Walter J. Blum '41, Edward H. Levi Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus, died at his home in Hyde Park on December 18, 1994. As a member of the faculty for over forty years, Mr. Blum established himself not only as one of the nation's leading educators in the fields of taxation, risk distribution, bankruptcy, and corporate reorganization, but also served as a driving force in the life and growth of the Law School and the University of Chicago.

Born on August 17, 1918, Mr. Blum spent most of his life in close association with the University. He was already an alumnus of the University's Laboratory Schools and the College when he entered the Law School in the late 1930s. By the time of his graduation in 1941—ranking first in his class and having served as editor-in-chief of the Law Review—then-Dean Wilbur Katz was compelled to write: "He is one of the ablest students whom I have ever had in my entire teaching experience."

After serving in the General Counsel's Office of the Office of Price Administration, and in the military, Mr. Blum joined the Law School faculty as an assistant professor of law in 1946. Professor Blum quickly established himself as a vigorous teacher and author. One of his books, The Uneasy Case for Progressive Taxation (1953), co-authored with Harry Kalven Jr., is considered a classic in the field. In 1953, he was promoted to full professor, later named the Wilson-Dickinson Professor of Law (1975-85), and then the Edward H. Levi Distinguished Service Professor of Law (1985-88). He was named the Edward H. Levi Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus upon retiring in 1988.

Mr. Blum remained a leader in the tax field throughout his life. He advised the American Law Institute in its Federal Income Tax Project, served as legal counsel to the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, and helped design and guide the Law School-sponsored Federal Tax Conference, one of the nation's premier conferences on that subject and now in its forty-seventh year. He frequently served as a consultant to the federal government, advising the Treasury Department and the Internal Revenue Service.

Mr. Blum chaired many committees for both the University and the Law School. He oversaw the construction of the Law School in the 1950s and its expansion in the 1980s. Mr. Blum also was a driving force behind the Mandel Legal Aid Clinic for many years. He served as faculty spokesman for the University Senate and, in 1988, he chaired the University of Chicago Centennial Faculty Planning Committee. For these and countless other good deeds, Mr. Blum was awarded the University of Chicago Alumni Service Medal in 1991.