



**CENTER ON THE
LEGAL PROFESSION**
Harvard Law School

In Memoriam – Philip (Phil) B. Heymann, 1932-2021

Cambridge, MA — The Harvard Law School Center on the Legal Profession was saddened to learn of the passing of Philip (Phil) B. Heymann earlier this month. At the time of his passing, Professor Heymann was the James Barr Ames Professor of Law, Emeritus at Harvard Law School, where he first began serving on the faculty in 1969. In 1981, Professor Heymann founded and served as the Inaugural Faculty Director of the Program on the Legal Profession, the first such program at a major law school. In 2015 the Program became the Center on the Legal Profession.

On learning of Professor Heymann’s passing, Professor David B. Wilkins, Lester Kissel Professor of Law and the Center on the Legal Profession’s current faculty director, said, “Professor Heymann was a constant source of friendship and mentorship to me for over 30 years. Phil’s storied career in academia and public service reflect the very best traditions of the lawyer-statesman. His work gave me the confidence to build a career around the study of lawyers—a confidence Phil nurtured including supporting me when I became the Program on the Legal Profession’s faculty director. Without Phil’s forethought, there would never have been a Program—now Center—on the Legal Profession. My thoughts are with Phil’s wife, Ann Ross, their amazing children and grandchildren, and the entire Heymann family.”

In 1981, Professor Heymann founded the Program on the Legal Profession—a program dedicated to studying the careers, professional responsibilities, and education of lawyers—with a grant from the Ford Foundation and the support of then-Dean James Vorenberg. In 1988 Professor Heymann published *The Social Responsibilities of Lawyers* (with Professor Lance Liebman), a set of case studies offering in-depth examination of legal professionals’ social and professional responsibility. The volume was the first of its kind to discuss the ethical responsibility of lawyers in light of the realistic challenges and constraints in different practice settings, helping countless law professors teach future lawyers how these situational factors could – and sometimes should – influence lawyer-client relationships and the responsibilities of lawyers to the adversary system, and to the justice system generally. Thanks to Professor Heymann’s visionary leadership, for the last half century the Center has provided an intellectual home for those studying these critical questions.

Professor Heymann’s vision continues to animate every aspect of the Center’s work. This includes the executive education and case development programs that the Center launched in 2007, inspired by Professor Heymann’s work on similar initiatives as part of his leading role in helping to build the Kennedy School of Government into the world-class public policy school that it is today. Likewise, Professor Heymann is seen throughout the Center’s ongoing Professionalism Project. In a 2014 [article](#) “Lawyers as Professionals and as Citizens: Key Roles and Responsibilities in the 21st Century,” co-authors Professor Wilkins, Ben W. Heineman Jr, former general counsel of General Electric, and William F. Lee, former managing partner of WilmerHale shared this project’s guiding philosophy: the importance of inspiring future generations of lawyers to aspire to follow in the footsteps of great lawyers like Phil Heymann.



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Indeed, Professor Heymann's entire career exemplifies the deep commitment to excellence, professionalism, and public service that we continue to seek to instill in our students. After undergraduate studies at Yale and a Fulbright Scholarship to the Sorbonne in Paris, he graduated from Harvard Law School in 1960. Professor Heymann went on to clerk for Associate Justice John M. Harlan II at the U.S. Supreme Court. He then embarked on a career in academia and public service. While Harvard Law School remained his academic home from when he first joined the faculty in 1969, Professor Heymann held political positions in Kennedy, Johnson, Carter, and Clinton administrations, including as a senior aide to his long-time mentor and friend, Archibald Cox, on the Watergate Commission. There is little doubt that Professor Heymann, who has been described "as close to Archibald Cox as a son" (James Doyle, "Not Above the Law," 1977), would find it particularly fitting and poignant that a portrait of Mr. Cox now hangs at the entry to the Center's offices on the Harvard Law School campus.

Professor Heymann's intellect, passion, and generosity of spirit will be missed by all. The Center on the Legal Profession is a direct result of Professor Heymann's commitment to the legal profession, and we are grateful to have experienced his friendship and support.

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