

## Sam Lipsman—1949-2013



Samuel L. Lipsman, director of publications and publisher and editor of the LACBA's award-winning *Los Angeles Lawyer* magazine, passed away on June 13 after a seven-month battle with cancer. Sam was born on May 3, 1949, in Davenport, Iowa.

To say Sam was brilliant is an understatement. He received a National Merit Scholarship to Princeton, where he earned a B.A. in sociology, and later attended graduate studies at Yale University. As a graduate student at Yale, he received a Fulbright Scholarship to study in West Berlin and became the first Fulbright allowed to do research in East Berlin. Although Sam decided not to become a professor, he did love to lecture and was knowledgeable on a wide range of topics from baseball (especially the White Sox), football (the Bears), and history to the law, economics, politics, and just about anything else.

Sam had a very distinguished career as a writer and editor for several leading publications, including the 25-volume, Time-Life series *The Vietnam Experience*, which is about the Vietnam War. After that project was completed, he relocated to Southern California, where he became the publisher and editor of *Los Angeles Lawyer*, a position he held until his death. Sam will be remembered for his wit, his caring nature, and his love for family and friends.

### In Tribute

We are deeply saddened by the loss of Sam Lipsman, Director of Publications and editor and publisher of the Los Angeles County Bar Association's award-winning *Los Angeles Lawyer* magazine. The LACBA community and the world lost too soon a great man, a true gentleman, and a scholar. Sam will always be remembered for his brilliance, his wit, and his compassion. He brought great style and passionate dedication to the magazine, and he enriched the lives of the many of us fortunate to have crossed paths with him.

*Patricia Egan Daehnke, president of the Los Angeles County Bar Association*



On my first day as LACBA's executive director, I was a bit overwhelmed meeting staff and getting acquainted with the complexity of LACBA. Sam came in to introduce himself, took a seat, and proceeded to tell me how things should be done. That was our Sam, and it was the first of many conversations about what was best for LACBA—at least in HIS view. I enjoyed going into his office to let him know that we wanted to do something differently with our publications—he would listen, give me a half-smile, and say, "I'll think about it and get back to

you." I could always count on him to come back with his thoughts and some good ideas. Our Sam. We miss him deeply, and LACBA will never be the same without him. I know I was fortunate to have the opportunity to work with him.

*Sally Suchil, Executive Director, Los Angeles County Bar Association*



I worked with Sam at *Los Angeles Lawyer* for 18 years. Throughout that time, his humor and wry wit infused every encounter and was his trademark until the very end. Sam was able to coax better writing and storytelling from authors, myself included, for he was willing to take as much time as necessary to make good articles great. He took no credit, but deserved much. Sam's dedication to the profession, the magazine, and LACBA was unmatched, and he is sorely missed.

*Jerry Abeles, former chair of the Los Angeles Lawyer Editorial Board*



Describing Sam as an "editor" is like describing Los Angeles as a "town." He was far beyond our summations of him. He was a mentor, a teacher, a wise man. His knowledge

was vast yet he was always approachable. I miss him.

*Eric Brown, member of the Los Angeles Lawyer Editorial Board*



I had the immense pleasure of working with Sam on the *Los Angeles Lawyer* magazine Editorial Board for four years. Sam was one of the most intelligent people I have had the pleasure of knowing. He was such a positive force and a true pleasure to work with. He will be extremely missed.

*Caroline Bussin, member of the Los Angeles Lawyer Editorial Board*



Sam Lipsman was an amazing, brilliant, unforgettable guy in the thick of the anti-war movement back then, an idealist among a lot of us who were just going through an idealism phase. I last saw him a number of years back at a college reunion and deeply regret not getting a chance to say goodbye.

*Christopher Connell, Princeton classmate*



Sam was and continues to be an inspiration. Words cannot describe how sad I am at his

passing. He left us far too soon.

*Chad Coombs, former chair of the Los Angeles Lawyer Editorial Board*



Sam was a very thoughtful and generous person. I'm glad I had the chance to get to know him. I will miss him.

*Ben Davidson, member of the Los Angeles Lawyer Editorial Board*



Sam was a great leader for *Los Angeles Lawyer* magazine. Our authors and editorial board are volunteers, so it requires strong motivational and organizing skills. Sam would welcome the new editorial board each year with a guide he called "The Care and Feeding of Authors." It was filled with his stories of some articles that are born great, some that are made great, and some that never made it into print. It has been a memorable way to remind the Editorial Board members of how closely tied the success of magazine is to its authors. I will miss Sam.

*Gordon K. Eng, member of the Los Angeles Lawyer Editorial Board*



As the editor in chief, Sam was uncompromising in his demand for high quality that significantly contributed to the discussion of the law. As a friend, he was insightful, loyal, and both liberal with smiles and reasons to smile back. He leaves a legacy of both that will endure in all of us who knew him.

*Michael Geibelson, former chair of the Los Angeles Lawyer Editorial Board*



Sam was smart, witty, and truly a pleasure to work with. I'm very glad that I got to work with him on a special issue so soon after he invited me to be on the board. I learned so much from him and will miss him.

*Sharon Glancz, member of the Los Angeles Lawyer Editorial Board*



Sam had such warmth and enthusiasm for his work. He was a true leader and will be sorely missed.

*Amy Messigian, member of the Los Angeles Lawyer Editorial Board*



One thing I know for sure after working with Sam for more than 18 years at *Los Angeles Lawyer*: Sam loved publishing. And publishing loved him back.

Sam knew a lot about a lot of things, but he was a true master of publishing, in all its facets. He understood the architecture of

editing. He knew when an article needed to be built out, expanded, and when an article needed to be recast, reframed, cut. He knew when to go Baroque and when to go Minimalist. He was a genius at constructing issue after issue of *Los Angeles Lawyer* magazine from compelling but sketchy ideas to the blueprint of articles in progress to the polished edifice of the final product. He relished his interactions with the lawyers who served on the magazine's Editorial Board and who wrote the articles published in *Los Angeles Lawyer's* pages. Sam insisted on impeccable research and top-flight analysis, and he was proud of the lawyers who regularly delivered both. Plus, he knew how to elicit and encourage beautiful, memorable illustrations and cover photographs and the production of state-of-the-art page layouts to surround the challenging text. He enjoyed his role of bringing forth legal ideas and expertise into a format that was elegant, entertaining, and, most important to Sam, as helpful as possible to lawyers in their daily practices.

Examples of his excellence abound, but the special issues are a true window into his skills. He could take compelling but seemingly impossibly broad themes—such as the aftermath of 9/11, the increasing intersection of criminal and civil law, the changing landscape of entertainment law and international law and real property law, and the workings of the Los Angeles Superior Court—and, in collaboration with the lawyers on the Editorial Board and the writers and the staff, orchestrate a pitch-perfect collection of impressive articles. His ability to bring order out of the inevitable chaos of initial plans and brainstorming is justifiably legendary.

Sam understood, and enjoyed, the business of publishing. He was an able steward of the magazine and the Publications Department. He became expert at the complex economics of publishing in a changing world, and he managed the magazine with brilliance during good times and bad. He was always deeply aware of the advertising side of the ledger and appreciated each and every one of the magazine's loyal and new advertisers.

Sam was looking forward to his well-deserved retirement. He would have been the world's best eminence grise, a constant source of expertise and guidance to the staff and the lawyers serving on future editorial boards. It is tragic and sad that he left us way too soon. But that expertise, that guidance, will always reside in the pages of the many issues of the magazine that bear his stamp.

*Lauren Milicov, Senior Editor of Los Angeles Lawyer from 1980 to 2012*



Sam was a brilliant, insightful, and truly caring person. His wit and charm made him a joy to be around. He was the kind of person who made a difference in the lives of those around him. Both his family and his colleagues will miss his presence in our lives, but we will cherish the fond memories we have of him.

*David Schnider, cousin and former chair of the Los Angeles Lawyer Editorial Board*



Sam was an encouraging, positive leader who brought humor, personality, a wealth of information, and a clear love of the written word to the magazine. He was a positive force for good for the publication and the legal community in Los Angeles. Plus he was just generally a good guy, and always very friendly, inviting, and supportive to me in my role on the board. I will miss him, as I know the whole board will.

*Heather Stern, member of the Los Angeles Lawyer Editorial Board*



When I became the chair of the *Los Angeles Lawyer's* Editorial Board, Sam said, "You need to write the From the Chair column, but can write about anything you want." "Anything?" I asked. Perhaps sensing my unconventional side, Sam smiled. "You can write about cooking or your childhood, if that's what strikes your fancy." So, I wrote about many things, few having to do with the law and most of them (intended to be) humorous. Far from discouraging this behavior, Sam actually encouraged me, even touted my columns to the board and enjoyed the bit of fan mail the columns generated. My entire time on the board was marked by Sam's encouragement of me, trust in me, and respect for me. And not until now do I realize what it meant to me. So, although I didn't come to know Sam as well as so many of you who might read this, I know that he was a special person whose influence made my life richer. My sadness at Sam's passing is made more so because I have waited too long to tell him that he made a difference.

*Ken Swenson, former chair of the Los Angeles Lawyer Editorial Board*



I had the honor of working with Sam as one of the contributors and editors of *Los Angeles Lawyer*. Sam was the best and he will be missed by all who knew him and everyone who benefited from his great work for the Los Angeles legal community.

*Steven Toscher, member of the Los Angeles Lawyer Editorial Board*