



A Message from the Editors

This issue of the *Journal of Law and Political Economy* is dedicated to the memory of Lauren Edelman, who died in February of this year.

A beloved faculty member at Berkeley Law and a treasured member of our Advisory Board, Professor Edelman was renowned for her empirical scholarship on civil rights and the workplace, which explained in rich detail how organizations steer equality-focused legal mandates toward their own bureaucratic needs. In addition to her pathbreaking research, Edelman played a key role in developing and promoting the field of sociolegal studies. She helped found the American Sociological Association's Sociology of Law section; she served as president of the Law and Society Association (LSA); and she was a board member of the American Bar Foundation.

In her 2004 LSA presidential address, Edelman called for more research by Law and Society scholars on economic activity, by which she meant not only phenomena conventionally understood as “economic” (such as markets, antitrust, bankruptcy, and employment), but also phenomena that at first glance seem outside the scope of economic activity (such as jury behavior, compliance, and legal consciousness) (Edelman 2004, 184). Edelman argued that such Law and Society research would “call attention to the *social, political, and legal construction of rational economic behavior* and to the *economic construction of law*” (ibid., emphasis in original). From a sociolegal perspective, she suggested, foundational Law and Economics concepts such as “rationality” and “preferences” would be understood as socially produced: “governed by culturally ingrained practices as well as, and sometimes instead of, preference maximization” (192). In accord with the institutional economists of the early twentieth century and the Law and Political Economy movement that had just begun to coalesce, Edelman emphasized the role of power in law and economic activity—arguing, for example, that legality and rationality are “forms of hegemony that tend to legitimate the interests of economically powerful groups” (190). Edelman’s interest in the cultural and political underpinnings of market activity, as well the role of legality in producing them, made her an ideal fit with the mission of *JLPE*.

We are deeply sorry to lose her.

The Editors

REFERENCES

Edelman, Lauren. 2004. “Rivers of Law and Contested Terrain: A Law and Society Approach to Economic Rationality.” 38 *Law & Society Review* 181.