

In Memoriam - Hon. Arthur L. Berman

by Jacqueline Carroll and Mitchell Goldberg

On June 7, 2020, the world, and especially Chicago, lost a good one.

Senator Art Berman (ret.), who passed away at the age of 85, was a Decalogue legend. He was a respected attorney and community leader. He was also a loving husband, father, and grandfather. During his time in the Illinois legislature (winning 22 elections for public office), Art earned a reputation as a champion for improving schooling for the children of Illinois. A graduate of Northwestern Law School in 1958, he was a longtime member and supporter of the Decalogue Society of Lawyers. He also served in various volunteer capacities for the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago, the Anti-Defamation League, Emanuel Congregation, and numerous other civic, legal, legislative, educational, and Jewish organizations and committees.

Reflections of Jacqueline Carroll, Co-Chair, Committee Against Antisemitism and Hate

As many in our community do, I grew up having several “aunts and uncles” who are of no blood relation, but such close family friends that they are for all intents and purposes family. I was truly blessed to consider Art and his wife, Barbara, to be my aunt and uncle. Art walked around with a glimmer in his eye and a smile on his face. His kind soul and good-natured demeanor exuded warmth to everyone he encountered. Art was a tennis aficionado. Not only did he play tennis on a regular basis, outside in the summer on clay courts and inside in the winter at Midtown, but every year for 25 years, he and his wife went to the U.S. Open. I recall going to my first live tennis match with Art and Barbara, the Virginia Slims, and seeing the joy on his face.

It is impossible to talk about Art without talking about Barbara and his family. Barbara and I recently spoke about Art and some of his favorite things people may not know about him. Every night Art had to drink one beer—a Sam Adams. Art’s seven grandchildren called him “Pop Art” and they loved to join him at Bears games and share nachos with cheese and peppers. Art and Barbara took each grandchild on a bar mitzvah trip for a weekend ranging from ice skating finals in St. Louis to pre-season basketball in Arizona to the Bahamas. Art was a creature of habit and a true family man. I may have lost an uncle, but the world has lost a gentle giant.

Reflections of Mitchell Goldberg, Decalogue Past President

When Jacqueline Carroll told me of Senator Art Berman’s passing on June 7, 2020, I was speechless. To call him a mentor would be an understatement. I have known Art since I was a law student, when we both attended a lawyer/law student reception put on by the Decalogue Society. When I later attended a Decalogue event, he remembered me by name and he would follow up on my success as an attorney. Eventually, he encouraged me to join the Decalogue Society’s Board of Managers. I served with him on the Jewish Community Relations Council and on a number of committees for Decalogue. At one event, he even introduced me to a state senator named Barack Obama, who would one day become president of the United States.

As I rose in the ranks of the Decalogue Society, Art was a constant source of wisdom and advice. His talent for coalescing ideas and as a peacemaker led to him serving as Parliamentarian for Life for our Society, which placed him on the Society’s executive committee in perpetuity. I was very grateful for his presence during my term as Decalogue’s president. Yet, for all his abilities, he was so very humble; always refusing awards for which he had so earned.

I was beyond thrilled when he accepted Decalogue’s Founders Award the year I was sworn into the Society’s presidency. It gave me such a wonderful feeling to recognize him and present that award.

Even as he faced health issues, he made it his business to be available for others and to help whenever and however he could. I was always taught one’s goal in life should be to leave the world better for having been here. To say Art will be missed is also an understatement.

Art: May Heaven greet you with the accolades you so very well deserve. You truly made a positive difference here. Rest in peace my dear friend. May those of us who had the honor to know you continue to strive to make further positive differences in your memory. And may that memory always serve for blessings.

Jacqueline Carroll is an attorney, who specializes in business litigation, civil rights litigation, and appellate law. Jacqueline serves on Decalogue's board and serves as Co-Chair of Decalogue's Committee Against Antisemitism and Hate.

Mitchell Goldberg is a regulatory and litigation partner in the law firm of Lawrence Kamin, LLC. In addition to serving as an advocate in financial services and commercial matters, Mitch frequently serves as a mediator. He also teaches classes in securities litigation at IIT/Kent College of Law. Among his several volunteer positions, Mitch is vice president of the Decalogue Foundation, a past president of the Decalogue Society, and currently serves as Co-Chair of Decalogue's Committee Against Antisemitism and Hate.