



Jon R. Waltz, 74

Law professor emeritus at NU

January 16, 2004 | By Angela Rozas, Tribune staff reporter.

With an acerbic wit and a penchant for bow ties and cigars, Jon R. Waltz held court for more than 30 years at Northwestern University School of Law, entertaining students with tales of his legal experiences and earning a reputation as a stellar scholar and expert in evidence and trial procedure.

Mr. Waltz, 74, a professor emeritus of law and a prolific author, died Friday, Jan. 9, apparently of a heart attack, at his home in Holland, Mich.

Raised in Delta, Ohio, Mr. Waltz graduated with honors from the College of Wooster in 1951 and received a law degree in 1954 from Yale University, where he was one of the editors of the law review, said his longtime companion Ross Edman.

During the next decade, Mr. Waltz worked as a lawyer with Squire, Sanders & Dempsey in Cleveland, a time punctuated by three years of service with the Army's Judge Advocate General's Corps.

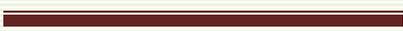
He joined Northwestern in 1964 as an associate professor. He rose through the ranks and eventually was named the Edna B. and Ednyfed H. Williams Memorial professor, an endowed chair.

Students tried not to miss his classes and fought to register for them, former student and Chicago lawyer Henry Lawrie said.

"He was a hoot," Lawrie said. "He was constantly telling us about the humorous things that had gone wrong or right in the trials that had affected the outcome. To expect the unexpected and that things rarely go the way you expect it and you better be prepared for it."

Eccentric and a sharp wit, Mr. Waltz smoked cigars in his office in defiance of school policy and was known for cutting down to size students who failed to prepare for his classes, former law school dean and faculty member Robert Bennett said.

"He loved his students, and they loved him," Edman said.



In 1969 Mr. Waltz advised lawyers of the Chicago 7, radicals who were accused of conspiring to incite a riot at the 1968 Democratic National Convention. The role earned him a secret security file with the military and exemplified his commitment to just causes, colleagues said.

"He wasn't a shrinking violet. Once he determined there was something out there that needed attending, he dived right into it," Bennett said.

"He wasn't an ivory tower academic at all."

Mr. Waltz was a consultant to a number of government agencies, including the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and the National Institutes of Health.

He ran unsuccessfully for the Illinois Appellate Court in 1978 and former Gov. Jim Thompson appointed him to the Illinois Judicial Inquiry Board in 1980.

Mr. Waltz wrote and co-authored 12 books, 27 law review articles and book chapters, and contributed to a number of major periodicals, including book reviews for the Chicago Tribune.

He co-wrote with John Kaplan "The Trial of Jack Ruby," a national best seller that has been called a masterful study of trials, and "Cases & Materials on Evidence," lauded as a premier casebook on the subject.

He also was an avid gardener who favored exotic day lilies and collected Chinese and Japanese art, Edman said.

Mr. Waltz retired from Northwestern in 1996.

He is survived by his partner, Ross Edman. No services are planned.