In Memoriam - Professor Peter M. Kempel
b. March 5, 1945 – d. August 11, 2014

It is the tradition of Western Michigan University’s Thomas M. Cooley Law School to name each entering class after a former justice of the Michigan Supreme Court, the United States’ Supreme Court or other distinguished member of the bar. Today’s entering class is named in honor of Professor Peter M. Kempel.

Growing up in the Detroit area, Professor Peter M. Kempel started his school years going to Christ the King School. He went to high school at Salesian High School run by the Oblates of St. Francis DeSales and then went on to receive a degree in philosophy and political science at the University of Detroit. While at U.of D. he was very active in theatre and was a member of the Players where he met his wife Kathy, whom he married December 31, 1971. He continued his education completing a degree in library science at the University of Michigan and then a Juris Doctorate at the University of Detroit Law School in 1971.

While earning his law degree, Professor Kempel was the law librarian and instructor in Legal Research at the University of Detroit, School of Law, and later a legal assistant in the Law Department of the Michigan Consolidated Gas Company.

After completing his legal studies, he served as a research attorney for the Michigan Court of Appeals and clerked for former Associate Supreme Court Justice Michael D. O’Hara, then sitting on the Court of Appeals.

In 1973, Professor Kempel joined The Thomas M. Cooley Law School and started his long career of 40 years as the director of Library and Research Services. He served as chair of the State Bar Libraries, Legal Research and Publications Committee and as president of Legal Aid of Central Michigan.

A member of the Cooley Legal Authors Society, Professor Kempel taught Legal Research, Family Law, Jurisprudence, Legislation, Legislative Drafting, Contracts, Sales & Negotiable Instruments, Evidence, Trial Practice, Professional Responsibility and Legal Ethics for over 26 years.

Beginning in 1998 he served as a Supervisor and Trustee for Watertown Charter Township in Clinton County.

Professor Kempel died August 11, 2014, at home with his wife Kathy by his side. During their 42 years together Peter and Kathy made many good and true friends. They also shared a love of animals giving a home to dogs, cats, a grouchy parrot and a friendly turtle. From the early '90s to the end of his life Peter and Kathy shared their love of horses and riding with a close community of fellow horse lovers at Fox Brush Farm in DeWitt. Kathy is now sure that he is trail riding his beloved mare Dicey Riley.