

Chester Lizak dies at 85; recalled as honorable, tenacious attorney

By Emma Oxnevad
eoxnevad@lawbulletinmedia.com

Chester A. Lizak, a founding partner at DiMonte & Lizak, died last month at 85.

Lizak, of Glenview, was known for his work in both personal injury matters and defending criminal cases.

He was described by longtime law partner Alan Stefaniak as “competent and honorable,” with a stellar ethical code.

“Anytime we had a partnership meeting and there would be a discussion of something, and if it even hinted of some type of impropriety, Chet spoke up very strongly that we weren’t going to pursue anything along those lines,” he said. “That’s just the way he was. If anything smelled or even gave the hint of not being right, he wouldn’t go near it.”

Stefaniak said that Lizak was always “thoroughly prepared” and “tenacious” in the courtroom, but kept a respectful attitude.

“He would never take advantage of somebody,” he said. “He would advocate and he would argue and he would represent his clients to the utmost of his ability, but he was always a gentleman and ethical about it.”

Stefaniak recounted a story in which a judge advised an attorney to consider settling a case rather than take on Lizak as opposing counsel, saying he “knows the rules of evidence backwards and forwards.”

“I thought to myself, ‘Wow, wouldn’t it be nice if a judge talked about me that way?’” he said. “That’s the kind of lawyer Chet was, and that’s the kind of reputation he had with judges. They knew he was good.”

Lizak received his law degree in 1962 from DePaul University, where he was an editor of the university’s Law Review. His article discussing criminal intent became required reading for students in criminal law classes. He received the Outstanding Service to the Profession Award from DePaul College of Law.

Lizak was also a past chairman of the Chicago Bar Association Defense of Prisoners Committee, former president of The Advocates Society, member of National Advocates Society and the Illinois State Bar Association’s distinguished counselor’s class of 1963.

He retired in 2017. Earlier this year, DiMonte & Lizak merged with Robbins, Salomon & Patt and became Robbins DiMonte.

“Chester worked six days a week in the office,” said Riccardo A. DiMonte, president of Robbins DiMonte and son of founding partner Eugene DiMonte, in a statement. “He also worked on vacations on the back of the

plane or the bus to pass the time during travel. One of the partners joked that the letter 'z' in Chester's last name stood for 'zealous,' which is required for a talented trial and appellate lawyer."

Stefaniak said that Lizak "taught me how to be a lawyer."

"There is one thing you can't learn from reading the book about the practice of law, and that's integrity," he said. "You learn that from being associated with people like Chester Lizak."

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