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Surya Prakash Sinha - In Memory of Our Colleague, Teacher and Friend

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OBITUARY

SURYA PRAKASH SINHA—IN MEMORY OF OUR COLLEAGUE, TEACHER AND FRIEND

Professor Ralph Michael Stein

Retired Professor of Law Surya Prakash Sinha died in late July 2005 after a long struggle against cancer. Joining our faculty in 1979 and teaching until 1996, he was a powerful intellectual eminence at our school and a major, highly regarded scholar in the world of Public International Law.

The first Indian national to become an American law professor, Prakash (as he was known) taught at a number of law schools before coming to Pace as an established scholar specializing in issues of international human rights, especially amnesty. His writings brought him many invitations to critical conferences and for years he was a leader in the Columbia University Seminar on Peace, exploring issues of alternatives to armed conflict based on the rule of law.

On campus Prakash was an invariably smiling active participant whose soft voice did nothing to belay the depth of his belief in civility, scholarly attainment and commitment to effective teaching. As with many colleagues he taught different courses including Torts and International Law, wrote law review articles, spoke at seminars, dealt with the plethora of administrative issues which are part of being tenured. But who else on the faculty also wrote novels, appeared on Carnegie Hall's burnished stage as a sitar player with the great Ravi Shankar, cut CDs of traditional Indian music and – hardly least – hosted wonderful dinner parties for colleagues where he prepared superb Indian cuisine which accompanied always stimulating, exciting discourse?

Prakash and I became close friends and I benefited from his patient lessons in creating terrific Indian dishes. His wife, Jessica, attended our school and became a fine attorney. She now practices in suburban Connecticut. His young daughter, Sonya, was part of the faculty's extended family – she's a successful Manhattan interior designer now.

Prakash's enthusiastic outreach to students motivated him to be the driving force behind creating what is now the Pace International Law Review. We were the initial co-advisors, Prakash sharing his immense knowledge and invaluable contacts in his field with the fledgling staff. He inspired them. Without him the Review might well not have quickly become the respected journal it is today.

Prakash and Jessica enjoyed travel together, actually twice driving from Europe to India, no slight feat. With all his commitments to teaching and scholarship his wife and daughter were always at the center of his life.

The international law community and our school are diminished by the passage of this extraordinary teacher and scholar who richly deserves to be always remembered as, in the traditional use of the word, a gentleman.