

## The Hun School of Princeton

# The Hun School is Saddened by the Loss of Michael Maggio '66, Distinguished Alumnus

**Posted February 11**

Michael A. Maggio, Esquire, 60, of Washington DC, a world-renowned immigration attorney, died Sunday February 10th at his home surrounded by his family. Michael battled non-Hodgkin's lymphoma courageously and consistently for ten months.

Michael was the Chairman and co-founder of Maggio & Kattar ([www.maggio-kattar.com](http://www.maggio-kattar.com)), a DC-based boutique immigration law firm which began on Columbia Road in a one room office in 1978. Located today on Dupont Circle the firm now employs over 30 immigration professionals representing individual foreign nationals and a select group of Fortune 500 and other companies as well as non-profits, universities and diverse institutions across the nation and around the world.

"He was a brilliant legal mind who not only interpreted the law without peer, but he recognized also that justice could only be served by changing it. His life embodied that commitment to change," said friend and colleague José Pertierra who would battle Michael frequently on the tennis court. "He played tennis in the same manner he practiced law. He fought like a tiger for every point. Although we must admit, he was a more talented lawyer than tennis player," joked Pertierra.

Michael was a nationally recognized authority on numerous complex areas of immigration law. Michael had been named "Washington's best immigration lawyer" by The Washingtonian magazine, and listed in The Best Lawyers in America and International Who's Who of Business Immigration Lawyers. He practiced immigration law passionately since 1978.

Michael was involved in many high-profile immigration related matters during his illustrious career including the landmark human rights case *Filartiga v. Pena*. The case was one of the first where principles of international human rights law were used to find justice in U.S. domestic court. Michael was a key part of the legal team that advised the father of Elián González in 2001. Many doubted that Juan Miguel would be successful in his efforts to rescue the little Cuban boy from his Miami relatives, but Michael was confident that law and justice were clear: that single fathers have a right to choose where they want to live with their children. He said at the time, "The rights of poor fathers trump the perceived rights of wealthier distant relatives."

The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, AILA, and the National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild honored Michael on October 26, 2004, "for his courageous and visionary work in defending immigrant rights and, in so doing, strengthening the Constitutional rights of all U.S. residents and citizens." Michael, an author of numerous publications also received the Tahirih Justice Center's 2002 Pushing the Envelope award "for his pioneering legal work and generous support of immigrants." At the U.S. House of Representatives on April 5, 2001, Michael received the National Coalition to Protect Political Freedom's Constitutional Rights Award "In Recognition Of His Outstanding Legal Service, Commitment to Due Process, And Resolute Stand Against The Use Of Secret Evidence."

As a past President of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) District of Columbia Chapter Michael appeared before the United States Supreme Court in 2007 on behalf of the organization. Michael was active in numerous other immigrant rights organizations, including the National Lawyers Guild Immigration Project and the Tahirih Justice Center. Michael had served as an Adjunct Professor of immigration law at numerous law schools, and he worked as a lobbyist on Capitol Hill before becoming an attorney.

Michael strived to integrate his political work and legal practice. During the 1970's and early eighties, he was active on opposing US intervention in Chile, El Salvador and Guatemala and represented many refugees from those countries seeking asylum in the United States. Michael was very active in representing Iranians opposed to US policies as well as Nicaraguans opposing US intervention.

Born on March 21, 1947, Michael was the oldest son of Peter and Michelina Maggio of the East Falls section of Philadelphia. Michael attended Chestnut Hill Academy and later the Hun School of Princeton receiving honors of distinction from both schools in the last five years as an alumnus. After attending Georgetown University Michael graduated from Temple University in 1971 leading many politically charged protests on and off campus. After spending the later part of the 1960's living in Berkeley California, Michael graduated from the Antioch School of Law in 1978.

While teaching an immigration law class at Antioch, Michael met and fell in love with his student Candace Kattar. They wed in 1982 and recently celebrated 26 years of marriage. Michael and Candace traveled the world together. While they always resided in Washington they maintained homes together in Miami Beach and Culpepper, Virginia where they had a farm.

"My Uncle Michael was a father to me. As a child I would spend summers working for him in awe." recalls Michael's nephew Peter "Jamie" Maggio of Gladwyne, PA. "I accompanied him on a cab ride to court one day and the driver refused payment as he excitedly told Michael that he was the reason that the driver and his family were able to live and work in America as citizens. That is when I began to comprehend his impact on humanity."

In addition to his loving wife, Michael is survived by his beloved mother Dr. Lena Maggio, brother Peter Victor, his adoring nephew Peter "Jamie" Maggio, nieces Fallon Maggio and Jennifer Maggio, his "grandson" Jake Maggio and seven Godchildren.

Two services will be held for Michael. A Mass will be held at Saint Bridget's Parish at 3667 Midvale Avenue, Philadelphia on Thursday February 14th at 11am and a memorial service will be held in his honor on Saturday March 8th

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