The last place to attract Kaplan was Atmospheric and Environmental Research (AER) in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He joined AER in 1981 as a principal scientist. AER provided him with an opportunity to infuse his thoughts and his philosophy into the private research sector in the United States. From AER he interacted freely on matters related to meteorology with nearly all the government agencies with whom he had previous connections: NASA, NOAA, DOE, and DoD. Kaplan felt at home at AER the same way he felt in academia or in government service. He remained at AER until his retirement in 1993.

For the rest of his life Kaplan continued to speak for better sounders using his deep insight into spectroscopy and his knowledge of the working of numerical weather prediction models as a guide. In 1982, shortly after leaving the NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center he was appointed “Distinguished Visiting Scientist” at JPL. Even after he had formally retired, he continued to provide advice and council to JPL and to his former and new colleagues there.

In his landmark paper of 1959, his vision of the future benefit of remote sensing was prophetic. In his words, “earth satellites hold the promise of continuous and truly global sounding of the atmosphere and would be capable of giving us a very satisfactory continuous picture of the temperature and moisture pattern of that part of the atmosphere which is above the clouds and above the cloudless ground and ocean. Tied in with adequate measurements at the earth’s surface we would then have a continuous knowledge of the changing structure of our atmosphere. With such a continuous knowledge of the global atmospheric properties it should certainly be easier to form a coherent picture of the important atmospheric processes.” Kaplan did more than anyone else to establish the physics of molecular spectroscopy as the foundation of observations from space. This achievement grew out of his deep conviction that remote sensing is a branch of physics. He had little use for ideas that could not be given a physical embodiment.

I would like to end this with a personal note. I have known Lewis for more than 30 years, since 1965 when he was at JPL. Even now, I still vividly recall the discussions, the seminars, and the debates we had on many subjects and issues. During one of our frequent visits in the 1970s to the NASA/Goddard Institute for Space Studies in New York City we used to go a small cafeteria nearby for breakfast. The people working there knew us well. One time he and I were sitting in the cafeteria engaged in a deep discussion while the waitress was trying in vain to get our attention. Finally, somehow, she asked “Are you two brothers?” Lew stopped, looked at her, and said, “In many ways!” This is how it was. We were close friends and colleagues as well as close family until the end. He will be sorely missed.

Lewis married Lillian Vond Epstein in 1942. Together, they shared life until his death. Lillian, their daughter Rebecca Miriam Nemser, her husband, and their son Alexander live in Massachusetts. Lewis Kaplan’s legacy will long endure and continue to grow as the concepts he developed for remote sensing continue to enable a new generation of scientists to peer into spectra and study the world.—Moustafa T. Chahine (chahine@jpl.nasa.gov).