

Faculty Publications

2010

Henry King

Erik M. Jensen

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/faculty_publications

 Part of the [Legal Profession Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Jensen, Erik M., "Henry King" (2010). *Faculty Publications*. 65.
https://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/faculty_publications/65

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Case Western Reserve University School of Law Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of Case Western Reserve University School of Law Scholarly Commons.

HENRY KING

Erik M. Jensen[†]

Henry King and I both began at Case Western Reserve in 1983, memorialized in an issue of *In Brief*, the law school magazine, that has a cover photo showing total devastation. It looks like the aftermath of a faculty meeting, but the picture is really of bombed-out Nuremberg, of course.

CWRU Professor Morry Shanker has told me many times—Morry has a tendency to repeat himself—that when he first met Henry King, he thought Henry was the worst name-dropper he had ever met. Henry peppered sentence after sentence with the names of the world's most prominent people—not only lawyers—in what seemed to be self-aggrandizement at its worst: Like “When Zsa Zsa Gabor and I were discussing U.S.-Hungarian relations, . . .”

But Morry soon came to realize that Henry not only knew the people whose names he dropped; he really was friends with them: statesmen, scholars, the Pope—well, not the Pope, I guess, but Father Drinan was pretty close, and not Zsa Zsa either, as far as I know. But it seemed that Henry knew just about everyone else important in the world. Henry really knew those folks, and they knew him, respected him, and loved him.

Henry walked on a world stage.

And he always aimed high. One of my favorite stories, told by Henry's wife Betty, illustrates the point. (This is a story I first heard at a faculty party held at the home of another person who joined the faculty in 1983, someone who has done pretty well for herself—here comes a name-drop—one Barbara Snyder.)

Betty was with Henry in Nuremberg for a while, the two of them dancing up a storm, but, with the birth of a child imminent, Henry insisted that Betty return to the United States. Henry wanted to make sure there was no question that the child would be eligible, under the

[†] David L. Brennan Professor of Law, Case Western Reserve University.

Constitution, to become president of the United States—you know, the requirement that the president be a “natural born Citizen.” Betty had a tone of exasperation in her voice when she told the story, and that, coupled with the sheepish look on Henry’s face, made it clear that this was an absolutely true story.

As I said, Henry aimed high.

But he cared about the local as well as the global and national. Henry was a great citizen of Cleveland and of Case Western Reserve. In fact, he was interested in *everything*, and, whatever the setting, he asked question after question. Socrates had nothing on Henry King. The first question to be asked at any faculty workshop: Henry’s. The first (and second and third) question to be asked at any informal lunch: Henry’s. The best conference presented at the law school each year: Henry’s—with Henry politely grilling speaker after speaker.

And—to change the subject, no good transition here—the cutest faculty member? Well, in the minds of many, that was Henry too. I know my wife Helen always thought Henry was just the cutest thing, and one member of this faculty always wanted, she used to say, to grab Henry’s cheeks. (I believe she was talking about Henry’s face.)

Henry was my friend for 26 years, one of my absolutely favorite people in the world, the nicest and most decent person I have ever known. His passing has left a terrible void in my life, as it has for so many others.

When Henry said, “It’s good to see you!” as he always did, he meant it. It is some solace at this very sad time to know that, because Henry left his mark on CWRU in so many ways, we cannot walk the halls without seeing images everywhere of our dear, dear friend. Henry, it will always be good to see you, too.