

BASF and JDC Mourn the Passing of Judge Stephen Reinhardt

April 3, 2018 -- San Francisco -- Judge Stephen Reinhardt, a tireless beacon of the federal bench, passed away last week. Appointed to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in 1980, Judge Reinhardt authored many influential opinions on LGBT rights, immigration, and racial and gender discrimination, among others.

The Bar Association of San Francisco (BASF) and the Justice & Diversity Center (JDC) mourn the loss of a friend and jurist who shared our passion for justice and equality.

In 2012, when Judge Reinhardt wrote the opinion for the Ninth Circuit ruling affirming a lower court's decision to overturn Prop 8, BASF saluted the decision and expressed pride in the progress for which our organization, along with many other members of the legal community, had been fighting. "In an age where judges are sometimes expected to be detached automatons, Judge Reinhardt warmly embraced the court's dynamic role in ensuring justice for all," remembers 2012 BASF President Kelly M. Dermody. "As one of many examples, his majority opinion in *Perry v. Brown*, the 9th Circuit decision in 2012 that Prop 8 (the anti-same sex marriage amendment) was unconstitutional, lifted an entire generation of LGBT Americans not only for its ultimate conclusion but also for its language acknowledging the human dignity of same-sex couples. He will be sorely missed."

Judge Reinhardt will also be missed by BASF members who clerked for him, including Robert J. Nelson, Lief Cabraser Heimann & Bernstein: "Judge Reinhardt combined an extraordinary intellect with a passionate commitment to society's dispossessed, and he was absolutely fearless. There has never been and likely never will be a stronger voice on the federal bench for society's voiceless. Judge Reinhardt worked seven days a week, for all of his 38 years on the bench, because he cared so deeply about the law, and, specifically, about how the law could be used to advance the rights of society's most vulnerable. His passing is a terrible loss but his legacy is a source of inspiration and hope going forward."

Stacey Leyton, P. Casey Pitts, Kristin García, and Andrew Kushner, four former Judge Reinhardt clerks now with the San Francisco law firm Altshuler Berzon, added the following: "While clerking for Judge Reinhardt, we observed on a daily basis how he combined a profound commitment to justice, fairness, and equality with rigorous and uncompromising legal analysis. Judge Reinhardt demonstrated the kind of approach to the law that is desperately needed in confronting threats to the country's most cherished principles, and he took great pride in knowing that his clerks continued to be at the forefront of that fight. Judge Reinhardt was an inspiration, a mentor, and a friend to each of us, and he will be deeply missed."

Judge Reinhardt was also a long-time champion of immigrant rights. As recently as last spring, Reinhardt condemned the immigration policies of the Trump administration, lamenting that "the government forces us to participate in ripping apart a family." JDC agrees that the government's actions lack compassion and are at odds with "the values of this nation and its legal system." JDC continues to fight for due process in removal proceedings and the rights of immigrant families.

BASF and JDC Mourn the Passing of Judge Stephen Reinhardt (continued)

These are just a few examples of the light and leadership Judge Reinhardt provided from the federal bench. BASF and JDC pledge to continue to support the fight for justice for all people. In this fight, we draw strength from Judge Reinhardt's legacy.

Our deepest condolences to Judge Reinhardt's wife Ramona Ripston, his three children and seven grandchildren.

###

The Bar Association of San Francisco (BASF) is a nonprofit voluntary membership organization of attorneys, law students, and legal professionals in the San Francisco Bay Area. Founded in 1872, BASF enjoys the support of more than 7,500 individuals, law firms, corporate legal departments, and law schools. Through its board of directors, its committees, and its volunteer legal services programs and other community efforts, BASF has worked actively to promote and achieve equal justice for all and oppose discrimination in all its forms, including, but not limited to, discrimination based on race, sex, disability, and sexual orientation. BASF provides a collective voice for public advocacy, advances professional growth and education, and attempts to elevate the standards of integrity, honor, and respect in the practice of law.