

# Remembering Professor Michael Kammen

After his passing in November 2013, the world paid many respects to Michael Kammen, the historian—a great thinker, writer, and winner of the Pulitzer Prize. As his students, we consider it an honor to remember Michael Kammen, the professor—a wonderful man who was as devoted to us as to his craft.

Commemorating a man who was an expert on memory is a difficult task; our words can hardly capture the brilliant spirit we each remember. Enthusiastic, supportive, and kind without fail, Professor Kammen was far more than an educator. To many of us, he was an example and a source of the strength required to forge our own paths within and beyond the discipline of history. He always came prepared, though never with an inflexible agenda, embodying an infectious curiosity that compelled and motivated us. His excitement for the world, like his wisdom of it, knew no bounds.

Outside of the classrooms of McGraw Hall, many of us came to know him around a dinner table in Becker House. Once a week, he hosted a gathering called Muse—a time, in his own words, to “discuss a wide array of topics related to history, art, and culture (high and low).” There, we formed partnerships, cultivated ideas, exchanged pieces of our worlds and minds, and shared a haven in the discipline that we all cherished. From a meal among strangers, Professor Kammen created a cohort of partners, friends, and perhaps even future colleagues.

Without him, we would have been students in the same department. With him, we became a community. As a community now united in his memory, we honor him as a teacher, a mentor, and an infinitely brilliant man. He enriched our minds and lives during our time at Cornell. Today, he enriches our fondest memories.

*Written by former students of Professor Kammen*