

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL REMINGTON

Just as we were finishing Volume 72(1), we heard of Michael (Mike) Remington's passing. This Tribute first appeared at Copyright Alliance and is republished here with permission from the authors.



On March 30, 2025, our friend and colleague **Michael (Mike) Remington** passed away peacefully at his home in Madison, WI, surrounded by his loved ones. **His obituary** was written by his son Christophe.¹ Mike was a true champion for the copyright community, a distinguished figure in intellectual property law, a dedicated husband and father, and a world traveler with a deep appreciation for other cultures.

His career spanned more than four decades, during which time Mike made significant contributions to copyright and intellectual property law, legal reform, government relations, lobbying, and much more. He served as Chief Counsel to the Judiciary Subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives on Intellectual Property and Judicial Administration for nine years, where he played a crucial and long-lasting role. As a partner at Drinker Biddle in Washington, DC, Mike was also the Founding Chair of the firm's Intellectual Property Group.

In addition to his professional achievements, Mike was accomplished in numerous personal endeavors, including painting, photography, cooking, and

¹ Obituary of Michael Remington, <https://www.jsonline.com/obituaries/pwix1146987>

writing. He was a talented golfer, skier, and swimmer, and is said to have had a “great jump shot” on the basketball court.

Over the years, Mike touched so many lives. Below is first his obituary by Christophe Remington are just a few testimonials from some in the copyright and IP community who collectively mourn Mike’s passing and celebrate his life.

MICHAEL REMINGTON’S OBITUARY BY CHRISTOPHE REMINGTON

This was originally published Milwaukee Sentinel, and was written by Christophe Remington, Mike’s son.

Michael J. Remington, a distinguished figure in intellectual property law and a beloved family man, passed away peacefully at his home in Madison, WI, on March 30, 2025, surrounded by his loved ones.

Born on June 5, 1945, in Baraboo, Wisconsin, Mike was the eldest of six children born to Frank and Susan Remington. Over the course of a remarkable career spanning more than four decades, Mike made significant contributions to intellectual property law, legal reform, government relations, and lobbying. He served as Chief Counsel to the Judiciary Subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives on Intellectual Property and Judicial Administration for nine years, where he played a pivotal role in the enactment of over 20 public laws aimed at improving the administration of justice. Among his many accomplishments were several key amendments to patent law.

A partner at Drinker Biddle in Washington, D.C., Mike was also the founding chair of the firm’s Intellectual Property Group. Throughout his career, he worked with a diverse array of clients, from a performing rights organization representing thousands of songwriters and music publishers, to a university foundation involved in technology licensing, individual authors and creators, and an alliance of inventors and start-ups.

In addition to his professional achievements, Mike was affectionately known as a “Renaissance Man” among family and friends. He was celebrated for his talents in painting, photography, cooking, writing, and his deep appreciation for other cultures. Mike’s love for exploration took him around the world, where he made lasting connections in places such as Africa, India, and France, where he became fluent in French. An avid reader, Mike was also a talented golfer, skier, and swimmer.

A proud graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Law School (Order of the Coif), Mike was a former Fulbright Scholar in Paris, France, and a Peace Corps Volunteer in Côte d’Ivoire, where he met his beloved wife, Françoise. Together, they shared 53 years of marriage and raised three children: Cecile (Todd Deutsch), Elise, and Christophe (Elizabeth Remington). Mike’s legacy lives on through his cherished grandchild, Julien.

A funeral mass [was] held at St. Bernard Catholic Church in Middleton, Wisconsin, on April 30, 2025, at 11:00 a.m., with visitation beginning at 10:00

a.m. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made in Mike's memory to The Carter Center, an organization dedicated to advancing peace and health worldwide. Donations can be made online at The Carter Center's donation page or by contacting their Donor Services at (404) 420-5109 or donorservices@cartercenter.org.

Mike Remington's life was marked by a profound commitment to justice, a passion for the arts, and a deep love for his family. His memory will continue to inspire all who knew him.

TRIBUTES TO MIKE

I went to law school to be a civil rights lawyer and discovered copyright, which immediately presented itself as my path. In 1984 as a 2L law student, I reached out to Mike to see if he would talk to me about copyright, technology, and public policy. Not only did he talk to me, but he became my long-time friend and guide. Indeed, Mike is the one who advised me to take the job with RIAA that I was not inclined to accept. It turned into a 30-year adventure. Mike's enthusiasm for copyright, for law, for public policy, and most importantly for the public interest, was truly extraordinary and inspiring. He cared about issues and about people—a combination that remains far too rare. I was so lucky to call him my friend over these many years and will miss him terribly. He made the world better.

— Neil Turkewitz, CEO, Turkewitz Consulting Group

It is difficult to think of an IP-related policy matter over the last several decades where Mike was not right in the middle. As technologies changed and accelerated, he was right there making an impact as the corresponding policy changes were being considered. Mike was an enthusiastic believer in the IP system, as well as someone with deep respect for the institution of Congress. His contributions are profound, and his friends and colleagues will miss him deeply.

— Vincent E. Garlock, Executive Director, American Intellectual Property Law Association (AIPLA)

I had known Mike for many years even before I started at the Copyright Alliance nearly ten years ago. Mike was so knowledgeable and thoughtful on important and complex issues of copyright law and policy that I came to rely on his expertise over the years. Then, when I took over the Copyright Alliance and started an Emeritus Council, I immediately asked Mike if he'd join the Council when he announced his retirement. He even looked the part—with his authoritative white beard and satchel at the ready. There can be no doubt that Mike's expertise and dedication to copyright law and policy left a lasting mark on it and on the copyright community. He played a pivotal role in shaping copyright law and policy through his work with Congress and in private practice. And as a trusted advisor, mentor, and advocate, Mike shaped the evolution and the future of copyright—and we are all the better for it. Mike's passing is a great loss, but

his legacy endures in the countless lives he touched, the laws he helped shape, and the principled example he set for generations to come.

— Keith Kupferschmid, Copyright Alliance CEO

While serving as General Counsel of the Copyright Office, I spent a considerable amount of time consulting with (and being guided by) Mike in the last stages of the General Copyright Revision Program, the sweeping rulemaking and related proceedings that accompanied its implementation, and legislative matters that continued to arise. Then and thereafter as we both entered private practice, I was privileged to enjoy and retain his friendship—including on the basketball court—for many years. Perhaps my most lasting impression of Mike, other than his emphatic devotion to his family, was the deep respect he both carried and instilled in others for the importance, credibility, and earned stature of legislative work, whether as staff, counsel or lobbyist. As a newcomer to Washington, it was a lesson I sorely needed early in my career and one that stayed with me; Mike was a wise, patient, and expert teacher. Plus, he had a great jump shot.

— Jon Baumgarten, former GC, U.S. Copyright Office

Mike Remington was a gifted copyright lawyer and policymaker, serving first as a long-time senior congressional staffer and later in private practice. He was especially known for his expertise negotiating among competing interests to craft bipartisan copyright legislation. He spent 15 years (nine as Chief Counsel) working for the Copyright Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee and its chair Bob Kastenmeier. He arrived at the Judiciary Committee just after enactment of the Copyright Act of 1976 and turned his attention to and was instrumental in the implementation of the “new” Act—both within the legal and copyright creative communities. And he played a critical role assisting the U.S. Copyright Office to staff and overhaul its internal registration processes consistent with the 1976 Act. For the Judiciary Subcommittee he organized hearings and drafted numerous bills and committee reports on seminal pieces of copyright legislation that have had a long-standing impact on U.S. copyright law and policy. This included his work on the U.S.’ accession to the Berne Convention and the Berne Implementation Act of 1988, the Visual Artists Rights Act of 1990, the Architectural Works Protection Act of 1990, and the Copyright Renewal Act of 1992, among many others. He was a strong supporter of creators, producers and users of copyrighted materials, and, along with Chairman Kastenmeier, worked to advocate for strengthening the copyright legal structures from the Hill.

During my tenure at the U.S. Copyright Office, I saw first-hand his advocacy and work strengthening the Office and its mission to improve the registration and recordation systems, as well as his support for the enhancement of the collections of the Library of Congress that resulted from registration. One example of the latter was his work crafting a compromise with the Senate Judiciary Committee regarding Sections 411 and 412 during Berne implementation to, in his view, keep

the registration and deposit system strong for the benefit of the Copyright Office and the Library of Congress. On a personal level, Mike and Chairman Kastenmeier were instrumental in advising and assisting me in my early copyright law career, including helping me to secure my first job at the U.S. Copyright Office, for which I am forever grateful.

— Eric J. Schwartz, Partner, Mitchell Silberberg & Knupp LLP

Mike was a mentor to me over the many years we worked together at Drinker Biddle. He taught me so much about subjects that were unfamiliar when I began my career as a copyright paralegal and then became a lawyer: legislative histories and processes, the complex world of music licensing, and the intricacies of copyright law and intellectual property law more broadly. Mike was a teacher at heart. His dedication to his clients was unwavering, and he made sure that each and every email and document that crossed his desk was as perfect as it could be. But what I most valued from my relationship with Mike was knowing him as a person: his love for his family, for France, for dogs, for literature, for music, for travel, and for lifelong learning. Mike had such a wide range of interests and was always willing to talk about the latest songs he was listening to and the last book he read. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to know and learn from Mike. He will be greatly missed.

— Jennifer T. Criss, Of Counsel, Technology Transactions Group, Orrick

The copyright community lost a tremendous leader and advocate in Mike Remington, just as my firm lost the original leader and inaugural Chair of its predecessor's Intellectual Property Group. Mike was a teacher and mentor to many, [including me], and set the highest of bars for colleagues to follow. Mike was known for his exacting standards, attention to detail, genuine benevolence, selflessness and loyalty, and willingness to stand up for his principles. While we mourn his loss, we remember with gratitude how much he left behind.

— Brian Coleman, Partner, Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath

I had the pleasure of working with Mike over many years. He was always friendly and a valued colleague. We all feel his loss keenly. My condolences to his family.

— Steven Tepp, President & CEO, Sentinel Worldwide

Mike was a pretty special person, and I am grateful to have known him. He was passionate about his clients, especially authors and songwriters, and deeply respectful of the roles of Congress and the Copyright Office. While I was serving as Register, Mike told me many stories about working on the 1976 Copyright Act as a young lawyer, under Chairman Kastenmeier. He would visit his former boss and bring me back advice and support. We have all lost a gentleman advocate in Mike.

— Maria A. Pallante, President and CEO of the Association of American Publishers, and Former Register of Copyrights (2011-2016).

Mike worked for about 25 years at the law firm Drinker Biddle, and I was fortunate to work with him there for 20 of those years. His knowledge of copyright law was deep, and I learned so much from him for which I will always be grateful. In addition to client matters, we wrote articles together and prepared PowerPoints to present internally at the firm, and also for webinars and other programs. Most of our projects were copyright-related, but we also shared an interest in civil rights issues and did a fair amount of pro bono work together. Mike had a big heart and cared about his family and friends as well as his clients. He loved music and loved to experience it live. He invited me and my daughter to accompany him and his family to concerts including at the Birchmere Music Hall in Alexandria. The first time we went there to hear Suzy Boggus, he took us backstage afterwards to meet Suzy. My daughter was so thrilled! We did this a number of times, and it was always fun. Once Suzy invited Mike to join her on stage and he sang with her! My son was also very fond of Mike. On one memorable occasion we all went to a party and Mike introduced my son to Isaac Hayes. Very cool! Mike was a mentor, a colleague and a friend. I will miss him.

— Janet Fries, Of Counsel, Lutzker & Lutzker

Mike and I bonded over many things—including a passion for copyright law, film, music, art, creativity, education, and France. His knowledge of copyright was deep and insightful, and like his Congressional mentor, Congressman Robert Kastenmeier, Mike sought to achieve justice and fairness when addressing the challenges of evolving technologies and real-world issues. Many abiding principles in copyright and IP law are rooted in Mike's thoughts and words. As a public servant and in private practice, Mike epitomized wisdom, compassion and concern for the law that great lawyers hope to realize in their careers. He will be missed.

— Arnie Lutzker, Senior Partner, Lutzker & Lutzker LLP and President/Chairman of the Board, INBLF

I always regarded Mike as a role model, in many ways. I first got to know him when he was Chief Counsel for the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual Property and the Administration of Justice (which was always a

mouthful and fortunately has been renamed many times). In that capacity, he demonstrated how you can craft good policy and legislation on a consensus basis. Mike always listened carefully to all the different points of view presented by the various stakeholders, arriving at reasoned conclusions based on discussions as well as what's right. He had a great relationship with Chairman Kastenmeier, and he always kept him and the Members of the Subcommittee informed, so that he represented not just his own views but those of the Subcommittee. He engaged minority staff and Members so that much of the Subcommittee's output was genuinely bipartisan. I watched Mike do this not only for the copyright legislation I lobbied on, but also for criminal justice and civil rights issues and everything else that came before that Subcommittee. But he wasn't just a first-rate Congressional staffer, he was a first-rate person, a true mensch, treating everybody with respect and kindness. A gentle soul with interests and passions well beyond his professional livelihood. As I said, a role model in many ways, and I will miss him greatly.

— Cary Sherman, former Chairman & CEO, Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA)

I have many fond memories of working with Mike on BMI matters. Mike used to carry a leather satchel that was so beat up and well-traveled it looked like a prop from the movie *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Mike told the story of how he was once flying in a commercial airline over the snowy Himalayan mountains somewhere in Asia and became concerned about the flight, when the pilot of the aircraft left the cockpit and came down the aisle and asked Mike, "Do you know where we are?" Haha. Such was the respect he engendered in people! Mike's courage and ardor for fighting big adversaries on behalf of songwriters were so strong that we privately referred to Mike as "Rembo." On copyright matters, he had the important metaphysical sense of always balancing the equities. A wonderful man.

— Joseph DiMona, former Vice President, Legal Affairs, BMI

In his excellent obituary, Christophe Remington, Mike's son, captured the breadth and depth of his father's many talents and [professional] accomplishments. [So, in the tribute below] let me instead focus on a few of the experiences Mike and I shared as friends and fathers and husbands that will help flesh out Christophe's portrait of his father as a Renaissance Man. Mike and Francoise, his beautiful and accomplished wife, were fun to be around, and their three children were great company for our three daughters. We all spent a lot of time together, and a list of those many shared activities would fill several pages.

So, I will mention a few of the highlights, including tubing down the Monocacy River in Maryland, with the Remington dog Cinder, who turned out to have a deathly fear of water. Mike had to cradle a quivering Cinder in his lap for the entire four-hour tube trip; canoeing down the Shenandoah River, with Mike always taking the lead over the rapids. He was very competitive, and not just on

the basketball court; skiing in West Virginia and Pennsylvania, with Mike leading his family down the most difficult slopes, the Oman family not so much; sailing for three days (on a 40-foot sailboat) down the Chesapeake from Annapolis, then up the Patuxent River, with Christophe still a babe-in-arms, just three months old; motoring down the Potomac in my speedboat with Mike, Christophe, and his French cousin, with a night on the boat anchored off Port Tobacco, Maryland, with Christophe, now almost ten years old, driving the boat for part of the trip, making his father very proud; singing Christmas carols in our shared neighborhood on Capitol Hill, lanterns in hand, and many toasts to the New Year; and crossing the Bay up the Choptank to visit Don and Jenny Sue Dunner at their home in Trappe, Maryland. Even without our families in tow, Mike and I had many joint adventures. We attended Country in the Rockies, a charity fund-raiser at Crested Butte, Colorado, with many Nashville country music celebrities.

We also co-taught a one-week World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) copyright seminar in Colombo, Sri Lanka, with a side trip on our day off to Kandy (the former royal capital in the mountains surrounded by tea plantations), to view the famous religious relic—Buddha’s tooth. And we co-taught copyright at George Mason University’s Antonin Scalia Law School, and co-lectured in Judge Newman’s *The Economics of Intellectual Property* course.

With [so many stories intact], I say goodbye to a good friend and a brilliant colleague. Anne and I were in touch with Mike and Francoise in planning a post-Covid reunion in Florida, but fate intervened, and now all I have are memories.

— Ralph Oman, former Chief Counsel, Senate IP Subcommittee; former U.S. Register of Copyrights