

## Stefan Albrecht Riesenfeld 1908–1999

Stefan Albrecht Riesenfeld died on February 17, 1999, aged 90, active and engaged to the end. Hospitalized in December with a heart-valve infection, he had recovered and begun physical rehabilitation at home when his heart failed. The day before, he had finished grading his Hastings Bankruptcy Law examinations. His departure leaves a large gap in the lives of the large number of people his life has touched.

Stefan Riesenfeld had been offered warm and full tributes so often, and especially in recent years, that the readers of the *Journal* probably know all of the formal and many of the informal details of that life. He was born in Breslau (now Wroclaw) on June 8, 1908. His law studies at Breslau and Berlin marked him early for an academic career, but even then he was engaged in law practice. It is a telling reflection of the nature of his scholarship that his doctoral dissertation on mutual insurance companies, published in 1932, was based on a scrupulous examination of the charters and bylaws of dozens of these firms, not merely on the doctrinal bases of their internal relations.

The turbulence and foreshadowed tragedies of the subsequent quarter-century led from internal to international relations for Steve. His odyssey to Berkeley via Milano was occasioned by Boalt Hall's — specifically, then-Dean Edwin Dickinson's — interest in international criminal law; his law study at Berkeley was punctuated by an influential work, written while he was a student, on the power of the president in foreign affairs; his Harvard post-graduate study was on ocean fisheries; and of course much of his writing after his appointment at Boalt — and most of his long involvement as consultant and advisor to governments and other public clients — was on international law. At the same time, of course, as readers of the *Journal* will recall, Steve's deep interest in legal history and his enthusiasm for the law of his adopted country naturally led him into comparative law, on subjects ranging from administrative law both procedural and substantive, through creditors' remedies and civil procedure, to antitrust and intellectual property law. To browse through his bibliography is to see the debates of the day unfold, but always within the capacious perspectives that comparisons over time and place provide.

Stefan Riesenfeld's contributions to this Society and to its journal were frequent and varied, and not only as author. In the first half of the 1960s he produced the Digest of Foreign Law Cases that was a feature of the *Journal* before the days of computerized databases and specialized law reviews. He was a leader in the Society from the beginning. While Berkeley's internal division of labor led to his close colleague Albert Ehrenzweig becoming Berkeley's member on the Board of Editors, with Steve holding a parallel position on the board of *The American Journal of International Law*, he also succeeded the former on this board in 1971.

As Dean Herma Hill Kay stated in a reflection on Steve's long relationship with Boalt Hall, for hundreds if not thousands of students, especially those from other countries, he was the institution; and for a shorter but hardly trivial period, this has been equally true of The Hastings College of the Law. When 75-year old graduates meet 25-year old ones, whatever the occasion, it is he who provides the common bond between them. Given his long and productive life span, his memory will continue to do so for decades. There will be 75-year olds in the middle of the next century who will retain vivid memories of this vivid personality, born at the beginning of this one. His many friends and admirers grieve for and with his family — his wife Phyllis, their sons Peter and Stefan, their grandsons Erik and Christian — and join with them in celebrating Stefan Riesenfeld's life.

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*Editor-in-Chief*