

IN MEMORY OF PROFESSOR STEPHEN T. ZAMORA

*James W. Skelton, Jr.**

On July 8, 2016, Professor Stephen Thomas Zamora passed away in Mexico City, where he and his beloved wife, Lois, maintained a home away from home. The University of Houston Law Center and the *Houston Journal of International Law* have lost a loyal and devoted friend, who shall be impossible to replace.

I met Steve in 1978, shortly after he and Lois had moved to Houston. We had two very significant things in common, the Peace Corps and our interest in international law. Steve and Lois had begun their 50-year marriage serving as Peace Corps Volunteers in Colombia from 1967-69, and I had served as a PCV in Ethiopia from 1970-72. As internationalists, it was only natural for us to gravitate toward international legal issues, and by the time we met we were totally committed to a wide variety of matters related to international law.

Another mutual interest was the continued growth, welfare and recognition of the *Journal*. Steve served as a Faculty Advisor to the *Journal* since its inception, and I have served as a member

* Mr. Skelton served as the Chairman of the Advisory Board of the *Houston Journal of International Law* from 1999 to 2010 and has been a member of the Advisory Board since 1980. He has practiced law for more than 40 years, specializing in international and domestic oil and gas transactions. His practice has been focused primarily on upstream international petroleum transactions, which has taken him to over 35 countries in the Former Soviet Union, the Middle East, Africa, Southeast Asia, Europe, and South America. The first five years of his career were spent in private practice, after which he worked for Conoco Inc./ConocoPhillips for nearly 28 years before retiring in 2008. Thereafter, he returned to private practice and began serving as an Adjunct Professor at the University of Houston Law Center, teaching the course in Energy Law: Doing Business in Emerging Markets. He is the coauthor of the second edition of the textbook *Doing Business in Emerging Markets: A Transactional Course*, and has published 14 articles and two book reviews for legal periodicals and books. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Economics from Arizona State University, a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree from South Texas College of Law and a Master of Laws degree in International Legal Studies from New York University.

of the *Journal's* Advisory Board since it was formed. We had similar visions and goals and worked well together on many of the *Journal's* issues and projects over the years. All three of these factors formed the foundation for a professional and academic friendship that lasted for almost 38 years.

Steve was always upbeat and as kind, pleasant and helpful as anyone I have ever met in my life. His kindness, good humor and generous compliments came to him so naturally and effortlessly that he made everyone he came in contact with feel important and valued. A recent edition of the *Texas Lawyer* quoted a longtime colleague, Bradley Richards of Haynes and Boone, as saying, "Steve was the consummate gentleman. He was kind, thoughtful and even-tempered. He was a great professor. He was always prepared, shared his knowledge with enthusiasm, listened to the students and offered them a helping hand whenever he could." That is a wonderful and accurate description of Steve as a man and a professor.

Steve was a very intelligent man who, in 1972, graduated first in his class from the Boalt Hall School of Law at the University of California at Berkeley. He graduated from Stanford University in 1966 with a major in Political Science. Following graduation from law school, Steve, Lois and their children, Camille and Peter, moved to Geneva, Switzerland where he served a one-year Postgraduate Fellowship at the University Consortium for World Order Studies. Thereafter, they moved to Washington, D.C. where he practiced international law with Cleary Gottlieb and then worked for the World Bank while Lois completed her PhD in Comparative Literature.

Given such a strong academic and legal background, Steve was able to teach a wide variety of courses at the Law Center, including International Business Transactions, International Trade, NAFTA, Contracts, International Banking Law, Mexican Law, and Conflicts of Law.

It was clear that Steve exceeded expectations on every level and accomplished great things during his tenure as a Professor at the University of Houston Law Center from 1978 to 2014. In addition, he took time out from teaching to serve as the Dean of the Law Center from 1995 to 2000, becoming the first dean at the University of Houston of Hispanic origin. He had such a positive

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outlook on and attitude about life that his appointment did not come as a surprise to me. It was also predictable that Steve remained as friendly and helpful as ever while meeting all of the responsibilities that came with occupying the Office of the Dean.

One of Steve's most important contributions was the establishment of the Center for U.S. and Mexican Law at the Law Center, which was the first research center in any U.S. law school devoted to the independent study of Mexican law and legal aspects of relations between the U.S. and Mexico. After he retired from teaching in 2014, he continued as the Director of the Center for U.S. and Mexican Law. He also served as the Director of the North American Consortium on International Law. Steve was extremely dedicated to improving and promoting better relations between the U.S. and Mexico. In 2006, in recognition of Steve's efforts, the government of Mexico awarded Steve the Order of Aztec Eagle, which is the highest honor given by the Mexican government to a foreign national.

Steve was an exceptional and talented author as well, publishing 34 articles and book chapters and 10 book reviews. He also was lead author of an excellent book on Mexican Law that was published in 2004 and is viewed as the best English language book on the subject, coedited the Basic Documents of International Economic Law, and was the founding editor of the online Database on International Economic Law.

During the numerous meetings, conferences and dinners we attended, Steve consistently displayed an in-depth knowledge of the subject matter and an ability to articulate the correct solution to a problem. I personally witnessed the kind and caring manner in which he treated everyone in attendance, as well as the positive responses or reactions to his thoughtful comments.

His professional life constituted a small part of what made Steve such a great man. He was primarily a wonderful family man who relished the fulfillment of his principal roles as a loving husband, father, brother and grandfather. He often told me stories about his wife and children that were packed with phrases and references that showed his love and devotion to them. Steve will be missed dearly by his family, his many friends, former students, colleagues and all of those who were privileged to know and work with him.