
Karlheinz Quack, Former Leader of Firm's German Practice, Dies at 80

2006-12-10

Karlheinz Quack, one of Germany's most distinguished lawyers and the founder of the practice that later became the core of WilmerHale's Berlin office, died on Sunday, December 10, 2006, at age 80, at his home in Berlin.

After having studied law at the Humboldt University in Berlin, Karlheinz Quack began his career at the law office of Dr. Reinholz in Berlin in 1954. Only shortly after joining Dr. Reinholz, he devoted all his efforts to expanding the small local firm, and led the firm—called Quack, Kühn & Partner—to nationwide esteem. In 1989, Mr. Quack joined forces with three other law firms to become Gaedertz Vieregge Quack Kreile. For over ten years, the merged firm was one of the leading players in the German legal market. In 2001, Mr. Quack and his team in Berlin merged with Wilmer Cutler Pickering.

Mr. Quack's practice spread across a rare breadth of legal areas—including corporate, intellectual property and antitrust. His admission to the bar in the 1950s coincided with the adoption of the German Antitrust Code. With the then newly established Federal Cartel Office located in Berlin, Mr. Quack helped shape German antitrust law and practice during the next 50 years. He frequently litigated leading cases before the German Supreme Court and the European Court of Justice.

Mr. Quack was deeply involved in academic life, both in Berlin and beyond. He taught corporate and antitrust law at the Free University of Berlin, and soon after the wall came down, returned to Humboldt University where he played a very active role in rebuilding its Faculty of Law. In 2001, Humboldt University honored his contributions to academic life with an Honorary Doctorate.

Mr. Quack also made many major contributions to the profession in Germany as a passionate advocate of freedom and law. From 1971 to 1981, he served as President of the Berlin Bar. Subsequently, he was appointed Judge at the German Supreme Court's Chamber for the Legal Profession, a position he held until 1990. Mr. Quack served as the third President of the German Association for Intellectual Property Rights and Copyright (GRUR) from 1981 to 1992. For his commitment to public service, Berlin awarded him its highest honor, the Ernst-Reuter-Medaille.

Karlheinz Quack is survived by his wife, Elisabeth, and two sons—WilmerHale Partner Ulrich Quack

and Andreas Quack—their wives and three grandchildren.