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Newsroom: A Farewell to Professor Kent

Roger Williams University School of Law

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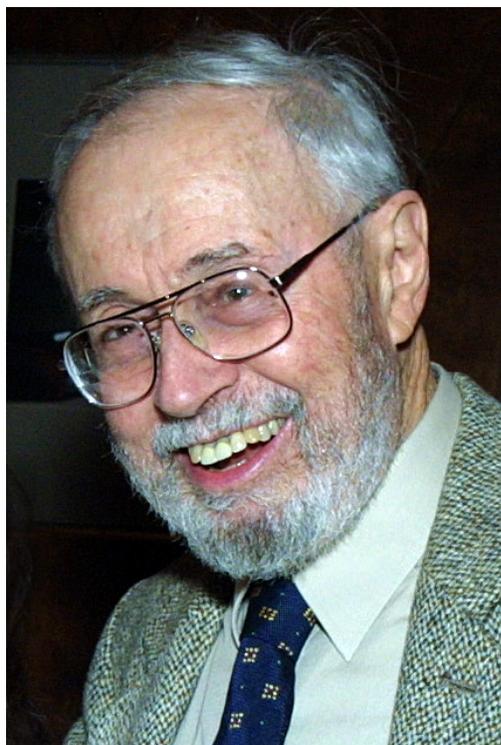
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Newsroom

A Farewell to Professor Kent

RWU Law notes the passing of esteemed educator, scholar, colleague and friend, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Law Robert Brydon Kent, H'91.



It is with great sadness and fond memories that Roger Williams University School of Law notes the passing of an esteemed educator, scholar, colleague and friend, **Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Law Robert Brydon Kent, H'91**, who died at his Lexington, Mass., home on February 5, 2015. He was 93 years old.

Professor Kent's accomplishments over more than 60 years in legal education are too numerous to recount. In addition to his tenure at RWU Law, he taught on the law faculties at Boston University, Harvard and Cornell (where he also served as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs); was a visiting fellow at Trinity College in Oxford; and even served as Professor of Law and Dean of the University of Zambia School of Law (earning the Peace Corp Citation in 1996 for his contributions to its "Lawyers in Africa" program).

A member of the American Law Institute for more than three decades, Professor Kent co-authored *Cases and Other Materials on Civil Procedure* in 1967; and authored his comprehensive treatise, *Rhode Island Practice: Rules of Civil Procedure*, in 1969, after serving as Reporter to the Committee on Civil Rules of the Supreme, Superior, and District Courts of Rhode Island, which recommended the adoption of the

Rules. He went on to serve on the Advisory Committee on Rules of Civil Procedure for the State of Massachusetts.

David A. Wollin, now a partner at Hinckley Allen in Providence, co-authored and introduced the 2004 edition of *Rhode Island Practice*, noting:

“
It has been 35 years since Professor Robert B. Kent wrote his seminal treatise on Rhode Island Civil Practice. As a testament to its value, [the] treatise has been cited in over a hundred published opinions. The treatise has provided inestimable value to Rhode Island practitioners and the judiciary, not only by canvassing what the law was at the time, but by forecasting what Rhode Island practice should be in so many areas. The value of Professor Kent's treatise is reflected in the fact that, in the intervening 35 years, the Supreme Court has adopted many of his commentaries as governing law in Rhode Island.”

Professor Kent, however, remained modest about his accomplishment. When informed some years ago that many members of the Rhode Island bench and bar considered his treatise "the Bible of Rhode Island Civil Procedure," he reportedly replied, "that is no doubt a tribute to its antiquity and not its authority."

The son of Madeline Brydon Kent and Silas Stanley Kent, Professor Kent was born and grew up in Lowell, Mass. He attended Kimball Union Academy, Harvard University and Boston University School of Law. He practiced briefly in Ware, Mass., before entering legal education. "He was an avid hiker who loved the White Mountains, once trekked in the Himalayan foothills, and had a special fondness for the Concord Woods," [one tribute](#) noted. "He also spent many happy hours on and off the tennis courts with his Lexington friends. He was a baseball fanatic with an amazing memory for the trials and triumphs of the Boston Red Sox."

Professor Kent is survived by his wife of 63 years, Barbara Tuttle Kent; their four children, Robert Kent Jr., Dorothy Kent (Lynn William Byron Smith), Elizabeth Kent (Thomas Watts), and Hugh Kent; five grandchildren; his sister-in-law Marjorie Kent; as well as many nieces and nephews. Professor Kent was active in the Lexington community where he lived for over 60 years, serving as Town Moderator, Town Selectman, and in a number of other capacities.

Services will be held at the First Parish Church in Lexington on a [date to be determined](#). Donations, in lieu of flowers, are asked to be made to "the Law School of your choice" or to the "Community without Borders" program in care of the First Parish Church in Lexington.