

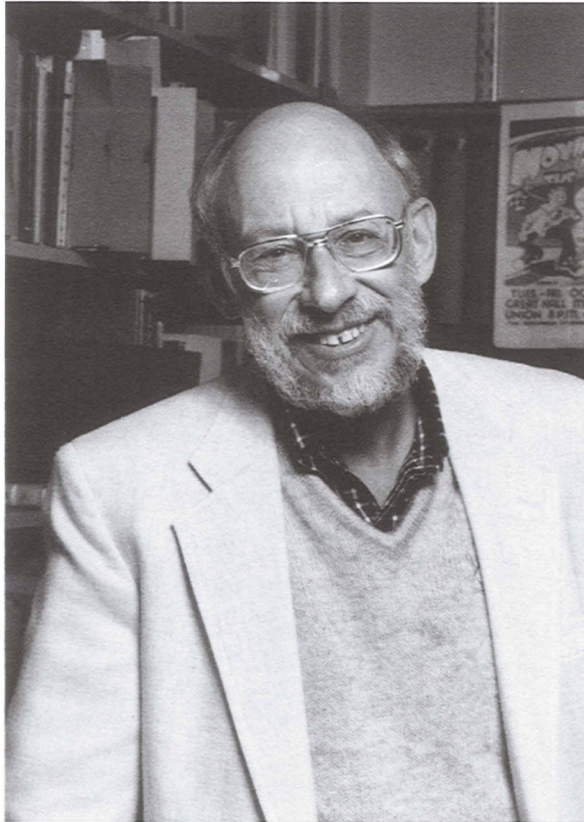
Zig: A Tribute

Excerpted from the Law School's official tribute to the late Professor Zig Zile, written by Gordon B. Baldwin, Evjue-Bascom emeritus professor of law.

When a colleague with the character, vigor, and value of Zigurds Zile dies, it leaves our school more barren and less interesting. No member of our faculty possessed a broader experience and background for law teaching and research. His teaching and his research covered a wide range—torts, civil procedure, land use planning, Soviet legal studies, comparative and international law.

Foley and Lardner-Bascom Emeritus Professor of Law Zigurds L. Zile died on November 26, 2002, after a short but acute bout with cancer. He had agreed to return to teaching a first-year law course three months earlier to fill an unexpected vacancy and had nearly completed that assignment when felled.

Zig was born in Riga, Latvia, in 1927. His family suffered under a year of Soviet occupation and three years of domination by Germany. During his unusual schooling in Latvia and Germany, he achieved fluency in Latvian, German, Russian, and French. (Later in his career he gained knowledge of Spanish and some Finnish.) He spoke and wrote cultivated and direct English. For nearly two years, the International Refugee Organization employed him as a translator before he entered the American army in 1950. He achieved the rank of



Zigurds L. Zile

sergeant and became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1953. His family moved to Milwaukee, and Zig supported himself as a sheet metal worker and carpenter. The University of Wisconsin-Madison awarded him a B.A. in economics with Phi Beta Kappa honors in 1955, and his law degree in 1958. He served on and published in the *Wisconsin Law Review*. An LL.M. from Wisconsin followed in 1959, and a fellowship at Harvard Law School culminated a few years later in their award of an S.J.D.

The law faculty marked Zigurds as a potential teacher early in his studies, and he was appointed an assistant professor of law in 1961 after completing his residency at Harvard. Already he had published four highly regarded law review articles on land planning in Wisconsin and France. He was

awarded tenure early in 1964, and elevated to professor in 1966. He took emeritus status in 1990, but continued to teach half time for several more years.

The Law School appointed Zigurds with the expectation that he would devote himself to the comparative law arena, with special emphasis on the Soviet legal system. Zigurds did this, and more. He became highly successful as a teacher and an expert on the law of torts and product liability. Doubtless his popularity in teaching a basic, first-year torts class stimulated many students to undertake comparative law studies with him thereafter. The Student Bar Association

awarded him the honor of Teacher of the Year in 1977. His mentorship also spawned teachers. Several former students became accomplished scholars of Soviet and Russian law.

An extensive research contract on Soviet Law from the United States Arms Control Agency (which produced a book), and a Fulbright professorship in Finland in 1977 confirm Zigurds's broad interests and extraordinary competence. He returned for an additional appointment in Finland in 1982, where he examined materials on Latvia unavailable to him in Latvia itself. His skills and knowledge of that civil law system brought him a Ford Foundation-sponsored program to improve legal education at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru. There he encapsulated his basic disposition "to rejoice with caution and despair with restraint."

Zig: A Remembrance

From remarks delivered at a memorial gathering for Professor Zigurds Zile on December 1, 2002.

*Robert L. Rabin
Professor of Law
Stanford University*

When I arrived at the University of Wisconsin Law School in early September 1966, just hired as a novice torts teacher, my initial stroke of good fortune was totally unexpected in character—the location of my office. Next door was the pre-eminent legal historian Willard Hurst, whose sheer presence was a source of great inspiration to a young man in his mid-twenties, embarking on an academic career. And immediately across the corridor—indeed, when our office doors were open we looked directly at each other—was a fortyish, rather decorous-looking scholar of Soviet law (and more importantly for me, a torts teacher as well), whose life is being remembered today, Zigurds Zile. Willard would play a mentor's role at that early stage in my career. Zig would become a colleague and a friend (“buddies,” as he would say in later years) for life.

I cannot remember precisely how long it was before I began bringing my sandwich to his office at noon, and turning what commenced as an occasional shared lunch hour into a daily routine. But before long, we were more than colleagues hashing out torts issues. Our lunchtime conversations ranged over the troubles on campus (it was, one must recall, the late '60s), our home lives, and the world at large: the tragic, the mundane, and the absurd, at a level of easy intimacy that would become the hallmark of our relationship.

I want to emphasize the absurd, because Zig had a marvelous eye for the preposterous pretensions of self-important types from every walk of life, whether in Washington

or closer to home. He followed the news avidly and was a keen observer of the social scene. But always there was a sense of distance. He remained grounded in a set of core values—finding a center in repose and reflection far from the crosscurrents of everyday life, perhaps best exemplified by his love for the untrammelled expanses of northern Wisconsin.

Zig in Latin America

*Joseph R. Thome
Emeritus Professor of Law*

Since I think I am the only person on this faculty who saw Zig in Latin America, perhaps a few words are in order.

In 1968, our Law School was selected to work with young professors from the Law School of Catholic University in Peru. Its very dynamic dean, Jorge Avendaño, decided that instead of having American professors come to Latin America, as was the norm, he would send young professors to Wisconsin for about a year to learn a version of the Socratic or case-study teaching methods. Zig, perhaps because he was quite familiar with the civil law system prevalent in both Europe and Latin America, was selected as our faculty person responsible for this program.

At one point, Zig traveled to both Peru and Chile with Avendaño, to study the law and development programs there. I became their host for their week or so in Chile. That week was a very valuable academic experience. But much more interesting for me was to witness the incredibly close relationship that developed between Zig and Jorge. On the surface, you couldn't think of two more different personalities. Jorge was very urbane, a sophisticated bon vivant, but brilliant, upper-class Peruvian. Zig was, well . . . Zig: down-to-earth, frank to a fault, and not very tolerant of pretentious people.

I always thought that this bonding was one of the reasons for the success of our program with Católica of Peru. Many young professors came over for several years, Zig worked them hard, but they learned and loved the experience and actually applied what they learned to their classroom teaching and research back in Peru. To this day they are known in Peru as the “Wisconsin boys,” a term which those who came carry proudly.

Zig never went back to Latin America until 1998, when Católica of Peru celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of the Católica-Wisconsin program, and Dean Zolezzi, himself a Wisconsin boy, specially invited Zig to come to Peru for the event. I think Zig enjoyed it to the fullest, and I know the “Wisconsin boys” were delighted to have him back.

Zig as a Refugee

*Lawrence M. Friedman
Professor of Law
Stanford University*

I have lots of memories of Zig, and all of them are pleasant. Zig was somebody who went through a lot when he was young. He was, literally, a “DP,” or displaced person, after the Second World War. He was one of those refugees who ended up, as so often happens, really enriching the United States.

Zig was a wonderful person—and he had a great, somewhat mordant sense of humor. That humor was directed against anything that was stuffy, arrogant, or self-important. Zig tried to teach me Russian (I've since forgotten almost all of it), and we actually wrote an article together. The Russians had stolen his country and driven him from his home; he took his revenge by becoming an expert on Russian law, which he dissected mercilessly and accurately. I remember him very, very fondly.



Spencer L. Kimball
Dean of the UW Law School
1968–1972

Spencer Le Van Kimball, legal scholar, insurance lawyer, Law School dean, and professor, died on October 26, 2003, at the age of eighty-five. Kimball was dean of the University of Wisconsin Law School from 1968 to 1972,

and also received his S.J.D. degree from Wisconsin.

Kimball, born in Thatcher, Arizona, in 1918, made notable contributions to the field of law during his lifetime and was recognized both nationally and internationally for his work. He was director of the Wisconsin Statutes Revision Project, and his work remains a model for insurance codes to this day. Kimball was one of the co-founders of AIDA, an international insurance law association. He was also the author of many works on insurance law and regulation.

In addition to his work at Wisconsin, he served as dean of the University of Utah Law

School, law professor at the University of Michigan and University of Chicago, and executive director of the American Bar Foundation in Chicago.

Kimball's wife of fifty-one years, Kathryn Murphy Kimball, died in 1990. They had six children, in addition to sixteen grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. In 1994, he married Virginia Barrus Johnson, who died one month before he did. With this marriage he added more children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren to his family.

After the death of his wife Kathryn, he retired to Salt Lake City, Utah, to live by the mountains and his siblings.

1920s

W. Roy Kopp '28
 in Naples, Florida

James C. Geisler '42
 in Madison

Leonard Loeb '52
 in Milwaukee

David A. Saicheck '64
 in Milwaukee

1930s

George C. Berteau '33
 in Neillsville

Roy B. Hovel '42
 in Sun Prairie

Robert J. Schmidt '52
 in King, Wisconsin

Robert D. Heidel '68
 in Middleton

Robert T. Murphy '35
 in Pompano Beach, Florida

James F. Clark '47
 in Poynette

Lloyd A. Barbee '55
 in Milwaukee

1970s
Robert Whitney '74
 in Madison

Doris Vaudreuil '36
 in Kenosha

Philip S. Habermann '47
 in Madison

John MacIver '55
 in Milwaukee

Gerald R. Falk '76
 in Milwaukee

H. Wilson Gray '37
 in St. Louis, Missouri

Norman H. Quale '47
 in Sarasota, Florida

David H. Bennett '56
 in Portage

Jerome M. Ott '76
 in Mt. Horeb

Willis E. Hoard '38
 in Beloit

Albert McGinnis '48
 in Madison

Richard E. Nelson '56
 in Wauwatosa

1980s
Ronni Gale Jones '85
 in Madison

E. Radcliffe Park '38
 in Falls Church, Virginia

Norman Rosen '48
 in El Paso, Texas

Spencer L. Kimball '58
 in Salt Lake City, Utah
 (see article above)

1990s
Richard Moncada '94
 in Pewaukee

Gerard H. Van Hoof '38
 in Appleton

1950s
Mark H. Makhholm '50
 in Marshfield

Sverre O. Tinglum '58
 in Green Valley, Arizona

2000s
Jessica M. Vianes '02
 in Milwaukee

1940s

Martin W. Peterman '41
 in Albuquerque, New Mexico

Byron Ostby '51
 in Madison

1960s
James R. Cwayna '62
 in Bloomington, Minnesota