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Carl A. Valenstein

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## MEMORY OF ERIC STEIN

*Carl A. Valenstein\**

My memory of Eric Stein is of a teacher and mentor rather than a colleague. I will leave to others more qualified than I to describe his major contributions to the academic literature and teaching of European Community and public international law. When I entered Michigan Law School as a student in 1980, Eric had “technically” retired or at least transitioned to emeritus status. I say he had “technically” retired because his commitment to the law school community as a writer, teacher, and mentor to students never appeared to diminish. He still taught a number of classes and seminars, wrote extensively, and was more than generous with the time he spent with young law students like myself who professed an interest in international law.

At that time, Michigan Law School was honored with the presence of two lions of international law who had established Michigan as a leading school for the study of international law. Eric Stein was one and William Bishop was the other. Both were great men, who followed in the footsteps of Professors Edwin Dickinson and Hessel Yntema before them, but they were also very accessible human beings who took a sincere interest in their students and their careers long after they had graduated from law school. They not only engaged with students in class but participated in the activities of the International Law Society and assisted the staff of the then *Michigan Yearbook of International Legal Studies* (now *Michigan Journal of International Law*). They have been aptly described as the anti-Kingsfields, the opposite of the caricature of the aloof and menacing law school professor from *The Paper Chase*.

After I graduated from law school, I continued to stay in touch with Eric and his lovely wife Ginny. Because my parents live in Ann Arbor and I had lived with them during law school, my parents had become close personal friends of the Steins. I came back to teach at Michigan a course in international dispute resolution and, later, at the International Transactions Clinic, and Eric always wanted to hear about what I was teaching and my experience practicing international corporate law as a partner in a large law firm. Concerned about the growing dichotomy between practicing lawyers and law school faculty (a topic that the former Michigan Law professor, Judge Harry Edwards, had written about in a seminal 1992 article in the *Michigan Law Review*<sup>1</sup>), Eric was pleased that Michigan students were

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\* University of Michigan Law School, Class of 1983; President, International Law Society, and Articles Editor, *Michigan Yearbook of International Legal Studies*; Adjunct Professor from Practice, Michigan International Transactions Clinic; Partner, Bingham McCutchen LLP, Washington, DC.

1. Harry T. Edwards, *The Growing Disjunction Between Legal Education and the Legal Profession*, 91 MICH. L. REV. 34 (1992).

getting a taste of the “real world” of international law in addition to the academic curriculum.

When I received Dean Evan Caminker’s notice in early 2011 that Eric was failing and resting at home, I sent Eric the following message:

*Dear Eric,*

*I just received Evan’s e-mail that you are resting at home and have given up on the medical establishment. I will be coming out to Ann Arbor in late March—early April to teach a few classes at the International Transactions Clinic and I hope to see you then if you are up for a visit. Susan will accompany me and she sends you her best wishes as well.*

*When I was teaching last semester, I had a flashback to 1981 when I took your public international law class and Lloyd Cutler, newly retired from the State Department Legal Advisor’s Office, came to class to discuss the legality of the U.S. response to the Iranian takeover of the U.S. Embassy. You and Lloyd Cutler called on me during class and, while I don’t recall whether I answered the questions correctly (I probably didn’t) it was a rivetingly emotional and intellectual experience. I knew then that I wanted to practice international law. More than twenty-five years later I am still happy with my chosen career (which is an exception for most practicing lawyers). You have always been a great mentor and inspiration to me and I think of you each time I mount the podium at the law school to teach my class, which is my way of giving back to the institution and faculty, including most of all yourself, that have given me so much.*

*I hope to see you soon.*

*Be well,*

*Carl*

Always the teacher, gently correcting the student, Eric wrote back the following:

*Dear Carl,*

*Thanks for your kind message. I am looking forward to seeing you here. It was not Lloyd Cutler, but I can’t recall who it was.*

*Warm regards,*

*Eric*

When my wife and I visited Eric and Ginny in the spring, I was amazed at how alert and engaged he was during our visit. He always had a sweet smile and twinkle in his eyes that were unaffected by his medical condition. We discussed my work, my teaching at the law school, and family matters.

Eric was working (with Ginny's invaluable assistance) on his article concerning his experiences in Italy during World War II,<sup>2</sup> and we discussed the comments he had received from the journal's editor, who had the temerity to question his diction in certain places. I shared my experiences as the Articles Editor for the *Yearbook* trying to edit the work of European authors, who thought it was sufficient that they had stated something as true without the need to cite any authority for the proposition. Eric asked me to send him some of the articles that I had written. I subsequently did and he commented on them. As we were leaving, Eric gave me a poem he had written.

As I left that special, final meeting, I turned to my wife and said: "I only hope I can be half as productive and alert as Eric when I reach my nineties." Eric was truly a model for all of us. Like my father, Eric was a member of that "greatest generation" that simply does not know how to quit. I happened to be in Ann Arbor teaching the day that Eric died. I felt as if he had wanted me to be there for the impromptu wake. He will be missed but never forgotten.

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2. Eric Stein, *War, Politics, Law—and Love: Italy 1943–1946*, 32 MICH. J. INT'L L. 553 (2011).

