



Attorney Kendall L. Manock was a 'Renaissance Man'

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By John Ellis / The Fresno Bee

Fresno attorney Kendall L. Manock, a civic leader and nationally known expert on agricultural marketing orders, died Thursday following a brief illness.

Mr. Manock, 80, was a longtime partner of one of Fresno's signature law firms, Baker Manock & Jensen, and served in many legal capacities and represented a broad range of clients during a legal career that spanned more than 50 years.

For all that, he also had interests broad and varied outside of the legal world.

"Before you even talk about his skills as a lawyer, he was Renaissance man," said U.S. District Judge Oliver W. Wanger. "He had interest in the arts, literature, history, opera, theater."

Mr. Manock also was a longtime board member of Community Medical Centers. He was instrumental in founding the Fresno Heart Hospital, a Community joint venture with physicians that opened in 2003, and the expansion of the Henry Madden Library at California State University, Fresno.

In addition, Mr. Manock helped create and was a member of the original board of directors of the Fresno Regional Foundation, Fresno's community foundation.

Mr. Manock was born in Hanford in 1930, and his family moved to Fresno when he was a young child.

After attending Fresno High School and Fresno State College, he studied law at the University of California at Berkeley's Boalt Hall, graduating in 1954.

After a stint in the U.S. Army, Mr. Manock returned to Fresno to begin his legal practice.

He eventually served as the first law clerk to Gilbert H. Jertberg, a judge of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

In 1959, Mr. Manock became an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of California in San Francisco, and in 1960, after returning to Fresno, formed a partnership with John H. Baker that would later become today's Baker Manock & Jensen.

Mr. Manock made a name for himself representing the California Table Grape Commission and other grower cooperatives, fighting attempts to dismantle them. He defended federal and state agricultural marketing orders and the commissions that sought to promote their products.

Barry Kriebel, president of Sun-Maid Growers, a Kingsburg-based raisin cooperative, said Mr. Manock's reputation went well beyond agriculture marketing orders to reclamation water law.

Kriebel knew Mr. Manock for 35 years, including a time when his firm was not the powerhouse it is today.

"He really built Baker Manock & Jensen into the premier business and agriculture law firm in the Central Valley," Kriebel said, "from tax to water to cooperatives and marketing orders to estate planning."

**KENDALL L. MANOCK
(1930 – 2010)
By George L. Strasser**

Ken Manock loved the practice of law. The people who worked for Ken, loved him.

Ken would speak fondly of his days at Boalt Hall, where he was a member of the graduating class of 1954, and he joked about learning that he passed the bar while on duty in the Army in Germany. In 1956, after serving in the Army, Ken returned to Fresno. When Gilbert H. Jertberg was appointed to the Ninth Circuit, Ken was asked to be his first clerk. After working a year as an Assistant US Attorney, Ken joined his friend Jack Baker at the Avery, Meux & Gallagher firm in 1960.

Ken Manock and Jack Baker then made their mark on an old Fresno firm that traced its roots to the turn of the previous century. They were young, exceptionally bright, and they brought significant growth to the firm. Ken became a nationally recognized expert on agricultural marketing orders and the taxation of agricultural cooperatives. In the 70's, the firm of Meux, Gallagher, Baker & Manock evolved, with the addition of Doug Jensen, into the Baker, Manock & Jensen firm that has continued with the same name for over 35 years. The work load increased and the firm took off, adding new lawyers whose careers matured under Ken and Jack's watchful eyes.

Ken Manock was the firm's managing partner for decades, a job not unlike that of the captain of a huge ship. He was aware of every aspect of the firm's business, but he steered the ship with a gentle hand, a nudge here, a push there, governing for the most part by consensus. If seas got a little rough, people would look to Ken for strength and assurance. And when things got stormy, as they sometimes do in the practice of law, Ken was always there to calm people down, and to give focus and perspective. "It all works out," he would say. And he was invariably correct.

Ken mentored several generations of attorneys at Baker, Manock & Jensen. He taught hard work and keen analysis by example, and he was willing and able to talk out a difficult legal problem in any subject. He was a genius at tearing a legal problem, or a statute, or a case, into its parts, and then putting it back together in a way that would advance his clients' interests.

It is said that the greatest and most successful leaders of law firms are those who do not demand for themselves everything they could, in fairness, demand. Ken was like that – he was generous with his time, generous with his community, generous with his clients, and very generous with the non-lawyer staff whose contribution to the firm he would be the first to acknowledge. He and Jack Baker were proud to have implemented an exceptionally generous retirement plan that benefitted non-attorney employees. If an attorney had a health problem, Ken would make it his concern, he would make a point to visit the attorney in the hospital, and he would again remind everyone that, "It all works out."

Ken was a voracious reader, and he loved history, opera, current events, and politics. He had an encyclopedic command of facts, and was a brilliant conversationalist. In his later years, Ken allowed himself more time for travel with Doris, his loving wife of more than 50 years, and together they journeyed throughout the world. Yet, he never stopped practicing law. He was clearly thrilled when his son, Charlie Manock, joined the firm. And he would speak affectionately of his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchild.

The stories that Ken's friends at BM&J tell about him could fill a book. In the end, however, we are each left with an overwhelming sense of gratitude. All of us were honored to have known him. Our careers would not have been the same, were it not for Ken Manock's love of the practice of law.

George L. Strasser has worked at Baker, Manock & Jensen since 1975.