

IN MEMORIAM*

LOUIS SOHN—by Peter Trooboff†

Imagine walking into Professor Louis Sohn's overflowing office and asking him, "How can I possibly memorialize you in a minute or so?" I suspect that Louie would have looked up from behind that giant desk, given that impish smile, and said with that characteristic little shrug, "It's okay—I guess you will have to omit a little."

In the pages of this *Journal*, at a wonderful Law of the Sea program in his honor and memory at the George Washington University Law School, and elsewhere, many have told the story of a remarkable young Polish student, Ludwig Bruno Sohn, who found his way to Cambridge on the eve of World War II when he already spoke eight languages and had published articles in many of them. These accounts record how Louie became Judge Manley Hudson's research assistant and aide and participated in the San Francisco Conference. They speak of his decades of writing and enormous contribution to international law in a productive life of scholarship, teaching, and mentoring.

Louie served this Society faithfully in many ways—most notably as its president from 1988 to 1990. In a moment that would have made his own mentor proud, he received in 1996 the Society's highest honor, the Manley O. Hudson medal. After I was nominated to fill his shoes, Louis would sometimes telephone, with frustration in his voice: There was so much he wanted to accomplish, there was too little time. In the end, he paid me the great honor of asking, "Please promise to finish up what I started." In the hardest days of my presidency, I was sustained by that commitment to Louie.

So following the advice that I expect Louie would have given me, I have left out much—too much—and I ask that you forgive me. None of us will ever forget what Louie taught us—to be brave and optimistic, to think big, to work hard, to keep our feet on the ground like the giraffe to which he always referred, and never to give up. His legacy lives on as we continue to emulate his efforts in this organization and elsewhere to establish and maintain "international relations on the basis of law and justice."

* For a more complete tribute, see Judge Thomas Buergenthal's moving reflection on Professor Sohn's life, at 100 *AJIL* 623 (2006).

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