

**DEDICATIONS TO THE MEMORY OF
ERIC J. SCHMERTZ, DISTINGUISHED
PROFESSOR OF LAW AND DEAN
EMERITUS, HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF LAW (1982-1989)**

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ERIC J. SCHMERTZ

*Stuart Rabinowitz**

The passing of Eric J. Schmertz was a great loss to the Hofstra Law School, Hofstra University, and to the legal profession. Professor Schmertz was a renowned labor-management arbitrator, a beloved law professor and former Dean of the Law School, and a great friend to me and to other faculty, students, and alumni of the Law School and Hofstra University.

I first met Eric Schmertz when I arrived at Hofstra Law School in 1972 as a brand new law professor. Eric was a founding faculty member of the Law School and already a legend in the field of labor-management arbitration. He was distinguished, debonair, charming, and welcoming. As I grew to know him better, I was particularly struck by his quick wit, his shrewd political assessments, his keen intellect, and most importantly, his warmth and genuine concern for others. When Eric agreed to serve as Dean of the Law School from 1982 to 1989, I served as his Vice Dean, and we worked closely together during those years. Eric served the Law School well; he never, ever lost sight of the “big picture.” He also gave me the opportunity to participate in every facet of law school leadership. His mentorship was invaluable and we became close friends, working together and solving problems together. Eric was a superb problem solver; he was practical and instinctively understood

* President, Hofstra University.

what was possible. He skillfully implemented solutions. He was also a great friend, fiercely loyal and supportive, and very giving of his time and advice. I will forever cherish his friendship.

Eric's professional accomplishments are simply extraordinary. Professor Schmertz is recognized as one of the nation's leading labor-management arbitrators. In a distinguished career in public service that has spanned nearly fifty years, he has heard and decided thousands of labor-management disputes. Among them are New York City's only firefighter strike in 1974, the nursing home strike of 1978, and the private sanitation strike of 1991. Professor Schmertz has served as executive director and member of the New York State Board of Mediation; a member of the New York City Office of Collective Bargaining; commissioner of labor relations of the City of New York; and a member of the New York State Public Employment Relations Board.

By appointment of President George H.W. Bush, Professor Schmertz was a member of three presidential boards of inquiry in labor-management disputes involving three of the nation's largest railroads. And, in 1974, 1976, and 1978, he was commissioned by the governments of the Philippines and Thailand to set up arbitration systems for those countries.

Professor Schmertz was the first recipient and occupant of the American Arbitration Association's J. Noble Braden Chair of Arbitration and is a past member of the association's board of directors. He was awarded the Whitney North Seymour, Sr. Arbitration Medal and the Alexander Hamilton Law Citation.

Professor Schmertz has also directed some of the most high profile events presented by the Hofstra University Cultural Center, including the very successful Presidential Conferences on the administrations of Eisenhower, Reagan, and Clinton, as well as retrospectives on the lives and legacies of Babe Ruth and Frank Sinatra.

Dean Schmertz was a phenomenal teacher and life-long mentor to his students. He illustrated legal principles by using his experiences in real life labor disputes, while he pushed his students to understand the intricacies of labor law. He taught our students how to effectively arbitrate, mediate, and negotiate; he taught them how to work with both sides in order to find a settlement that made both parties winners. His students loved him, and he inspired countless students to follow in his footsteps in the practice of labor law. This is Eric's most lasting legacy—the alumni who owe their very successful careers to his

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leadership and inspiration.

On a personal note, I will miss our long conversations about everything from labor law to politics to our families. I will miss his sense of humor and insightful comments, his sage advice, and his friendship. Eric is irreplaceable.