

## BEST LONG PROFESSIONAL ARTICLE AWARD

### Hal Abramson

**Article?** **What is the recipe for success in the category of Best Long Professional**

- A **compelling account** of what may be the most emotionally charged and difficult political negotiation of our time;
- A **rigorous analysis** of the **styles** and **tactics** employed by the key participants; and
- The **lessons** that, hopefully, we can **all learn** from these negotiations.

For this outstanding contribution, CPR is pleased to present its prestigious Award to Professor Hal Abramson for his article entitled “**Nelson Mandela As Negotiator: What Can We Learn From Him,**” published in **The Ohio State Journal on Dispute Resolution.**

In his article, Professor Abramson considers how Nelson Mandela approached negotiating the unbanning of the African National Congress, the dismantling of apartheid and his own freedom – after 27 years of imprisonment. Viewed through the lens of negotiating behavior, this heroic struggle for freedom takes on a new dimension. In his article, Professor Abramson details Nelson Mandela’s approaches on behalf of himself and his nation, including Mandela’s nuanced understanding of the **importance of building relationships, listening, apologizing, and forward thinking.**

Rather than summarize this article, let me read just one paragraph describing the moment in history when President de Klerk informed Nelson Mandela that he would be released from prison the very next day.

Mandela used this discussion about his release as an opportunity to make the case for unbanning the ANC, lifting the state of emergency, releasing political prisoners, and allowing exiles to return. If de Klerk did not unban the ANC, Mandela reminded him

that he would be working for an illegal organization and said: “you must simply re-arrest me after I walk through those gates.” This re-arrest reframing help de Klerk see the dispute from an unappealing perspective. If these changes were not made, Mandela’s freedom and any resulting positive world reaction would be short-lived.

Less than two months later, President de Klerk stunned the country and the world on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1990, when he gave his now famous unbanning speech in which he met Mandela’s key preconditions for negotiations and announced that he would be released unconditionally.

For me, of all the lessons learned from this article, I was impressed by Nelson Mandela’s deep and abiding understanding of the need to study the interests and needs of those with whom you do **not** agree. If I had my way, I’d make this article required reading for every negotiator — from the advocate in a commercial mediation to those who are working to achieve peace in the Middle East.

It is now my pleasure to present the **CPR Award for Best Long Article** to Professor Hal Abramson.