I regret that most members of the class of 1991 will never know David Kadane, a member of Hofstra Law School’s original faculty, who died in April of this year. Nonetheless, his life and professional achievements have touched many of you through your association with the Law School, and with those members of the faculty, like myself, who David influenced and inspired over the course of many years.

David Kadane was the son of a lawyer. He attended public schools in New York City, graduating from C.C.N.Y. in 1933. In 1936, he received his LL.B degree from the Harvard Law School where he encountered, among others, W. Barton Leach, Edward H. “Bull” Warren, the reputed model for Professor Kingsfield of “Paper Chase” fame, and Felix Frankfurter.

From 1936 to 1938, David was Assistant Counsel to the U.S. Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce. From 1938 to 1946, he was Attorney, Special Counsel, and eventually Assistant Director of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission where he worked with both William O. Douglas and Jerome Frank. He was also Special Assistant to the National Housing Expediter, Wilson W. Wyatt, during 1946.

Following his government service, David was employed by the Long Island Lighting Company. From 1949 to 1970, he was General Counsel of LILCO where he developed a national reputation for his work involving the government regulation of utility rates. From 1964 to 1966, while on leave from LILCO, he and his wife Helene served in the Peace Corps. David was a legal adviser to the government of Tanzania and to its President, the Honorable Julius K. Nyerere, during his Peace Corps service.

In 1970, David joined the founding faculty of the new law school at Hofstra University. He was a pioneer in creating new programs of clinical legal education and the first director of the Hofstra Law School’s Neighborhood Law Office which continues to service low-income clients as the Community Legal Assistance Corporation. David also taught a variety of courses at Hofstra including property law, corporate finance, and wills, trusts and estates until his “retirement” in 1984 as the Harry R. Rains Distinguished Professor. Thereafter, he continued to teach as an adjunct professor at both Hofstra and at the new law school of the City University of New York, Queens College. During 1985-86, he was a visiting lecturer in administrative law at East China Normal University in Shanghai.

No survey of David’s remarkably diverse life would be complete without mention of
his very numerous professional, civic, and community activities over more than forty years. By one friend’s count, David was involved, often in important leadership roles, with more than sixty organizations. Most were on Long Island and some he invented.

Of course, this very brief summary of David’s long and productive professional career barely suggests his enduring contributions to the law school and larger communities. Because he understood the special challenges and contradictions of his younger colleagues and students alike who, simply put, knew him for the wise and witty man that he was.

When I think of David, I am moved to recall at least two quotations that I think he would have liked. Gibbon, the historian, once noted that “the winds and waves are always on the side of the ablest navigators.” At the same time, David also honored another value that may or may not be fully compatible with the first. However much he demanded from himself and others, David clearly agreed with the great Maimonides who once said: “There are eight rungs in charity. The highest is when you help a man to help himself.”

To the very end, teacher Kadane challenged us to ignore and transcend our self-imposed limitations. For that above all, he deserves to be gratefully remembered.

Ronald H. Silverman
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