

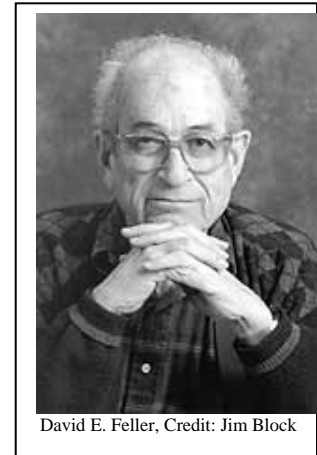
About David Feller...

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Professor emeritus and labor law expert David Feller dies at 86

By Erin Campbell, School of Law (Boalt Hall) | 12 February 2003

BERKELEY – David E. Feller, a renowned labor law expert and professor emeritus of the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law (Boalt Hall), died on Monday, Feb. 10. He was 86.



Feller died at Kaiser Permanente Hospital in Oakland, Calif., where he had been admitted for multiple health problems.

"David Feller was a widely respected labor law scholar and prominent member of the Boalt faculty for more than 35 years," said UC Berkeley law professor Jesse Choper, a former dean of Boalt Hall. "He came to Berkeley following a brilliant, nearly two-decade-long career as one of the nation's preeminent appellate lawyers in this field, arguing a large number of the most important labor law cases decided by the United States Supreme Court at that time."

Feller was born in New York City on Nov. 19, 1916. He received his bachelor's degree and law degree from Harvard University, graduating magna cum laude. While attending law school at Harvard, he served as an editor of its Law Review.

After graduation, he taught at the University of Chicago; served in the U.S. Army, where he earned a Bronze Star; and went on work for the Department of Justice. From 1948 to 1948, he clerked for Chief Justice Fred M. Vinson of the U.S. Supreme Court.

He became a partner in the Washington, D.C., firm of Goldberg, Feller & Bredhoff and served as general counsel for the United Steelworkers and the Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO, as well as for several other unions.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Feller was heavily involved with many cases before the U.S. Supreme Court. He argued a multitude of important labor law cases before the U.S. Supreme Court, including *Vaca v. Sipes* and *Goodall-Sanford, Inc. v. Textile*

Workers. He also participated extensively in National Labor Relations Board proceedings and negotiated collective bargaining agreements for the United Steelworkers and other unions.

Feller participated extensively in civil rights litigation. During the 1950s, he served on an advisory committee of lawyers that assisted Thurgood Marshall, at the time the general counsel for the NAACP, in preparing litigation challenging school segregation. He also wrote or contributed to numerous friend-of-the-court briefs, including *Brown v. Board of Education* and *University of California v. Bakke*.

Feller joined the Boalt Hall faculty in 1967, teaching appellate advocacy and labor law during his 20-year term. He participated in several university committees and boards, including the board of the University of California Retirement System (UCRS), for which he was a board member for more than 15 years. In 1987, he was awarded the prestigious Berkeley Citation in recognition of his extraordinary achievement in the field of labor law and his outstanding service to UC Berkeley.

"David was the consummate wise and seasoned lawyer," said colleague and former Boalt Hall dean Sanford Kadish. "He was a voice for reason and moderation throughout his tenure at Boalt, and his constant pragmatic concern for reasonable accommodation and masterful lawyering skills brought us through many stormy seas in the turbulent '60s and '70s."

Often sought out by the media for his expertise on labor issues, Feller most recently provided commentary for several news outlets on the West Coast port lockout.

Feller is survived by his wife of 55 years, Gilda; younger brother, Oscar, of Palm Desert, Calif.; sons, Fred of Berkeley, Daniel of Albuquerque, New Mexico, Joseph of Phoenix, Ariz., and Jonathan of Mill Valley, Calif.; and four granddaughters.