Stanley Kaplan 1910–1991

Stanley A. Kaplan, Professor Emeritus of Law, died at his home in Lincoln Park on July 13, 1991. He was 80 years old. Mr. Kaplan graduated from the University of Chicago in 1931 and from the Law School in 1933. He received an LL.M. degree from Columbia University in 1935. Mr. Kaplan was an authority on ethics and professional responsibility and an expert on corporate law and securities regulation. With Professor Walter J. Blum ’41, he wrote a textbook on bankruptcy, “Materials on Reorganization, Recapitalization and Insolvency,” which was published in 1969. He taught at the Law School from 1960 until his retirement in 1978, when he returned to private practice with the firm of Isham, Lincoln & Beale. Before joining the Law School faculty, he was managing partner in the firm of Gottlieb & Schwartz.

From 1980 to 1984, Mr. Kaplan served as chief reporter of the American Law Institute’s Corporate Governance Project, which reviewed and monitored corporate legislation. He was a founding member of the Chicago chapters of the American Civil Liberties Union and the Anti-Defamation League and former chairman of the American Veterans Committee. During World War II, Mr. Kaplan served as a Marine Corps major in the South Pacific.

He was an amateur photographer with work exhibited at the University of Chicago and other galleries. He excelled at sports and held amateur state championships in squash and tennis.

At his memorial service, Judge Hubert L. Will ’37 and Morris J. Leibman ’33, shared their thoughts about their old friend.

Mr. Leibman said: “Stanley was as close to a genius as we’ll ever meet. Knew everything, read everything, and thought about everything, but always with humor. He had a constant sense of adventure and challenge. He was an extraordinary scholar and a lawyer of great ability and experience. I was his devoted friend for more than sixty years and was privileged to share the essence and the glow of a special human being.”

Judge Will said of Professor Kaplan: “He was my best friend and the most remarkable, informed and interesting human being I’ve ever known.... A voracious reader with a prodigious almost photographic memory of everything he read.... A skilled collector of works of art, paintings, sculpture, carvings, objets d’art, and ties. A great raconteur with an endless store of anecdotes. An implacable foe of all forms of discrimination.... A skilled mountaineer and explorer who had climbed some of the world’s formidable peaks.... A respected director of several major corporations. A concerned and active citizen who supported a wide variety of cultural, social and political organizations and activities such as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Lyric Opera, the Chicago Opera Theater, Great Books groups, the campaigns of Adlai Stevenson, Paul Douglas, Richard M. Daley, Sidney Yates, and many others. Above all, an ideal husband and father—loving, sensitive, supportive—as enthusiastic about his wife Joan’s achievements as about his own. Truly, a Renaissance Man.

“His great legacy is the effect he had on all who knew him: friends, colleagues, and students, and the effect the institutions he helped found and guide have had and will have in the future in the struggle for a better community, nation and world.”