

## Edward Wesemann: 1946 – 2016

Featured in the September 2016 edition of the [Edge International Communiqué](#)

By Edge International



Ed Wesemann

It is with deep sorrow that Edge International acknowledges the death of our longtime partner and friend Ed Wesemann. Ed died peacefully at his home in Savannah, Georgia on August 1, 2016.

Those who worked with Ed mourn the loss not only of an esteemed colleague and friend, but an essential contributor to the knowledge that made Edge International a respected, leading legal consultancy around the world. Says founding principal Gerry Riskin of Canada and Anguilla, “For many years, as Edge’s focus on strategy for global firms became our hallmark, Ed has been our ‘man on the mountain’ from whom wisdom was always available — wisdom that always stood the test of time. Ed was a mentor and a leader at Edge, and many of our achievements have been accomplished thanks to him. On a personal level, I am bereft. It’s unimaginable not to be able to pick up the phone and talk things over with Ed.”

Adds U.K. principal Nick Jarrett-Kerr, “I have worked with many extremely clever people throughout my career, lawyers and consultants whom I have admired and respected. Ed is right at the top of the list! There was a great deal about Ed to love and respect: his deep knowledge of the legal profession, his ability to command respect every time he opened his mouth, his intuition, his humility, his respect for others, and the pithy phrases that distinguish his many articles – all of which were well worth reading. But above all, I will always value his friendship that transcended the long distance between us and enabled us – every time we spoke – to continue where we had last left off. This was a man I truly loved.”

Ed Wesemann was considered a leading global expert on law firm strategy and culture, particularly issues involving market dominance, governance, merger and acquisition, and the activities related to strategy implementation. As well as in the U.S., he worked with law firms in the U.K., Europe, Africa, China, Australia, New Zealand, South America, Canada and Mexico. Sean Larkan – longtime Edge principal based in Australia – explains in part why Ed’s work was so widely admired: “Ed helped to engender a genuine culture of caring for and about clients. What strikes one is how well he is remembered from past trips and assignments, and how fondly by those who met him. As a result, he created a wonderful atmosphere around the Edge brand.”

*“Ed’s passing hits hard for all of us. His legacy, however, is remarkable and worthy of celebration. His skill with clients, his deep knowledge of his market and his contribution to colleagues are just a few things I will remember every time I take on an engagement.” – David Cruickshank, Edge principal, New York City and San Diego*

Atlanta-based Edge principal Mike White also admired Ed Wesemann's work with clients. He says, "Ed had a remarkable ability to synthesize seemingly irreconcilable inputs and ideas, derive trends, and deliver insights more efficiently than any consulting professional I've ever been around. The legion firm leaders who relied on Ed habitually went to him for unfiltered direction ('Just tell us what to do!'), and Ed always delivered. His clients ended up implementing Ed's recommendations with noteworthy conviction and confidence." Nick Jarrett-Kerr echoes that statement, saying "He had a unique incisive diagnostic ability to get straight to the heart of every issue and immediately to be able to frame options that might solve the problem."

Ed held a Masters of Public Administration degree with Honors from Roosevelt University and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Valparaiso University. He served on the adjunct faculties of a number of law and graduate schools of business including the Case Western Reserve School of Law, the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, the Carnegie Mellon School of Public Affairs and the Gordon Institute of Graduate Business School of the University of Pretoria, South Africa.

Long-time Edge International principal Jordan Furlong, now at [Law21.ca](http://Law21.ca), says, "It's hard to know what would be the best single word to describe Ed Wesemann. 'Professional' would certainly be appropriate, reflecting the world-class expertise, loyalty and dedication with which he constantly helped achieve the best interests of his law firm clients. 'Leader' would also be fitting, as anyone could attest who saw him easily command the attention and respect of high-powered lawyers and consultants, and help direct them towards their optimal outcomes. But I think that as a naturalized Southerner, Ed might appreciate no description more than 'gentleman' – a word that goes only some way towards expressing his extraordinary generosity, his gracious hospitality, and his stalwart friendship. We will not see his like again, and we are immeasurably poorer for his loss."

Bithika Anand, Edge principal based in Delhi, India, remembers the warm reception she received from Ed when she joined the group. "He was a wonderful professional and a human being," she says. "His passing away has left a void." Adds Mike White, "As good a consultant as Ed was (and he was simply the best!), he was an even better person. He was both an 'idea' person and a 'people' person, and everyone he touched became more of the latter."

Ed was the author of four books on law firm management, including *Looking Tall by Standing Next to Short People*, *Creating Dominance: Winning Strategies for Law Firms*, and *The First Great Myth of Legal Management Is That It Exists*. In addition to having published over 100 articles, he was a frequent speaker and the author of a monthly email message that was read by thousands of law firm leaders around the world.

Toronto-based John Plank joined Edge in 2004 after meeting Gerry Riskin and Ed in Savannah. As a communications coach himself, John ranks Ed Wesemann as one of the top communicators in the profession. "Shy by nature, Ed put effort into communicating simply, clearly and as economically as possible. Whether conversing, presenting or in his writing, Ed's genius was to be able to make the complex simple, to make sense out of chaos and to achieve it in simple, eloquent and inclusive language and style that was always infused with Ed's abundant warmth and humanity."

Ed's legacy to Edge International is massive. In the words of Sean Larkan, "There are few professionals who leave behind what I call 'capital fabric' – a basic, solid foundation for their firm that will benefit it in years to come. Ed is certainly one of those people, in terms of culture but also learnings and approach, and the actual materials and references he unselfishly shared with us and left for our use."

*"There is a saying that 'no one is irreplaceable,' but in the case of Ed Wesemann that simply does not apply." – Gerry Riskin*

Ed Wesemann is survived by his beloved wife of 49 years, Janice, his children William and Emily, Emily's spouse Erin, and his grandchildren Carmella and William. The formal obituary may be found at [Fox and Weeks Funeral Directors](#). Any clients or friends who would like to share their memories of Ed with us are welcome to [contact us directly](#).