



## **James A. Henderson, Jr.**

February 6, 1938 – July 2, 2019

James A. Henderson, Jr., the Frank B. Ingersoll Professor of Law, Emeritus, at Cornell Law School, died July 2, 2019. He was 81 years old. James earned a B.A. in English from Princeton, a J.D. from Harvard Law School, and an LL.M. from Harvard Law School. Jim began his long teaching career at Boston University School of Law in 1964. He taught there for 20 years before coming to Cornell Law School, where he taught for another 29 years before taking emeritus status. During his career, Jim also taught at the University of Colorado School of Law, the University of Virginia Law School, and Brooklyn Law School.

Jim was a prolific scholar whose work spanned over five decades. His law school textbooks included *The Torts Process* (9 editions), *Products Liability: Problems and Processes* (8 editions), and *Torts: Case and Materials* (4 editions). He also authored over eighty scholarly law review articles. Jim earned a reputation as a top-rate torts scholar, leading the American Law Institute to appoint him, along with his longtime friend and collaborator Aaron Twerski, as co-reporters of the *Restatement of Torts (Third): Products Liability* and co-advisors to the *Restatement of Torts (Third)*. Jim and Aaron also served as co-Special Masters in the World Trade Center Disaster Site Litigation, which administered the 9/11 first responders fund. He testified many times in front of Congress and state legislatures. Jim continued to produce scholarship after obtaining emeritus status; his most recent article came out in the *Florida Law Review* in January of 2019.

Jim was one of the most cited and respected torts scholars in the world. It is no exaggeration to say that his ideas completely restructured the very foundations of products liability law. His contributions have been widely recognized with numerous awards. He was the recipient of the R. Ammi Cutter Distinguished Award from the American Law Institute (1997). He also received the Robert B. McKay Law Professor Award (2011) from the American Bar Association for professors who have shown advancement to justice, scholarship, and the legal profession, demonstrated by contributions in the field of tort, trial practice, or insurance law. Given his life-

long commitment to the understanding of tort law, his most cherished award was certainly the William L. Prosser Award for Outstanding Contributions to Tort Scholarship, which the Torts Section of the American Association of Law Schools bestowed on him in 2014.

Jim lived his life with great passion. Among his many adventures, Jim once played an instrumental role in saving a passenger plane from crashing when a mentally ill passenger attacked the pilot. His diverse experiences and keen mind produced an incisive wit that one sees sprinkled through his casebooks and his scholarship. That scholarship also mirrored his own complex mix of fatalism and personal responsibility which now forever marks the world's understanding of products liability. And of course, he loved teaching. Despite the impressive body of scholarship he amassed, he always asserted that he owed his primary professional responsibility to his students.

Jim is survived by his wife, Marcia, and his son, James D. Henderson, and daughter, Katherine Henderson Helber, and their families. He also leaves behind many friends, colleagues, and former students, whose lives he touched, and who are better for having had the privilege of knowing him and learning from his insights.

*Written by Jeffrey J. Rachlinski*