



Mr. Howard B. Stravitz

September 28, 1947 - April 30, 2021

Howard B. Stravitz, longtime professor at the University of South Carolina School of Law, gourmand, wine connoisseur, and beloved by his family and his many friends, passed away on April 30, 2021, at the age of 73.

Born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, Howard migrated to Columbia, South Carolina, in 1983 and became a fixture of the academic, Jewish, and food and wine communities (among others) for nearly 40 years.

Howard was a nationally recognized scholar of civil procedure. His works have been cited by courts across the country, including the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals. He was a recipient of the Outstanding Faculty Publication Award for scholarship focused on the jurisdiction and powers of federal courts. During his academic career, he also established himself as a sought-after legal consultant on many cases in both state and federal courts, evaluating complex civil procedure and federal courts issues.

After graduating in 1972 from Rutgers University School of Law-Camden with high honors and serving as the Editor-In-Chief of the Rutgers Law Journal, Howard worked as a law clerk for the late Honorable David N. Edelstein, then Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York (1972–1974). Before joining the faculty at the University of South Carolina Law School, Howard practiced law with Cleary, Gottlieb, Steen & Hamilton in New York City for a decade.

Howard was truly one of a kind, in the best possible way. He was erudite and eclectic. He loved good wine and good food because they were accompanied by the delightful companionship of the many who were close to him.

His knowledge of wine was incomparable: for years he authored the wine chart at the end of the famous Zagat restaurant guides. He cooked with the skill and panache of the best gourmet chef. He was a longtime member of the Bacchus Society, in both Columbia and Charleston, a group of close friends who shared his passion for great wine and food to

match.

Howard's dinner parties were legendary, involving a rotating cast of friends and were often for charitable purposes. Howard would cook each course in his professional-grade kitchen, and then enjoy that course with his guests, paired with wines chosen with the expertise of the most skilled sommelier. Many times, his dinner guests saw the sun rise at the end of a multi-course meal while finishing dessert and sipping port, having spent an enjoyable night engaged in discussions of fascinating subjects led by Howard that rivaled those of the famous Round Table at the Algonquin.

Howard's law school classes were also legendary, and he was beloved by his students as he was by his friends. His areas of expertise were broad, but perhaps his most popular course was a study of Jewish law, which students clamored to get into regardless of their particular religious beliefs. Howard brought to that class not only a rabbinical knowledge of Judaism but a profound understanding of many other religions, especially from a historical perspective. As the Talmud says, whoever teaches Jewish law to others, it is as if they became a parent; viewed through that lens, Howard was a parent to hundreds if not thousands of students of all faiths. For many years, Howard invited his classes to his home for legendary end-of-semester wine and cheese parties, the tales of which were legion.

Howard relished serving as a mentor to generations of law students. Between 1989 and 1999, he coached the South Carolina law school teams in the American Bar Association Moot Court competition. Several of his teams made it to the national finals, and one of his students was named the best oralist at the national finals.

Howard loved learning, from the deepest intellectual topics to the basic issues of humanity, from the most serious topic to the silliest, from the most esoteric and spiritual to the most practical. Howard also loved teaching, which stemmed from his endless quest for knowledge. His career perfectly matched his passions – allowing him to learn and teach alongside close friends. Indeed, even as his health declined in recent months, Howard continued teaching through the end of the spring semester, committed to his students and to sharing both his knowledge and that passion for learning.

Howard loved helping others, particularly those who struggled to help themselves and their families. His charitable actions and contributions were the boundless product of his platonic ideal of a giving heart.

Howard also loved football. Howard spoke often of his days as an offensive lineman on his

high school football team. He remained close with those teammates and loved sharing football Saturdays with a group of friends who shared his passion for football; indeed, he often arrived with the appropriate bottle (more often, bottles) of wine to pair with the game day snacks.

Most of all, Howard loved people, from all walks of life. He had countless friends and was beloved by them all. His friendship and love for others was constant and unending. That love for others came with a great sense of humor, insight, and passion. His advice and counsel were cherished.

Howard was deeply invested in his faith. Since his arrival to Columbia in 1983, Howard was a devoted member of Beth Shalom synagogue and served a term as its President. He was recognized for leading the synagogue through difficult times with great skill and agility. In recent weeks, he spoke regularly about his excitement for the fall, not only for the opportunity to gather safely in person again but because – as past president of the synagogue – he would have the honor of holding one of the sacred Torahs.

Howard is survived by his loving family: his brother Ed, sister-in-law, Joyce, his nieces, Pamela Sculler and Shari Cooperstein, Shari's husband Howard Cooperstein, and four of Ed's and Joyce's grandchildren, Matthew Sculler, David Sculler, Jordan Cooperstein, and Carly Cooperstein. Howard thought of them as his own grandchildren, and they called him Great Uncle Howard.

Contributions may be made to the University of South Carolina School of Law, Howard B. Stravitz Scholarship Fund, mailed to the Development Office, 1525 Senate Street, Columbia SC 29208 or online at <https://donate.sc.edu/direct-your-gift?id=04c258de-fbab-47c1-825f-f595a2bfbeb1>.

Howard was laid to rest on Tuesday, May 4, 2021, in a private family ceremony. A public celebration and memorial will be announced and scheduled for a later date. Shives Funeral Home, Trenholm Road Chapel, is assisting the family locally and Beth Israel Memorial Chapel, of Delray Beach, is assisting the family in Florida.

It would be impossible to capture the magnificence and humanity of Howard Stravitz in a treatise, let alone in the limited space of an obituary. Quite simply, he is irreplaceable, and will be greatly missed by many.

Comments



“ i remember meeting Howard years ago in new york he was a very nice man may he rip i'm very sorry to his relatives affected by his passing he'll never be forgotten!!



Anonymous - April 10 at 10:26 PM



“ Dear family of my beloved friend and professor,

I remain deeply saddened by the passing of my beloved friend and teacher. I wish I could have gathered with you all to process this loss and to celebrate and remember Howard. I also wanted to let you know that my forthcoming publication in the Harvard journal of gender and the law is dedicated to Howard. It's a small thing but I know that without his guidance, encouragement, and support, I would not be where I am in my life now, both professionally and personally. I miss Howard deeply and think of him often.

Sincerely,

Carrie Raines

Caroline Raines - April 08 at 04:08 PM



“ My condolences to Professor Stravitz's family. I recall his love of the law and wine. His jubilant personality made him a student favorite. His passing is a loss for all of us.

Nina Martin c/o 2000 - April 05 at 01:56 PM



“ I knew Howard before he was ‘Howie’ and living in New York City while working for Cleary. Even then he was not unlike the magnificent figure written about in this obituary. All my love to you, Howard. Learning of your death was a monumental shock and continues to be an open wound. If your mother were still alive, I’d have given her the comfort you would have wanted me to. May you both sleep in peace.
EN



Ethel Nagelberg - March 24 at 05:01 PM



“ I am deeply emotional and melancholy after learning of the news of Professor Stravitz's passing. As a 1L student in 2003, I had the privilege of taking his Civil Procedure course. At the time, I didn't realize he would become more than just my favorite professor. The erudite and urbane Professor Stravitz would ultimately have an impact on my development as a student, lawyer, and man. I truly regret not taking the time over the years to tell him how much he meant to me and the integral role he played, and continues to play in my life. My sincerest condolences to his family.

Rest well, Professor.

Councilman Overture E. Walker
Richland County, SC

Overture E. Walker - May 09, 2021 at 12:05 PM



“ I am deeply saddened by this news. Howard was my beloved mentor and friend. In his company, I always found joy, wisdom, and inspiration. I wish I could see my friend once more.

Caroline Raines - May 08, 2021 at 10:29 AM



“ Professor Stravitz was my Civil Procedures professor at USC Law, and he such a love for the law. I enjoyed his class and my he rest in peace. Lola Richey, Class 1995

Lola Richey - May 07, 2021 at 09:52 AM



“ I am very sorry for your loss. I was a student at USC Law School under Professor Stravitz in c. 1988. He was a happy person and I never saw him in a bad mood. He was an excellent teacher of the law, of course. But what I most recall about Howie Stravitz was his love of great wines. He took his personal time to introduced me to Guigal Cotes du Rhone, a lovely red wine that I still seek out today. He wanted to share the best things in life with his students in the law and in general. He was so enthusiastic about passing on wisdom to us and that is what made him a truly great man. Howie Stravitz will be greatly missed.

Edwin Turnage

Edwin Turnage - May 06, 2021 at 10:29 AM



“ Professor Stravitz was a fantastic teacher; I wish I had been as good a student as he was teacher. I have many good memories from his teaching. He always seemed to be able to intertwine wine into his complex hypothetical exam questions. I will never forget as a 1L student in his Civil Procedure class (fall 1985) on the Friday of the first week of class.....in the closing minutes of class a student asked Professor Stravitz what were his weekend plans to which he replied, "well.....some good food, some good wine and some good company." Immediately someone from the back of this of this large class hollered out "Oh! so you're going out of town!" We all had a good laugh. I extend my deepest sympathy to his family in this time of loss.

Mike Barcroft

michael barcroft - May 05, 2021 at 05:42 PM



“ Howie as I called him was my high school teammate at Tilden High School in Brooklyn NYC. He was a wonderful teammate and friend and I had a chance to speak with him on many occasions about growing in Brooklyn in the golden decade of the 60's . I played next to him on many occasions he as the center I as the guard. There was no finer man and teammate you could know or have as a friend . I loved Professor Stravitz. May you find eternal rest Howie and enjoy a good glass of red where and when you can. I toast you and your teammates will never forget all of your accomplishments in life Love you dear friend # 60 as you always called me Cal ,and by the way he was one tough son of a gun as a football player!!

calvin M levy - May 05, 2021 at 08:21 PM



“ This is amazing! I watched videos of him playing high school football and it was so fun! Hilarious to think of him as a football player, but he loved football and attended many many many games with him! I loved watching his videos of high school football and he loved all of his teammates so much! What an amazing man!!!!

Alice - May 18, 2021 at 08:50 PM



“ Howard was a close friend, a great teacher, and a wonderful person. I met him when I attended law school in the early '90s; we lived near each other and both loved wine and good food, so that pretty much sealed the deal. During Law Week, David Rothstein, Howard, and I won the trivia contest. (Howard referred to us as "Two Jews and Hughes.")
After my wife Lee and I moved to Charleston we continued to visit each other several times a year for meals and wine. We will all miss him terribly.

Jim Hughes - May 05, 2021 at 03:44 PM



“ It is with deep sadness to hear of Professor Stravitz's passing. He was by-far my favorite professor in law school and i was lucky enough to have him as a professor for civil procedure, federal courts, and then Jewish law. Professor Stravitz was always so generous with his students and ended the school semester of each class with a night of wine, cheese, and laughter. He was truly one of a kind and i will always remember him fondly.

Tori Rhea - May 05, 2021 at 01:42 PM



“ I was one of the thousands of law students Professor Stravitz taught during his career, and I was very sorry to hear of his passing. He was a really good man, and I have fond memories of his classes, speaking and socializing with him outside of his classes, and his quick wit and sense of humor. He had a great impact on those privileged to know him, and he will be missed.

Brian Comer - May 05, 2021 at 12:11 PM



“ I moved just around the corner from Howard in 1985, and we immediately befriended one another. My first surprise gift came in the form of an Interview Magazine, whose back cover featured an "Absolut Cameron" ad. I have it still. A year or two later, my friends - who were in their third year of Law School - eternalized Howard in their spoof film -- much of which took place in Howard's wine cellar. It was then I recognized that Howard was as beloved by his students as he was by his friends. Over the years, I had some of my finest meals and wines with Howard. I was fortunate to have dined Chez Stravitz, once with our friend, Selma Jones. While living in New York, I had a joy of a night on Howard's arm, first attending the Ballet and then enjoying dinner at Daniel Boulod's newly opened restaurant. We last spoke in late March, and had a short but treasured text exchange the week before he died. In typical dear Howard style, he had gifted me with a bottle of Pinot Noir, aptly from the Cameron Vineyards, back in the mid-1990's. Over 25 years, I have moved that bottle from home to home, from city to city. For the past 3 years, it has had a place of honor in my kitchen, along with my favorite painting. I sent him this photo and he recognized it immediately -- and the significance of all that it meant -- and will forever mean to me. He was kind enough to not fuss at me for never having opened it (and for improperly storing it)! Howard, it was an honor and a blessing to know you and enjoy the warmth, humor, and love of your friendship. To your family, I extend my deepest sympathies. There will be a void he can never fill, but your memories of him will be some of the best ever. They couldn't be any other way. With affection,
Cameron Smith Vogt

Cameron Smith Vogt - May 05, 2021 at 09:20 AM



“ I graduated from USC School of Law in 1985. I had Professor Stravitz for Federal Practice. He invited me and a few students from the class to his home for dinner. The food and wine was extraordinary as was the conversation. My condolences to the family. May his memory be eternal.
Nicholas J. Clekis

Nicholas Clekis - May 04, 2021 at 08:24 PM



“ Very sad to read this news. I remember Professor Stravitz fondly and credit him for my love and understanding of civil procedure and jurisdictional issues. When I first arrived in Charleston back in the early 1990's as a District Court law clerk, Professor Stravitz invited me to one of his wine tastings. It was such an enjoyable evening. Conversations with him were always interesting and engaging. I know he contributed to the lives of many students and lawyers. My condolences to his family and friends. His obituary was a tribute to a wonderful person.

Trudy Robertson - May 04, 2021 at 11:16 AM



“ Howard taught me many things in our 20 year friendship, but mostly, he taught me how to love each other despite differences. Having had him to all our family holiday meals, there will be a huge void at my table and in my heart!

Toni Elkins - May 03, 2021 at 10:22 PM



“ So amazingly sad to read this. Professor Howard Stravitz, of blessed memory, was such a good man and incredibly fun and unique personality.
He will be sorely missed.
Godspeed to his family.
L'Chaim my friend.
Mayor Steve Benjamin
Columbia, SC

Steve Benjamin - May 03, 2021 at 09:09 PM



“ Howard was a wonderful friend and very special to my family. We will miss him
jane kulbersh - May 04, 2021 at 06:44 PM



“ Our world is diminished by the loss of Howard Stravitz. His obituary is an eloquent tribute to an extraordinary man indeed. I, along with a host of others throughout the world, was privileged to know him. My condolences to his family, friends and colleagues.

Warren Hughes - May 03, 2021 at 05:14 PM



“ I'm very sad to hear that Howard had passed. I always looked forward to sharing wine notes with him. Howard always knew what he liked in a wine, and I usually agreed with him. He was quite a critic! I always enjoyed our time around great food as well. Pairing wine became a fun hobby for me, and Howard was a spark that challenged me in the kitchen. I will miss him and our culinary moments together very much!

David Allison - May 03, 2021 at 10:26 AM



“ Warren McInnis Hughes is following this tribute.

Warren Hughes - May 02, 2021 at 02:45 PM



“ At the Law School, Howard was my next-door-office neighbor and fellow Civil Procedure teacher for years, and he was a wonderful mentor who introduced me to South Carolina state procedure when I moved to Columbia. I have two memories to share. First, Howard's Civil Procedure class last year sent him a big, beautiful basket of bright yellow items (snacks in yellow packaging; yellow flowers; a yellow blanket) when they heard he was ill. Howard invited me next door to his office to see it, and he tried (pretty successfully) not to choke up in front of me when displaying it. He was so deeply touched by this demonstration of how much his students cared about him, but in his typical manner, he was trying to hide his soft side. Second, in Howard's last month, the Supreme Court gave him a gift in the form of the Ford Motor Company decision, which will make it easier for people who've been injured by dangerous products to sue manufacturers. The opinion, authored by Justice Elena Kagan, turned on Howard's favorite topic of personal jurisdiction and represents a revolutionary step forward in products liability litigation. Howard and I exchanged happy emails the day the decision came down. "Kagan is BRILLIANT," Howard wrote. I could just envision the huge smile on his face, and I'm glad that the last legal development Howard was able to witness in his long and significant career brought him such joy.

--Lisa Eichhorn

Lisa Eichhorn - May 01, 2021 at 09:51 AM