

Carl Quimby Christol (1913-2012)



Carl Quimby Christol, who pioneered the field of international space law, died of natural causes at his home in Santa Barbara, California on 22 February 2012 at the age of 98.

Christol was a member of the faculty of the University of Southern California from 1949 to 1987 and authored numerous academic texts including “The International Law of Outer Space” which became the primer for the field of law that evolved with man’s foray into space.

He served for six years as the chair of the Department of Political Science. His research and writing focused on international space law, international law, U. S. constitutional law, American foreign policy, security issues resulting from terrorism, and human rights.

Christol was a retired Army Colonel and a recipient of the Bronze Star. He served in the Infantry between 1941-1946 including at the Battle of the Bulge in Germany and making initial contact with Russian Forces east of the Elbe River in 1945.

His World War II experiences in Germany resulted in a lifetime interest in human rights. He developed a course at USC titled “The Politics of Peace—Human Rights,” which he taught for many years. This was the first course devoted to this subject area taught at the undergraduate level at a major American university. In 1968 and again in 1987 he organized conferences hosted by USC and co-sponsored by the American Society of International Law and Los Angeles legal organizations titled “A Quest for Human Rights,” and “Human Rights and Terrorism.”

Christol was born in 1913 on the farm homesteaded by his grandparents in what had been Dakota Territory at the time of homesteading. He grew up in

Vermillion, South Dakota, and graduated in 1934 from the University of South Dakota where his father was a history professor. Christol received his PhD degree from the University of Chicago in 1940 and studied at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in Massachusetts, followed by a year at the University of Geneva and the Institute of Higher International Studies.

He earned a law degree from Yale Law School where he studied from 1940-1941 and from 1946-1947; his studies at Yale were interrupted by his service in the infantry during World War II. In the summer of 1950 he attended the Academy of International Law at The Hague. During the summer of 1980 he was a scholar in residence at the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Conference and Study Center.

His first book on international space law resulted from his holding the Stockton Chair of International Law at the U. S. Naval War College in 1962-1963. Four subsequent books in the field resulted in awards from Phi Kappa Phi, the International Academy of Astronautics to which he was elected in 1984, and the International Institute of Space Law, where he was the president of the American Branch, 1973-1975. He received the Institute's Life Time Achievement Award in 1998. He authored eight books, including a political science text with USC colleagues which ran to four editions. He also wrote many chapters in books edited by other scholars and over 100 journal articles, many of which appeared in foreign professional publications.

His early specialization in international space law resulted in teaching assignments at the University of Technology, Sydney, Australia, McGill University in Montreal, Canada, three universities in Beijing, China, universities and institutes in Tokyo, Japan, the University of Korea in Seoul, with governmental military and foreign policy officials in Bangkok, Thailand and the University of Uruguay and Catholic University in Montevideo. He was a guest lecturer at the United Nations University Conference on arms control and disarmament at The Hague in 1984. He was an honorary member of space law organizations in Japan and in Uruguay. He chaired the Space Law Committee of the American Branch of the International Law Association and served on the Space Law Committee of the International Law Association (London). He was the chair of the International Law Committee of the American Studies Association in the 1970s.

He was the founding chair in 1950 of the Los Angeles County Bar Association Committee on International Law, which now is one of the largest and most active of the Association's sections. He also served during the 1950s as the Chair of the American Bar Association's Space Law Committee. Professor Christol has been a member of the Board of Editors of The Western Political Quarterly, the Australian Journal of International Law, Space Policy (London), and a contributing editor of International Legal Materials, a publication of the American Society of International Law. He was a member of the American Society of International Law Executive Committee in the 1970s. In 2010 he was elected to the Board of the London Institute of Space Policy and Law.

From 1970 to 1975 he was a member of the U. S. Department of State's Advisory Committee on International Law.

As a member of the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace he became an observer at the United Nations law of the sea conferences in Geneva during the early 1970s. He became acquainted with Ambassador Arvid Pardo of Malta who became a world figure as a result of his "Common Heritage of Mankind" proposal for the ocean. When Ambassador Pardo's official status later ended with a change of government in Malta, Professor Christol was able to obtain an appointment for him on the faculty of USC. Together they offered a graduate seminar in which Ambassador Pardo took the lead on ocean subjects and Professor Christol on outer space.

In the 1960s and 1970s he participated in Pacem in Terris and Pacem in Maribus conferences held in Switzerland, Algeria, Malta, and Japan. They were conducted by the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions and associated organizations located in Santa Barbara. During the 1970s and 1980s he was a Vice President of the Court of Man Foundation. On its behalf he met with many influential lawyers and judges in the United States, Europe, and Africa seeking their support for the concept of "The Court of Man," a non-governmental tribunal designed to engage in prosecutions of governmental officials for violations of basic Human Rights.

As a faculty member at USC he was highly respected by his students for his academic integrity and his absolute commitment to their intellectual growth and wellbeing. He was the recipient of numerous student and faculty awards for excellence and innovation in teaching. For over 25 years he was the faculty advisor for Blackstonians, the undergraduate honorary scholastic pre-

law society. His former students have achieved notable successes in the professions of law and teaching and in business and politics, both in the United States and abroad, including members of Congress, sub-cabinet officials, the Speaker of the California Assembly, and a Foreign Minister of Thailand. He had a great memory for names and faces and was able to identify many former students many years after graduation by their names.

Following his retirement in 1987 from USC he was invited by the University's Emeriti College to deliver the 2002 Borchard Foundation lecture on "International Law and U. S. Foreign Policy." This led to a book on the subject in 2004 with a second revised edition in 2006. In 2009 his "The American Challenge: Terrorism, Detainees, Treaties, and Torture: The American Rule of Law, 2001-2008" was published. It focused on America's legal and military difficulties during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the vastly different appraisals of these situations, and the prospect that the United States might regain its reputation as a supporter of the world rule of law.

After moving to Santa Barbara in 2004, he renewed his interest in the work of the United Nations Association of the United States (having served as president of the Los Angeles organization in the 1970s). His interest in arms control and disarmament resulted in his appointment as chair of the committee dealing with anti-personnel land mines and cluster bombs. This resulted in a cooperative political involvement with community leaders on the subject and subsequent communications with the White House and congressional leaders. These efforts were designed to secure the signing and ratification by the United States of the two current international agreements outlawing anti-personnel land mines and cluster bombs.

Dr. Christol was predeceased by his wife, Jeannette, of over 50 years, in 2000 and by his son, Richard, in 1983. He is survived by his daughter, Susan, her husband, Jim Deacon, and by grandsons, Dekker C. Deacon and Kyle Q. Deacon of Goleta, California.

Memorial gifts honoring Professor Christol's father, may be made to the "Carl Christol History Award," University of South Dakota Foundation, Vermillion, S. D., 57069 to support scholarships for undergraduate students. A memorial service is planned in March in Santa Barbara.