

Donald J. Rapson

On Saturday, October 6, 2007, Donald J. Rapson, one of the initial members of the Commercial Financial Services Committee, died. Assisting in the formation of the Commercial Finance Committee is but one of Don's many, many contributions to our profession and to the law. Don was a successful lawyer in private practice, the Senior Vice President and Assistant General Counsel of The CIT Group for fifteen years and an adjunct professor of law at Columbia University and NYU.

Don was a lawyer's lawyer. Those of us who had the privilege of benefiting from his wisdom and judgment are manifold. For over fifty years Don shared his expertise in the Uniform Commercial Code and in other issues relating to commercial finance with numerous groups, including the Commercial Finance and UCC Committees. He was an American Law Institute representative on the Permanent Editorial Board for the Uniform Commercial Code and on numerous Drafting Committees. In this latter role, he was actively involved in updating and revising Article 9 as well as Articles 3, 4, 4A and 6. He was often the conscience of the effort, advocating in behalf of interests that otherwise might not have been given due recognition. He held all to his own very high standards, always pushing for the "right" result. And he was always on the lookout for fresh talent, promoting lawyers of promise—motivating and assisting them to contribute to the public good. Don was a prodigious author and panelist. He was a past recipient of the Homer Kripke Award from the American College of Commercial Finance Lawyers. He was the third recipient of the American Law Institute's John Minor Wisdom Award in recognition of his contributions to the work of the American Law Institute.

In 1999, Don "retired" from CIT but he never retired from making contributions to the development of commercial law and to our profession.

Throughout, he remained a loyal alum of Columbia University. Through many cold Fall days he attended virtually every Columbia home football game (including a long, long losing streak). But, as in the law, he was a doer, not merely an observer. He was a fine athlete who competed vigorously at tennis and was a strong swimmer. He is survived by his lovely wife, Ellen, whom he adored, and his sons David, a practicing lawyer, and Jeffrey, a teacher, both in the San Francisco Bay area, of whom he was very proud.

Don will be missed but never forgotten.

Maury Poscover
Harry Sigman
Steven Weise