

**REMEMBERING
JAMES D. WOLFENSOHN
(1933 – 2020)**



By: World Bank Group Alumni

A Unique Disrupter
by Miguel Schloss

Beyond the shadow of a doubt, Jim Wolfensohn was in a league of his own. Visionary, strongly willed, and deeply human — he was oftentimes feared and at the same time admired by many.

Upon reflection, and after reading the articles and emails received from dozens of colleagues, I can only suspect how difficult (and lonely) it must have been for him to introduce the path-breaking reforms he sought to modernize the Bank.

As far as I could tell, deep down, he was fundamentally a disrupter — intellectually, emotionally, and in every other respect

But at the end of the day, no matter how well planned, the changes were inherently tumultuous (using the Washington Post's depiction). When all was said and done, the reforms produced a different and more up-to-date Bank, responding to emerging societal and borrowers' demands, and with a distinctive Wolfensohn trademark.

Whether this could have been done in any other way is a matter of debate — but it was clear that we all had to face a changed international context that cried for a more effective, efficient and relevant World Bank.

It was a privilege to have contributed to help the Bank free itself from the organizational silos that had crept over the decades to face the challenging times ahead.