

*A champion for the
mentally and physically
challenged, Professor*

S T A N H E R R

*spent his professional life
crusading for their causes.*

BETTY LYNNE LEARY

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As colleagues, students and alumni try to describe the man who shaped their careers, influenced their lives, and inspired them to see the human face of their work, they struggle with the words.

Warm, friendly, thoughtful.

But as the stories unfold and the memories are relived, the words begin to flow.

Caring, compassionate, kind.

They describe a meticulous researcher, a contagious spirit, a man with boundless energy. Stanley S. Herr is remembered as a professional who, as a brilliant young lawyer, became a friend, a fierce advocate and an unwavering voice for the disabled.

Herr passed away on Sept. 24, 2001, at the age of 54, following a yearlong battle with cancer. He dedicated his career to the advancement of disability rights and the elimination of discrimination based on mental, physical or other disabilities.

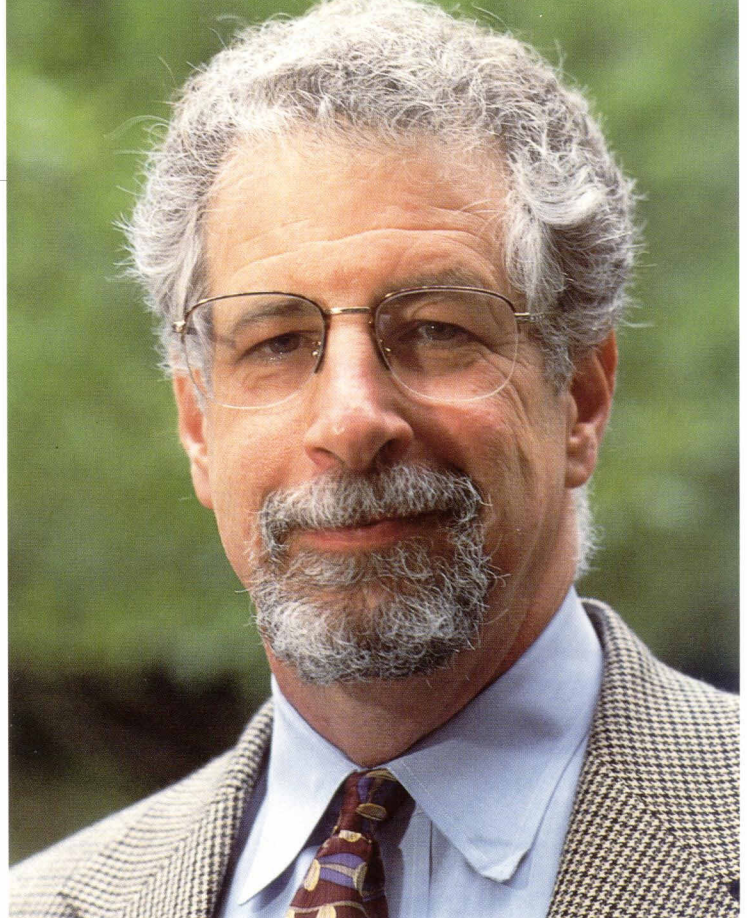
Following his graduation from Yale Law School in 1970, Herr focused his energies on protecting the rights of chil-

dren. Just two years after he started his *pro bono* practice of children's law, he took the

lead in a lawsuit, *Mills v. Board of Education*, that would lead to a landmark decision securing access to education for all children regardless of their physical, mental or emotional disabilities. The Supreme Court and Congress later relied on the *Mills* decision to provide the legal and political foundation for the 1975 Education for All Handicapped Children Act that required special education for every child with a disability.

"He was an incredible man, and it's an incredible loss," says Col. David B. Mitchell '96, superintendent of the Maryland State Police. "Stan had such a depth of compassion for persons with disabilities. He was a noted authority in the world in his field yet he remained such a humble man." As a

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student in Maryland's evening program, Mitchell worked side-by-side with Herr, representing clients in the Clinical Practicum on Disabilities.

"We shared a mantra that came from Mother Teresa," he explains. "There's nothing worse than being nobody to nobody.' In many cases, but for Stan's *pro bono* representation, there was no one for these people." Describing his first meeting with Herr as a life-changing event, Mitchell says that the professor was a master at taking law school strategies and theories and making them applicable to real-world situations.

FUND FOSTERS HERR'S LEGACY

Professor Stanley S. Herr dedicated his life and career to the advancement of disability rights and the elimination of discrimination based on disabilities. He pursued a lifelong interest in the practice and study of public interest law and the implementation of human rights.

Before his death last September, Herr and his family established The Professor Stanley S. Herr Fund for Disability Rights and Social Justice through the University of Maryland Baltimore Foundation Inc. The fund supports lectures, publications, conferences, symposia and fellowships regarding disability rights and social justice. It was Herr's wish that his work would continue, and he noted that this fund was one way he could reciprocate to the School of Law and to the public service community that he loved so very much.

Herr's work will indeed continue. Contributions to the Herr fund have enabled the establishment of the Stanley S. Herr Memorial Conference on Social Justice and Disability Rights. The inaugural conference will be held on Oct. 4.

For information on how to contribute to the fund, contact Trishana E. Bowden, director of development, at 410-706-2070.

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"He cared about the underdog, the person with no voice in life," he says. "People who had nothing to do with their disability other than being born had a friend and an advocate in Stan Herr."

A prolific and eloquent writer, Herr produced more than 100 articles, five books and many chapters published in both the popular and professional press. At the time of his death, Herr was working on yet another book, a joint effort with two fellow authors on critical issues affecting persons with disabilities. He enlisted the help of several students who are now working to complete Herr's contributions to the book. One of those students, Joe Ward, who completed his second year at the law school, describes taking the Civil Rights for Persons with Disabilities seminar, once taught by Herr.

"Stan came to the very first class and explained how he had been fighting for people with disabilities his whole life, and now that he had cancer, he too had a disability," Ward recalls. "He used this to remind us that no one is immune from disabilities. He said to fight for what you believe in, even if, for now, it does not touch your life personally."

Ironically, when Herr joined the School of Law faculty in 1983, he wasn't sure he would like teaching, but he soon discovered a profound love for his students and they responded to him with commitment and devotion. He inspired countless numbers of students, now lawyers, to take up the cause, to get personally involved and to make time for *pro bono* service.

"Stan was one of the main reasons I came to the University of Maryland," Ward adds. "He was not only a professor, he was a real person. Stan was what every law school wants in a faculty member."

Luciene Parsley, who graduated in May, also chose Maryland because of Herr's influence. She served as his research assistant and describes him as a relentless researcher.

"He always had a million ideas," Parsley says. "Whenever I thought we were making headway in the workload, he would get another idea for an article!" She adds that even though Herr was always juggling numerous projects, classes and service-related activities, his door was always open to his students.

"He was a kind, accessible and thoughtful professor. He wanted everything we learned to be relevant to real-world lawyering," Parsley explains. "He introduced me and my classmates to some of the most influential people in the disability community, and he solidified my desire to make my career in this field."

Never one to sit on campus and simply wax poetic about social injustices, Herr embraced dozens of organizations, serving on boards, spearheading committees and leading groups with dogged, unrelenting determination. He was honored with many prestigious awards, including honors from the American Bar Association and the Association of Retarded Citizens.

"Stan's strength was in his ability to meld all three areas of academic life: teaching, scholarship and service," says

Alan Hornstein, associate dean and professor of law. "He had the rare gift to make all three areas a coherent whole."

Colleague Douglas Colbert, professor of law, agrees.

"Stan was a scholar, teacher, activist," Colbert says. "His greatest strength was using his scholarship, teaching and lawyering skills to dedicate himself to people with disabilities." Colbert admits that he and Herr had completely different styles, yet they shared a common passion about work and life.

"I come from New York which is much more confrontational," Colbert explains. "Stan taught us advocacy Maryland-style. He had a tremendous love of his work. He said he had the best job imaginable."

A master at building consensus, Herr was a positive, creative thinker who had a talent for bringing people together to work collectively. His contagious spirit, persistence and vigilance motivated those

around him to excel.

Herr was blessed with an exceptional family who provided endless support to his demanding schedule. "Stan would be the first to admit that he couldn't have done all that he did without the love and support of Raquel and their three children," Colbert notes. "He was very aware of how lucky he was to have such a loving family."

Herr traveled the globe lobbying for changes in the law, lecturing in public forums and litigating in court. He testified before the United Nations, in both houses of Congress and before the Maryland State Legislature. From 1993 to 1995, Herr was the Kennedy Public Policy Fellow at the White House, assisting the president's chief domestic policy adviser. He is a hero in the state of Israel, where he was the inspiration behind their efforts to pass model disability legislation.

Even as he was forced to slow down, Herr remained active in both the School of Law and the disability community.

"To the very end, Stan was arranging conferences and programs, taking charge to make sure they were done just right," says Karen H. Rothenberg, dean of the School of Law. "The grace and courage with which Stan faced his final illness is a further example of the way he lived his life."

Though his time was far too short, Herr accomplished more in his life than most people could in two lifetimes. His physical legacy can be seen in the law school's new building, described as the friendliest physical structure for the disabled in all of American legal education.

"Stan's lasting legacy to the School of Law is a new generation of lawyers inspired by a man who never gave up fighting for those who could not be heard," Rothenberg says. "While we are deeply saddened by our loss, we can be grateful that our way will continue to be guided by his ideas and his commitment to social justice." ■

DISABILITY DISCUSSION CONTINUES AT ROUNDTABLE

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Stanley S. Herr was never one to let illness keep him from his life's work. At the time of his death last September, he was working diligently on an analysis of antidiscrimination laws in the United States, the United Kingdom and in Israel. The paper marked the culmination of two years of research, including a year of study in Israel.

As was his style, Herr hatched the idea of a roundtable discussion as a way to bring people together to think about and discuss disability issues.

"Stan was very much an inspiration to

people in the disability field," says Beth Pepper '83, an attorney practicing in the area of disability rights law. "His research explored what we can learn by looking at the laws of other countries, our own country and how other countries look at us."

More than three dozen participants, including activists, government officials, legal scholars, policy analysts and people in the international rights and civil rights fields attended. As fate would have it, Herr passed away hours before the roundtable began. There was never a question that the roundtable would go on.

"I knew he would want the discussion to proceed," Pepper relates. "There were deep feelings of sadness that Stan was not there, but it was very fitting to be discussing topics that were what his life was all about. It was an appropriate way to say our goodbyes to Stan."

Pepper met Herr after she graduated from Maryland when she was invited to serve as a visiting professor for one of Herr's classes while he completed a fellowship at the White House.

"He was a hard act to follow," she says, laughing. "I by no means tried to fill his shoes, but it was in that context that I got to know him better and learned of his commitment to his students."

Pepper continued connecting with Herr through their shared interest in the disability rights community. She helped coordinate the roundtable, working closely with him on the agenda, speakers and other specifics of the event.

"Stan was already quite ill but he was quite relentless," she says. "He had a passion for this kind of work."

Karen H. Rothenberg, dean of the School of Law, opened the roundtable that morning with the announcement of Herr's passing. She noted that while the participants were deeply saddened by the news, it strengthened everyone's resolve to go on with the workshop.

"Stan was a valued member of our law school and of the legal community," she says. "Everyone in that room had been touched by Stan, and everyone was committed to being a part of his lasting legacy." ■