

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

KURT STEINER

(1912-2003)

On October 20, 2003, the Department of Political Science at Stanford University lost a long-time colleague, beloved friend, and a warm, refined, and gentle spirit when Professor Emeritus Kurt Steiner passed away. His life spanned 91 years--with lengthy periods of residence and professional service in three dispersed geographic regions--Western Europe, Asia, and North America. Born in Austria, Kurt Steiner was trained in law at the University of Vienna where he received his JD. Along with thousands of other European refugees, Kurt Steiner fled to the United States with his wife, Josepha, to escape the Nazi conquest of Western and Central Europe.

He joined the United States Army during the Second World War, where he learned the Japanese language and graduated from the U.S. Military Intelligence School. Following Japan's surrender on August 14, 1945, Dr. Steiner served in the Allied Occupation of Japan under General Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers. From 1947 – 49, Dr. Steiner served as a prosecutor at the International Military Tribunals for the Far East.

Based on extensive research and personal experience, Dr. Steiner has written an in-depth history of the Wartime Trials focused on the cases of twenty-five major Japanese leaders who stood accused of committing war crimes. The project was Dr. Steiner's last scholarly undertaking. Among earlier works of scholarship, Local Government in Japan, published by Stanford University Press in 1965, remains on the list of "must read" books for students of Japanese politics.

Dr. Steiner also made use of his legal background in serving as the Chief of Civil Affairs and Civil Liberties in the Allied Occupation. In that role, he worked with Japanese government officials in drafting a bold and idealistic Constitution, adopted in 1947. The postwar Constitution made sweeping new provisions for civil liberties and established the fundamental framework for Japan's postwar democracy and economic development.

For nearly four decades, Professor Steiner taught undergraduates and trained several generations of graduate students at Stanford. He was a wise, supportive, and encouraging mentor to many. His influence extended beyond the lecture halls and seminar rooms. Dr. Kurt Steiner—lawyer, scholar, teacher, and practitioner--will be long remembered and sorely missed by the Stanford and the international academic communities.

Committee:
Daniel Okimoto