Lewis “Lew” B. Kaden

In Memoriam

Cambridge, MA — The Harvard Law School Center on the Legal Profession was extremely saddened to learn of the passing of Lewis “Lew” B. Kaden earlier this month. For nearly 15 years, Mr. Kaden served as a founding member of the Center’s Advisory Board. In 2019, with much of his family in attendance, the Center was immensely proud to honor Mr. Kaden with its Award for Professional Excellence in recognition of his lifelong service to law, academia, business, and public policy, and his deep commitment to the highest ideals of the legal profession.

On learning of Mr. Kaden’s passing, Professor David B. Wilkins, the Center’s faculty director, said, “Lew was a towering figure in the legal profession, and a treasured mentor and friend. There literally would not be a Center on the Legal Profession without Lew’s steadfast support. I will miss Lew’s wise counsel greatly. My thoughts are with Lew’s wife, Ellen, their amazing children and grandchildren, and the entire Kaden family.”

Mr. Kaden’s varied career reflected his immense intellect and deep commitment to ideals of justice and human betterment. After graduating Harvard College and Harvard Law School, Mr. Kaden served as an aide to Senator Robert F. Kennedy’s presidential campaign before himself entering electoral politics. He then moved to academia, rising to become a tenured professor at Columbia University Law School where he inspired countless students with his knowledge and passion. After Columbia, Mr. Kaden spent two-decades as a senior partner of Davis Polk & Wardell. In 2003, Mr. Kaden moved to Citigroup, where he served as general counsel, chief administrative officer, and vice-chair, retiring in 2013. Even in retirement, Mr. Kaden continued to serve on a number of boards as well as to teach, including a recent course at Harvard Law School whose title, “Globalization: Business, Legal, and Public Policy Issues,” perfectly reflected his storied career.

Mr. Kaden’s intellect, passion, and kindness of spirit will be missed by all. We at the Center on the Legal Profession are grateful to have experienced his friendship and wholehearted support. We will find a way to permanently honor his indelible contributions to the Center and to the legal profession in the coming days.

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