

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

24-137

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

February 1, 2022

To honor and celebrate the extraordinary life and legacy of Edgar S. Cahn, a visionary lawyer, social justice organizer, legal scholar, and educator, and to declare March 23rd, 2022 as Edgar Cahn Day in the District of Columbia.

WHEREAS, Edgar Stuart Cahn was born on March 23, 1935 and was raised in an activist household, with his father, Edmund Cahn, a prominent legal philosopher and professor at New York University and his mother, Lenore Cahn, a social activist for the sick and elderly, and a founder of Caring Community, a non-profit that provides social services to the elderly;

WHEREAS, Edgar received his undergraduate degree in English literature at Swarthmore College in 1956 and achieved both a master's degree and PhD in the subject at Yale University, continuing his education to earn a law degree from Yale Law School in 1963;

WHEREAS, while at Swarthmore College, Edgar met and fell in love with fellow student Jean Camper, forming a partnership that would eventually spur substantial social, political, and legal change for the benefit of our country's most vulnerable, and they would marry in 1957 in New York, because at the time, interracial marriage was illegal in Jean's home state of Maryland;

WHEREAS, Edgar and Jean, both Yale Law School alumni, in 1963 moved to the District of Columbia, with Jean working as a legal advisor in the Department of State, later transferring to the Office on Economic Opportunity, and Edgar was Special Assistant to and speechwriter for then-Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy;

WHEREAS, dubbed 'the double legal eagles' by Supreme Court Justice Lewis F. Powell Jr., in 1964, Edgar and Jean co-authored an article in the Yale Law Journal entitled, "The War on Poverty: A Civilian Perspective," that outlined the concept of a national program of legal

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services for the poor. The article is cited as the genesis of formalized legal services offices and has become among the most cited articles in the Yale Law Journal's history;

WHEREAS, Edgar joined Jean in the Office of Economic Opportunity where they worked with Sargent Shriver to establish a first of its kind federally funded legal services program that provided legal aid to thousands of low-income Americans. This groundbreaking initiative, the predecessor to the Legal Services Corporation, is widely acknowledged as setting out the blueprint for legal services and to have catalyzed what was then a burgeoning field of public interest law, and internationally the "access to justice" movement reflected in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 16;

WHEREAS, in 1968, Edgar continued his work to combat social inequities through the launch of the Citizen's Advocate Center, which organized the Citizen's Board of Inquiry into Hunger and Malnutrition in America, conducted the hearings and authored the Commission's Report, Hunger, USA, and then initiated the earliest litigation challenging the administration of the food stamp and commodity program which had deferred to Southern states in their refusal to provide emergency aid to black sharecroppers while declaring an emergency to give generous loans to plantation owners, Edgar's litigation ultimately led to reform of the program which had been enacted during the Depression to help the landowners to be remade into an anti-hunger program;

WHEREAS, Edgar next undertook a two-year campaign organizing Native American leaders in an effort that led to ending the official Federal policy of terminating Native American tribes, and with his book, Our Brother's Keeper: The Indian in White America, a classic indictment of America's treatment of Native Americans, ultimately lead to enactment of Public Law 93-638, the American Indian Self Determination Act;

WHEREAS, together, Edgar and Jean founded the Antioch School of Law in Washington in 1971, the country's first public interest law school, where they would serve as co-deans through 1980. The School's admission philosophy challenged primary reliance on the LSAT as a predictor of lawyering competence, and the teaching provided at Antioch through its teaching law firm was experiential as well as Socratic, geared towards poverty law and based on 'hands on' approaches to the legal profession. All first year law students were required to live- in the homes of client families in the District for the first six weeks. They then became legal advocates, technicians and paralegals in the Urban Law Institute, the school's "teaching law firm." There, they assisted in filing lawsuits on behalf of the poor, and in one year these lawsuits numbered over 1,000. Based on the principle of using clinical training as a mode of education and service to the community, during its operations, the school handled more than 10,000 public interest cases, graduated over 1,500 public interest lawyers, and trained roughly 450 paralegals;

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WHEREAS, Edgar and Jean joined with students, alumni and faculty of Antioch School of Law along with local legal and civic leaders in a successful grassroots campaign to retain the Antioch School of Law's mission, curriculum, clinical programs, and personnel for the benefit of the City by persuading the Council of the District of Columbia in 1986 to pass legislation that re-established the school as the District of Columbia School of Law (DCSL), later named the David A. Clarke School of Law at the University of the District of Columbia;

WHEREAS, after Jean's death in 1991, Edgar joined the faculty of DCSL, as Distinguished Professor of Law, introducing the students of every entering class to the School's unique mission through his orientation course, Law & Justice, until 2 years before his passing on January 23rd, 2022;

WHEREAS, in 1980, at the end of the Cahns' tenure with Antioch, Edgar began developing a strategy to empower the poor by developing a new kind of tax-exempt currency initially called "service credits" later renamed "Time Dollars," and in 1991 he co-authored with Jonathan Rowe, Time Dollars, and in 1995 founded the Time Dollar Institute (now TimeBanks.Org) to promote and spread what has become known as timebanking;

WHEREAS, this new form of currency viewed human worth and time as our most valuable resource, and provided a system for community members to provide and receive services from one another thereby helping individuals and communities build community resilience and overcome the debilitating effects of isolation;

WHEREAS, Edgar's work on Timebanking also led to his development of a far-reaching theory of systems change he called "Co-Production" that he offered as a new paradigm for human services, its theory and implications set forth in his book, "No More Throw Away People" on which he collaborated with Chris Gray;

WHEREAS, Edgar and Christine, who were married in 2000, worked tirelessly until the time of Edgar's death to spread timebanking and co-production and to spur a global movement which is now celebrated on International TimeBanking Day each year on Edgar's birthday;

WHEREAS, the recipient of numerous accolades throughout his career, Edgar was honored with the Association of American Law School's William Pincus Clinical Award for 'Outstanding Contributions to Clinical Legal Education' and the National Legal Aid and Defender Association's Charles Dorsey Award for extraordinary and dedicated service to the equal justice community and to organizations that promote expanding and improving access to justice for low-income people;

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WHEREAS, Edgar also served as a Visiting Scholar at Columbia University's Center for the Study of Human Rights, a Senior Research Fellow at the Southeast Florida Center on Aging at Florida International University, and Distinguished Visiting Scholar at the London School of Economics; and

WHEREAS, Edgar leaves behind an incredible legacy of fighting for systemic justice and valuing human worth and human potential above all else. He was a visionary in new strategies in alleviating poverty and empowering others, a pioneer in clinical education, a beloved Ward 3 neighbor, and a dear friend. Edgar was a lifelong servant leader with an unwavering focus on helping the most vulnerable among us; he was equally beloved for his kindness, and he will be greatly missed.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the "Edgar S. Cahn Legacy Recognition Resolution of 2022."

Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia celebrates the extraordinary life of Edgar Stuart Cahn and shares heartfelt condolences to Christine, his children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and the UDC Law community. In recognition of his outstanding service, March 23rd, 2022 is declared to be Edgar Cahn Day in the District of Columbia.

Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately.