

# Introduction

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On April 16, 2018, the Cornell Law School community lost one of its brightest stars, Professor Lynn Stout.

Lynn Stout was a brilliant thinker whose extensive body of work possesses that rare blend of in-depth knowledge, thorough and thoughtful analysis, eloquent and agile acuity, and more importantly—the quality of all great “greats”—unique paradigmatic thinking that questions anything and everything. As a scholar of corporate law and governance, she is widely known for debunking the orthodox notion of “shareholder value” as the be-all and end-all of business corporations. Lynn’s successful critique of the “shareholder value” myth was grounded in a broader understanding of human action as driven not solely by economic self-interest but reflective of a far more complex interplay of deeply prosocial motives and preferences. What made Lynn’s approach particularly effective was an incredible ability to embed her characteristically precise legal arguments in a richly conceptual framework informed by social science research. And all of that was lit from inside by her ultimate love of humanity and unwavering faith in its potential.

Lynn Stout will always be remembered as one of the greatest scholars and social engineers of our generation. But to all of us, her colleagues and friends here at Cornell (and well beyond), she was much more than that. Lynn was part of our loving family, a caring member of our community. She was a mentor to anyone who wanted to develop themselves. She was compassionate and deeply spiritual, and—in her own way and through her own strengths—she devoted her life to making this world a better place. Lynn was a fighter who believed that, by creating socially responsible corporate governance mechanisms that protect all of our long-term interests, we can reclaim the ingenious human invention—the corporate form—for

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the common good. Her life's work is not finished: it is now up to all of us to continue on that noble path.