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Liu helped build Chinese relations at John Marshall

Professor, 38, was 'the kind of person you could count on'

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Law Bulletin staff writer

Benjamin P. Liu was known at The John Marshall Law School for his work in IP law, particularly as director of the law school's Chinese Intellectual Property Resource Center.

He was also known as a cheerful presence, a patient adviser, a proud family man and a generous friend.

His generosity was apparent in November 2013 after the law school's Review of Intellectual Property Law Journal symposium. He picked up the tab at a River North restaurant for sake, other drinks and dinner for about a half-dozen students.

"It wasn't cheap," said then-student Adam D. Sussman, now of Seyfarth, Shaw LLP.

"He did it before we even knew. He had just taken care of it."

Liu died Monday of unknown causes. He was 38.

"It was just an incredible shock," said professor William Mock. "He is very bright, very accomplished, had an exciting research agenda and a young family. Hard to believe."

After graduating from Harvard University in 1998 with degrees in biochemistry and cellular biology, Liu spent a year

studying in Japan before earning his J.D. at UCLA School of Law.

At UCLA, he worked as an editor at the law review and spent two years as a research assistant on free speech and human rights issues.

Liu's first job was as an IP associate at Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP in New York, where he worked for four years.

"He was one of the nicest people you could know," said Stroock partner Matthew Siegal. "Very dedicated. Very hard working. The kind of person you could count on."

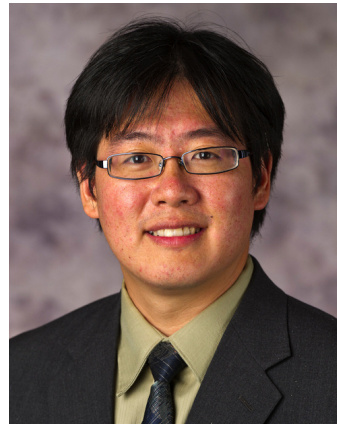
Liu handled both plaintiff and defense work at Stroock. Fluent in Mandarin Chinese, he accompanied Siegal and then-associate Angie Hankins to Hong Kong to help with discovery in a patent infringement case involving Fujifilm.

Siegal and Hankins said Liu and his wife moved to Chicago so that she could take a position at the University of Chicago as an assistant professor in Japanese art history.

"He had a very bright future at Stroock," Siegal said. "There are lots of positions for bright, up-and-coming patent attorneys but not an awful lot for Japanese art history professors."

Starting in January 2010, he spent 1½ years in private practice as a transactional patent attorney before coming to John Marshall in May 2011.

"Ben was a really good teacher," said Dean John E. Corkery. "He was one of three people on our faculty who spoke



Benjamin P. Liu

Chinese. We have lost someone who really had an important skill for us."

In August 2011, John Marshall opened its center for Chinese IP law with Liu as director.

During his three years there, he helped the school build its relationship with China.

He was a guest lecturer at Toulouse Business School in France and this year was named a vice chair of the American Bar Association's International Intellectual Property Rights Committee.

"He was building his credentials in the practicing bar as well as in the international world," Mock said.

Former students recall Liu as a regular source of guidance.

"I'm beginning to get e-mails from some people who took classes from him," Corkery said. "One said, 'I felt like of all the professors I had at John Marshall,

I connected with professor Liu the best. He was a great teacher who cared for his students.' I would echo those sentiments."

Paul Kossof, who earned his J.D. in May and is now doing contract work at Seyfarth while earning an LL.M., spoke with Liu two weeks ago about potentially relocating to China and the impact that would have on Kossof's marriage.

"He told me about his experiences and how (he and his wife) were always trying to combine their professional careers," Kossof said.

"From that conversation and other conversations, I knew that Professor Liu knew how to balance his work life and his family life, and that in many aspects, he put his wife and his children first."

John Marshall professor Shahram Dana was moved by Liu's thoughtfulness when Liu bought a glow-in-the-dark toy dinosaur for Dana's son's second birthday.

"I learned so much from my exchanges with him and grew to value him as not just a colleague at the law school but as a thoughtful and devoted father," Dana said.

Liu is survived by his wife, Chelsea Foxwell, and two children. Services are not yet set.

"We all know that mortality comes to us all," Mock said. "But when it comes out of season, it seems unfair and it shakes people. ... He was a wonderful fellow. It happened much too fast and much too soon."