



John E. H. Sherry

March 17, 1932 – October 30, 2014

Professor John E. H. Sherry taught his first course in “Laws of Innkeeping” at the Cornell Hotel School in the fall semester, 1972. Born in New York City, he grew up in Morningside Heights, near Columbia University, received his B.A. degree from Yale University, his L.L.M. from New York University, and his J.D. from Columbia University, where he was a classmate of Cornellian and U.S. Supreme Court associate justice, Ruth Bader Ginsburg. His father, John H. Sherry, a prominent New York hotel attorney, who famously commuted from New York to Ithaca by train, taught law at the Hotel School for over forty years.

John and his father are testimony to the family’s commitment to the law and to education. Together they taught law and educated the future leaders of the hospitality industry for nearly sixty years. They taught many, many generations of Cornell alumni. And, they remain unique in the history of the School -- the only father-son combination of faculty members to teach at the School.

The Hospitality Industry -- hotels in particular -- have some very special issues in regard to the law of business. Hotels historically have the right of Innkeeper’s Lien, whereby a hotel can seize the luggage of a guest who tries to skip out on the bill, keep it, and sell it to satisfy the unpaid rent. In modern times, the universal use of national credit cards, and the fact that most hotels insist on a credit card upon check-in, has relegated the use of the Innkeeper’s Lien law to history. However, it allows interesting, and sometimes humorous classroom discussion. John used such incidences to keep the mood light and fun.

On a more serious side, hotels are faced with some very strict rules having to do with the guest experience, and safety in particular. John was well-versed in these issues, and particularly those

instances where the hotel's liability might be increased. This type of knowledge is highly important to the student who might make a career in Lodging.

John loved the Cornell and Hotel School community. He proudly served on many university committees, often representing the Hotel School. He regularly attended, and was a longtime season ticket holder, to both Cornell football and hockey. He enjoyed any university event that served Cornell BBQ chicken! Within the Hotel School, he supported both "Quantities" classes by regularly dining in the old Rathskeller and the Statler dining room as well as the newer facilities. He attended many Hotel Ezra Cornell (HEC) weekends, and, between John, his father and his daughter, his family has an extensive and much cherished collection of HEC china.

His colleagues at the School sought him out for his expertise and guidance about legal issues and many remember him as "counselor."

He developed and taught the course "Business and Hospitality Law" in the Hotel School as well as courses in international law at Cornell Law School.

John traveled extensively throughout his career, including sabbatical leaves to China and Israel. He is remembered by his family and colleagues for his scholarly intellect, profound commitment to his students, his work ethic and his sense of humor punctuated by a deep bass laugh. To this day, his daughter meets Hotel School alumni who share wonderful recollections of their experiences in his classes or how he helped them individually.

He served in the Korean War with the 17th Field Artillery Battalion and in the Army Reserve through the early 1960s, when he was called again to active duty during the Cuban missile crisis, ending his service with the rank of captain.

The family's belief in the importance of education continued. A son and daughter graduated from Cornell University -- John E. Sherry, earned a B.A. from the College of Arts & Sciences in '84, and Suzanne Sherry Lee, received a B.S. from the School of Hotel Administration in '89. A second son graduated from SUNY Albany - Douglas M. Sherry, earned a B.A. in History in '88. Inspired by their father, both John and Douglas went on to graduate school. Douglas is a Ph.D. and is now carrying on the family tradition as a college professor. John is a medical doctor, practicing in VA.

A member of the Cornell hotelie family, now gone but not forgotten.

A. Neal Geller, Richard H. Penner, Michael H. Redlin