

Author of Famed Law Review Note Dies

From [Legal Blog Watch](#):

William S. Stevens, a Pennsylvania lawyer who died last week at the age of 60, will forever be remembered for the anonymous law review note he published as a law student at the University of Pennsylvania in 1975. ... "The Common Law Origins of the Infield Fly Rule" was a slightly tongue-in-cheek inquiry into whether the rule of baseball was shaped by the same influences that shaped the common law.

Stevens' [obituary](#) in The New York Times called the note "one of the most celebrated and imitated analyses in American legal history..." The note quickly achieved legal fame, the Times said, in part because nothing like it had appeared before in a major law review and in part because its reasoning was so elegant and concise.

After his publication of the note and graduation from law school, Stevens went on to practice with several law firms in Philadelphia. In 1990, he became an assistant director of the American Law Institute. He retired in September but had taken a one-year post this year as acting director of the Alaska Bar Association's CLE program.

In his memory, the law review this week [posted his famed note to the Web \[PDF\]](#).