did so much to support. The annual convention of Information Systems Analysts, to which you devoted so much of your energy, was a model of its kind. As an invited speaker I well remember the enthusiasm it generated and the great care you took to ensure a successful outcome.

Remember the day we spend together in Sintra after the 22<sup>nd</sup> Conference in Estoril? We decided to join an international group on a guided tour of one of its grand palaces only to find, to the dismay of us all, that the guide spoke only Portuguese. You immediately offered your services as interpreter and translated throughout in three different languages. Once again you saved the day. I was educated and amazed!

Few seemed to know of your role as a part-time farmer; and of your skills in growing fine avocados. Your generosity in providing these at meetings in Israel was always appreciated – they were delicious! For sure you were a man of many parts.

ICA offered you many opportunities for service on a wider front and you grasped them without hesitation. Not only as a member of the ICA Board and chairman of Study Groups, but also in your many spirited contributions from the conference floor as Israel's National Representative. Your Round Table reports were always most informative and, spiced with humour, encouraged others to play an active part. No conference was ever complete without Benny Raab!

My most abiding memory is of the way in which, at very short notice, you played a pivotal role in transferring the 24<sup>th</sup> conference, planned for Jerusalem, to Switzerland when the Gulf war threatened. Working closely with our Swiss colleagues all went well. I know that this last minute move was, after all your hard work, a bitter disappointment – but you turned disappointment into triumph when, on the return of the conference to Jerusalem two years later, you ensured its resounding success. None who took part will ever forget that conference!

In all of this Ettie played a crucial role. Her support in your work for ICA and as leading lady for the accompanying persons programme at conference was invaluable. You were justly very proud of her.

The conferment of Honorary Life Membership of the Council at the millennium conference in Ottawa was a well-deserved honour in recognition of all your many years of dedicated service. It was fitting that, as only the third person to be so honoured, you followed in the steps of your distinguished fellow countryman Aaron Gertz; a founding father of ICA, its only Secretary General and first Honorary Life

member. He would have been proud to welcome you into the fellowship of Honorary Life Members as, indeed, was my privilege. Ettie would have been thrilled.

Benny, old friend – IT professional, administrator, patriot, internationalist, farmer and ICA Honorary Life member. Shalom ! We could not, and will not, forget you.

**Larry Caffrey, ICA.** It's a bit difficult to follow that so rather than add to it, I'm going to tell you two stories concerning Benny. It might fit the calibre of the man. A few years back Benny wasn't able to attend an ICA conference; I think it was in Sydney. After Conference, I collected the conference sound tapes and sent them off to the transcription lady who serviced the tapes for many years. Shortly after there was a very urgent phone call; please ring immediately. When I answered the phone she said where's Benny. So I explained he wasn't able to be there this year. She was so disappointed. She said she really looked forward to hearing Benny's voice and what Benny had to say and she missed him and at the end of the conference and when she completed the proceedings she sent all the information back and again phoned me, asking me to tell him that he'd been missed and she hope to hear from again soon.

Another occasion I'm going to talk about was in Jerusalem, well it wasn't Jerusalem it was actually Nazareth, but it was the Jerusalem conference. We all toured Israel on Benny's insistence and we all went up to Nazareth for the day. We'd been to many places, everywhere, so it was rather late when we got to Nazareth with two busloads. We eventually arrived at the church gates of the church of the Annunciation. The sun was setting, so the gates were closed. The man at the gates said 'You cannot come in, the gates are not open after sunset.' All of a sudden Benny arrived. 'What's the problem?' he said. We told him. 'Oh! I'll sort that out.' he said. He walked up to the gate; a few words to the man; maybe a little bit of paper changed hands and all in all behold we were in. We had Benny the Jew, persuading the keeper of the gate an Arab, to let all those Christians into the church. What problem? No problem, not to Benny.

So we have a man, Benny Raab, who touched the lives of everyone he met and touched the lives of a few he didn't meet. We have Benny the man to whom no gate was locked and no door was shut.

Rest in peace Benny. Rest in peace.

Solemn Music

**Nachman Oron, Chair of ICA.** I now call on Shimon Broner, the National Representative for Israel to say a few words on Benny

**Shimon Broner, The ICA National Representative for Israel.** Before speaking as the Israel International Representative I would like to inform you that at Benny's funeral I put a lots of flowers of flowers on behalf of ICA.

I first met Benny in 1976 and during the years, our relationship came a bit closer and closer. I learn a lot about his personality. Standing at the funeral of Benny and listening to the eulogy speech delivered by Mr. Nachman Oron, ICA Chair, I realised that what has been said described exactly the characteristic of the late Benny Raab. So I decided to translate the eulogy speech; for those of you who knew Benny, I'm

quite sure that they are familiar with what was said and for those who have not met Benny, it is a good chance to learn a little about the great man.

(Eulogy speech delivered by Dr. Nachman Oron at the funeral of the late Benjamin (benny) Raab).

“Benny Raab. Honorary President of the Chamber & Founder of the Information Systems Analysts Bar; Honorary life member of ICA.

My dearest friend Benny:

To stand here at your grave and eulogize, seems to me as part of a surrealistic movie. It seems as if at any time you will stand up, scold us, and ask us to return at once to the lecture and stop disturbing the lecturer.

I met Benny for the first time over 40 years ago as a student in one of the systems analysts courses organized by Benny, on behalf of the Israeli Institute of Productivity.

Since then we maintained a close relationship which continued until the end of last week. Almost no weekday went by without a phone conversation between us.

Benny always had a full agenda for conversation, full of enthusiasm, raising brilliant ideas on how to enhance the bar's activities which he loved so much, what to do regarding international activities and how to enrich the loaded programme of the next ica convention and also to make use of our lunch- break, and most of all how to recruit more scholarships for students in developing areas, through the voluntary communal activities of the chamber which he developed with so much devotion.

Many years ago Benny initiated the CIO's forum in government ministries. The forum holds regular monthly meetings with amazing full attendance.

During one of our stormy forum meetings, one friend shouted at him:- "Benny, if you would not exist, someone would have to invent you", because only thanks to you this organization did not cease functioning even for one month. Later on, we expanded and also established the forum of CTO's, and there too Benny was the driving force.

Benny served many years as Israel's National Representative in the International Council for Information Technology in Government Administration, ICA.

During my first visit to the international ICA conference, I was full of appreciation regarding Benny's involvement in the organization's activities, his intimate relationship with leading world figures, and his fiery argumentative capability, yes... in fluent English.

To all conferences the late Etty accompanied Benny, she was loved by us all and organized activities for the accompanying persons.

In 1992 representatives from all over the world were invited to the Jerusalem ICA Conference, organized by Benny, this conference will be remembered as one of ICA's legendary ones.

Benny progressed in the ICA hierarchy and made me join and stand-in for him as Israel's National Representative, and like him, to reach the organization's top. Benny was so happy when a year ago the organization elected me, for the first time in history an Israeli, as the Chairman of the International Organization ICA.

The ICA organization rewarded Benny by bestowing upon him the Honorary Life Membership distinguished award, preceded by only three persons.

Benny's main affection was towards the Systems Analysts Bar. Forty years ago Benny initiated the establishment of the "Organization of Systems Analysts", which grew and developed after 30 years into the Information Systems Analysts Bar of Israel.

The Bar activities expand continuously and our yearly convention became very popular in the past years. The communal activity of the chamber expands very much too.

Benny was involved in the Bar's activity almost to his last day. No week passed without him coming to visit the office. Last Thursday he happily informed me that he succeeded finalizing the editing of the next information bulletin, and now he can rest a little.

Above all, he mostly loved his sons, Nachum, Moshe and Elazar, his daughters-in-law and especially his grandchildren who made him very happy. He always carried their photos in his pocket.

My dear friend Benny, you requested to rest a little, and you left us so much alone. We will always remember your image and special personality. We will miss you greatly.

Go in peace and rest in peace

**Shimon Broner, Israel.** I would like to add that in Israel we have made a special memory book for Benny. All CIO's, and all professional IT professionals, they all wrote some words in the book. I brought this book with me and I would like to pass the book among you over the next two days, everyone who wants to add some words, will be appreciated. The book will go back to his sons on my return to Israel. Thank you.

**Nachman Oron, Chair of ICA.** At this point, I would like to thank Shimon and Larry and Peter and Frank, thank you very much for your efforts. A few weeks before Benny passed away, we had a meeting here in Cyprus and then Hans Ksica from Austria joined us to go back to Israel. Hans had spent more than a little time with Benny when they were travelling all over the country and he enjoyed very much that time. Hans was quite shocked when the announcement was made that Benny had passed away. I asked Hans to prepare these beautiful slide presentations and music that you have seen and heard today. So thanks to Hans for his beautiful work. Thank you all.