



**PETER  
GERHART**

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**REMEMBERING  
A DEVOTED  
LEC COMMUNITY  
MEMBER**

The College grieves the loss of a valued community member. As Case Western Reserve University shared, Peter Gerhart passed away on February 7th from a brain hemorrhage. He served as interim President of Lake Erie College from 2015-2016 and was most recently a member of the College’s board of directors. Gerhart was 75 years-old. He is survived by his wife, Ann, his children and grandchildren.

Gerhart was the John Homer Kapp Professor of Law and held a secondary appointment at the Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western Reserve University. He received his BA from Northwestern University in 1967 and his JD from Columbia University Law School in 1971. He began his career as an associate at the law firm of Weil Gotshal & Manges in New York City before teaching for 11 years and serving as associate dean and interim dean at Ohio State University College of Law.

After a national search, Gerhart joined the Case Western Reserve law school faculty as dean in 1986. He served in that capacity for ten years, until 1996. During his decanal tenure, he played a key role in developing the Frederick K. Cox International Law Center and the Milton A. Kramer Law Clinic. A talented and experienced higher education administrator, he served as the interim president of Lake Erie College from 2015 to 2016.

Gerhart was a noted expert in antitrust and trade regulation and a specialist in international economic law and globalization. He published dozens of law review articles in leading law journals at Duke University School of Law, Vanderbilt University Law School and the University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School, among others.

Most recently, he focused on legal theory. His trilogy of acclaimed books published by Cambridge University Press spanned the legal universe, including Tort Law and Social Morality (2010), Property Law and Social Morality (2014) and Contract Law and Social Morality (publication forthcoming on February 19, 2021). Each book followed the novel approach he developed regarding legal reasoning, making the case that the doctrinal categories used to understand private law have only artificial boundaries.

While service and scholarship played a crucial role in Gerhart’s career, his passion for teaching, especially



first-year law students, stands out as one of his defining characteristics. By his own choice, he taught four different courses in the law school’s first-year curriculum, including torts, contracts and property legislation and regulation—sometimes covering two of them in the same year. Moved by the recent spate of incidents of racial injustice, he devoted part of his fall 2020 sabbatical to designing a course in structural racism and the law.

Dr. Bryan DePoy, who served under Dr. Gerhart, states that “while he served as the interim president for just a year, his genuine kindness and sense of compassion left an imprint on the Lake Erie College community that will never be forgotten. We are a better institution because of his leadership.”