



Mr. Karl Straus

February 7, 1921 - September 6, 2017

Karl Straus, Community Leader and Attorney, Dies at 96.

Karl H. Straus, an attorney for more than 65 years, known for his community involvement and leadership, died in Asheville, NC, September 6th after a brief illness.

Mr. Straus was born in Mannheim, Germany, in 1921 and immigrated to the United States in 1936 to escape Nazi Germany. He moved to Asheville, NC, in 1952, and began and built the firm that would later be known as Patla, Straus, Robinson & Moore, P.A.

Because Mr. Straus believed that his community had offered him extraordinary opportunities, he wanted to give back, and he became a pillar of the community. He served in leadership roles on numerous boards and committees, including the UNCA and the UNCA Foundation Board of Trustees, and the boards of Memorial Mission Hospital, Wachovia Bank, the Asheville Tourists Baseball Club, Gibbons Hall School, the Capital Bank Corporation, the Buncombe County Bar Association, Congregation Beth Ha Tephila, the Asheville Symphony, Brevard Music Center, and the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina.

To provide pro bono legal services for those in need, he helped found the

Legal Aid Society, now Pisgah Legal Services, where he served both as board member and as board chairman.

He gave his heart to fighting intolerance, prejudice, and discrimination, and volunteered his time with the Asheville Chapter of the National Association of Christians and Jews and the Asheville Buncombe Human Relations Council.

Mr. Straus was an avid runner well into his seventies, and in 1992, UNCA dedicated its running track to him. He had the privilege of carrying the Olympic torch in the 1984 Summer Olympics Torch Relay.

In 1942, Mr. Straus tried to join the military, but was rejected as an “enemy alien.” As soon as he became an American citizen, he became a member of the US Army Air Corps, then transferred to the Allied Military Government for postwar Germany. He received a bronze star for his work in the denazification program of the Allied Military Government. Returning to the United States in 1946, Mr. Straus benefited from the GI Bill to attend college and law school at New York University, while also working at a gas station.

He started dating the love of his life, the late Sylvia Patla, in NY, an Asheville native, and together they returned to Asheville, where they started their family. He is survived by three children and their spouses, Lisa Straus and Jim Bethel of Washington, DC; Hank Straus and Karen Barwick of Chapel Hill, NC; and Joel Straus and Nancy Zwick, of Evanston, IL; three grandchildren, Max Mizell of Delray Beach, FL; and Nathan and Isabel Straus of Evanston, IL; and several nieces and nephews, who will miss his playfulness, love, and wisdom.

The funeral will be held at Temple Beth Ha Tephila, September 10, at 1:00 pm. Contributions in his memory can be made to Pisgah Legal Services, UNCA, or Temple Beth Ha Tephila.

Cemetery Details

Riverside Cemetery

53 Birch Street
Asheville, NC 28801

Tribute Wall



“ *Mr. Karl Straus*

October 07, 2023 at 11:15 AM



“ *Having lived a very full 96 1/2 years--Karl saw just about everything thing there is to see within the human experience. He embraced it all---the good, the bad---and the ugly---. Karl was larger than life--he added something wonderful to the lives of everyone he touched. He did this easily just by being himself. Wisdom with warmth, humor with compassion, empathy with sincerity was Karl's path. His life is a user's manual for all of us on how to be the best human being we can be. I feel privileged to be among his friends.*

I will miss you Karl. Thank You for your friendship and my memories of you.

Debbie Zimmerman

Debra Zimmerman - September 11, 2017 at 04:08 PM



“ *The staff and board of the Irene Wortham Center wish to extend our condolences to the family of Mr. Straus. Our agency, like many, many others, benefited from his care and service to those less fortunate; in our case, persons with disabilities. He will be missed!*

Eleanor Campbell - September 11, 2017 at 12:06 PM

DL

“ I am saddened deeply by the loss of such a divine citizen of the world. Karl Straus was a unique leader. He lived everyday as an prime example of kindness and intelligence in action. His character was unmatched due to his long track record of honesty and goodwill. I considered him a mentor and a surrogate father figure for decades because of his endless guidance and shared wisdom. Knowing Karl made me want to be a better person. Knowing Karl made me want to reach out and look after others. Knowing Karl made me appreciate the many gifts of my life. We were making plans to have lunch together the week before he passed. I am heartbroken we have missed our last date together but I am thankful we were able to talk one final time. My condolences to the entire family. He and his Sylvia are together again in my mind. I celebrate his glorious life lived and shared so graciously. All my love.
Dori Formato Legg

Dori Legg - September 10, 2017 at 11:56 AM

BB

“ Our heartfelt condolences to the family of Karl Straus. He will be greatly missed for his wise council, his kindness and understanding, and his wicked, wicked (and wonderful!) sense of humor. He was, indeed, part of our families also.
In deepest sympathy,
The Blomberg, Patton and Grimes families

Barbara Blomberg - September 10, 2017 at 11:40 AM

GS

“Karl was one of my friends and was a mentor. I moved to Asheville in 1965, 52 years ago and Karl was one of the first friends I made in Asheville. He was a great attorney and a wonderful friend and loved Asheville and Western North Carolina. We served on many committees together to help our community be the very best.

We will miss him.

Glenn W. Wilcox, Sr.

Glenn W. Wilcox, Sr. - September 09, 2017 at 04:23 PM

BA

“Karl lived a wonderful life and one that I and my wife shared only a little of and for that small bit we are grateful. May he rest in peace and may his surviving family rejoice in a life well live,

bob adamw - September 09, 2017 at 04:15 PM

BW

“Condolences to the family on Karl's passing and we bless and honor his life and the worlds history he lived with. My mother, Laretta sends her sympathy and notes they were very close in age.

Laretta Warlick

Billy Warlick

Asheville NC

Billy Warlick - September 09, 2017 at 04:08 PM

MD

“ *Michelle Day lit a candle in memory of Mr. Karl Straus*



Michelle Day - September 08, 2017 at 11:38 PM

JC

“ *Mr. Karl was one of my favorite Bulldogs. He was always so very thoughtful and kind to me, and I enjoyed hearing his many stories. Glad I had the opportunity to visit with him a few weeks ago. He was wearing his UNC Asheville scarf! His Bulldog Family will miss him.*

Janet R. Cone - September 08, 2017 at 04:44 PM

JJ

“ *Julie Johnson lit a candle in memory of Mr. Karl Straus*



Julie Johnson - September 07, 2017 at 02:25 PM

CB

Dear Karl Straus Family, In the early 2000's I needed legal council and Karl was recommended by an elderly family friend. He was not only a considerate, professional, warm spirited lawyer, but also has been a very good friend down through the years. I will miss sitting and talking with him and seeking his counsel. I will continue to keep him in my heart and will also use his excellent law firm for any future advice. May God richly bless all of you. You have my deepest sympathy at the passing of this great man. Clairene Brown

Clairene Brown - September 10, 2017 at 11:38 AM



“ *Gracious Lavender Basket was purchased for the family of Mr. Karl Straus.* ”



September 07, 2017 at 11:53 AM