

# Remembering the Warmth and Commitment Julian Kossow Brought to Teaching Law

## **“I went to law school for all the wrong reasons,”**

Julian R. Kossow wrote in a piece for the Marquette Law School Faculty Blog in 2010. That, of course, is not a conclusion held by others, because Kossow went on to a distinguished career, including a decade as a visiting professor at Marquette Law School, where he was highly respected not only for his knowledge but for the care and warmth he showed to students. Kossow died August 2, 2020, at the age of 87.



Julian R. Kossow (1932–2020)

In that blog post, Kossow explained what he meant about enrolling in the part-time evening program at Georgetown Law in Washington, D.C., in the early 1960s. “I had been doing real estate development for four or five years,” he wrote. “I was a client before I was a law student. I became quite annoyed that my attorneys seemed to be patronizing me. They spoke a language that was foreign to me. I decided to go to law school to find out what the mystique was all about and, hopefully, to emerge as a better developer.”

In a second blog post, Kossow described a pivotal moment early in his time in law school. He wrote:

“The entire event took, at most, ten seconds, but in that incredibly brief time I learned that the study of law was the right thing for me. The time was mid-September 1963. The place was the old Georgetown University Law Center at 5th and E Streets, N.W. The room was shaped like a bowling alley. One hundred and twenty-five part-time evening students were shoehorned into that room. At precisely 5:45 p.m., Professor Thomas O’Toole entered the room from the back. It was the only way in and out of the room in which constitutional law was being taught. Professor O’Toole took one step, paused, and from the back of the room, spoke in a loud, clear voice, ‘Mr. Chase, why was the Court in *Euclid* concerned about the scope of the town’s zoning plan?’ Before Mr. Chase could answer, the professor took another step into the room, paused, and said, ‘Mr. Kossow, why did I ask that question?’

“A few seconds later, after I had choked on an answer that included the words ‘comprehensive plan,’

the professor walked to the front of the class and said, ‘Mr. Hubbard, do you agree with Mr. Kossow’s answer?’ . . . Professor O’Toole, in ten seconds, changed the direction of my life.”

Kossow said he found himself intellectually excited by his studies. It was an excitement he passed on to many students at several law schools where he taught, including his years at Marquette from 2004 to 2014.

Daniel Toomey, a Washington, D.C., lawyer who was a close friend, has recounted Kossow’s career: Successful involvement in real estate development both before and after becoming a lawyer. Involvement in land reform work in Ethiopia, working with Emperor Haile Selassie in the 1970s. Development of thousands of apartments for Russian immigrants to Israel.

“He was urbane, well-read, curious, and loved traveling with his wife, Janet,” Toomey wrote of Kossow. Marquette Law Professor Michael O’Hear wrote, “Julian had a warm smile, a hearty laugh, and a treasure trove of colorful anecdotes from his professional work and extensive international travel. Julian also impressed with his passionate commitment to teaching.”

Although he lived in Washington, D.C., Kossow commuted to Milwaukee for years to teach courses including property, real estate finance, real estate contracts and conveyances, and trusts and estates. In a comment on the Law School’s Faculty Blog, Jane Eddy Casper, a retired administrator, wrote, “He taught several courses in the evening throughout his MULS years, sharing his scholarship, insight, and gentlemanly ways with numerous part-time evening students. One of those students (graduated 2016) told me recently how much she enjoyed the dinners he arranged at local restaurants throughout the semester—small groups of first-year students who then got to know each other better and, of course, got to know their professor better as well.” In fact, Kossow continued that tradition even in retirement in Washington, D.C., gathering with Marquette lawyers—his former students—in the area. He had retired, but he was still teaching. ■