Scholarship as Contribution to World Peace

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Eric Stein was clearly one of the important legal scholars of our time. I enjoyed him as a colleague for more than three decades, and remained a friend afterward although we were separated by distance. Eric was truly dedicated to his scholarship, which was broadly concerned with international law and how it operates, but perhaps most significant to his legacy was his deep interest and personal involvement in the extraordinary beginnings and ongoing evolution of the European Union.

As a scholar of the intricate legal structure of the European Union, Eric had to cope with the beginnings of what may be one of the most important geopolitical international relations and legal developments of the post–World War II era. The European Union was based only partly on the goals of economic development. More important was the role that the Union played in preventing another European war following several devastating wars of the twentieth century. Eric was in the midst of this development, and contributed enormously to the development of a rules-based economic system, which deserves important recognition for its institutional and constitutional impact on the relatively peaceful decades that followed.

Eric was always a true gentleman and scholar. He dedicated many hours to influential publications including important books as well as carefully structured and lively essays. He was also a devoted teacher, and maintained close contact with many former students. Much of Eric’s background was of course in Europe, so he was able to play a role in bridging the different cultures of Europe and the United States. This background, his recognition of the importance of human institutions in preventing war, and his study and scholarship about weapons control concepts contributed to a unique and fertile mind.

He will be missed, but we all rejoice in the fact that he was fortunate to have experienced an important, interesting, and enjoyable life. He was also enormously fortunate to have a dedicated and intelligent wife, Virginia, who had the talents to be an amazing and lasting partner for Eric.